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# [***Even With Biden as a Pro-Labor Champion, Unionizing Is Still a Grind; Farah Stockman***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:669V-2P71-JBG3-617K-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 1428 words

**Byline:** Farah Stockman

**Highlight:** A flurry of new organizing efforts is giving young people hope.

**Body**

DETROIT — This city is known as a capital of organized labor; a [*legendary 113-day auto strike*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/09/26/automobiles/auto-strikes-history.html) here in the 1940s helped make health care coverage and pensions the gold standard for employers nationwide. But this year, a notable strike in Detroit happened in a coffee shop, not a car factory.

For more than 150 days, baristas refused to return to their posts at the Great Lakes Coffee Roasting Company, a popular chain with a main spot in Midtown Detroit where the owners showed their respect for coffee farmers in Brazil and other countries by writing their names on a blackboard near their beans. During an outbreak of Covid in January, the baristas demanded protective gear and tests. In February, they decided to form a union.

Their strike was part of a flurry of new union activity across the country that Democrats hope will translate into more votes in November. Since President Biden took office, there has been an uptick in petitions to form unions, and today [*public approval of unions*](https://news.gallup.com/poll/398303/approval-labor-unions-highest-point-1965.aspx') is at its highest since 1965.

Mr. Biden, who pledged to be “[*the most pro-union president you’ve ever seen*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/03/15/opinion/biden-unions.html),” deserves some credit for that. He isn’t shy about using the bully pulpit to promote organized labor and [*wasted no time putting labor-friendly*](https://www.natlawreview.com/article/president-biden-moved-quickly-to-re-direct-nlrb-first-100-days) members on the National Labor Relations Board. In August, an emergency board he appointed helped reach an agreement that would award [*15,000 railway workers*](https://www.reuters.com/business/autos-transportation/freight-railroads-some-unions-reach-contract-deals-covering-15000-us-workers-2022-08-29/) a hefty raise.

But that doesn’t mean that Middle-Class Joe from Scranton is winning back the blue-collar hearts that fell for Donald Trump, or has reversed the decades-long exodus of [***working-class*** *white people from the Democratic Party*](https://www.theatlantic.com/education/archive/2018/11/education-gap-explains-american-politics/575113/). Much of the new labor organizing is taking place among white-collar professionals who already lean toward Democrats.

[*Architects*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/12/21/business/architects-white-collar-union.html) in New York, [*graduate workers*](https://local33.org/) at Yale and employees of the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee on Capitol Hill have all attempted to establish collective bargaining units. ([*Workers at an architecture firm*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/01/business/architects-union.html) in New York on Thursday formed what may be the industry’s only formal private-sector union in the country, the Yale graduate students are still trying, and the Democratic staff members are part [*of the Teamsters now*](https://www.axios.com/2022/08/26/democrats-unions-big-bet).)

But what’s clear is that Mr. Biden has been the most vocally pro-union president in generations, perhaps since Franklin D. Roosevelt. Democrats hope that his strong stance will erode the appeal of the Republican Party for old-line union workers.

Mr. Trump exploited rifts between union leaders and the rank and file, positioning himself as a champion of blue-collar workers even as he [*attacked union leaders*](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/wonk/wp/2017/01/23/donald-trump-tells-union-leaders-he-wants-to-hire-americans-to-rebuild-america/). “Spend more time working — less time talking,” Mr. Trump [*tweeted*](https://www.politico.com/story/2016/12/trump-carrier-union-boss-232354) at the president of a steelworkers union in Indiana in 2016. “Reduce dues.” He promised to bring factories back to the United States, even if it meant killing unions and cutting wages and taxes and rolling back hard-won safety regulations.

It worked. [*Internal polling*](https://apnews.com/article/fa5657f51e97f608659db5c014799a45) from the United Automobile Workers union found that more than 30 percent of its members bucked its leadership and voted Republican in the three presidential elections before 2020.

Overall support of Republicans by union households [*is almost back up*](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-fix/wp/2016/11/10/donald-trump-got-reagan-like-support-from-union-households/) to where it was under Ronald Reagan, who won two landslide elections, says Jarrett Skorup, the senior director of marketing and communications at the Mackinac Center for Public Policy, a nonprofit institute that advances the principles of free markets and limited government.

He also noted that although union organizing has experienced an uptick this year, the trend has been a steady decline. The number of unfair-labor-practice and new representation cases filed has dropped since 2015 — from 2,822 to 1,638 in 2021, according [*to data from the National Labor Relations Board*](https://www.nlrb.gov/reports/nlrb-case-activity-reports/annual-case-intake/unfair-labor-practice-and-representation).

Blue-collar union workers were once among the strongest pillars of the Democratic Party, but that began to change in the early 1970s, Thomas Frank, the author of “Listen, Liberal: Or, What Ever Happened to the Party of the People?,” told me. As youths were energized by protests over racial justice and the Vietnam War, political strategists began to see ***working-class*** white people as impediments to progress. In 1971, Frederick Dutton, a Kennedy adviser, published a book called “Changing Sources of Power,” which recommended that Democratic leaders concentrate on attracting young college-educated voters instead of their traditional white ***working-class*** supporters.

“That sort of percolated down to the broader culture and became the conventional wisdom of that era,” Mr. Frank explained. “Being on the left wasn’t about the ***working class*** anymore; it was about college kids.”

The trend continued for decades, as Democrats like Bill Clinton and Barack Obama supported free trade agreements that sent factory jobs overseas. Even though the idea for the North American Free Trade Agreement began under George H.W. Bush, a Republican, union leaders blame Mr. Clinton for getting it over the finish line. He also oversaw the normalization of trade relations with China, which led to the loss of more factory jobs.

By the time Hillary Clinton ran for president in 2016, the Clinton name was anathema to many workers in Rust Belt states that had seen factories move to Mexico and China. Instead of voting for another Clinton, many union workers cast ballots for Mr. Trump, who held the distinction of being the first president in decades to rail against free trade.

Mr. Trump’s election also completed a great reversal in the political identities of the parties. It used to be that the more educated you were, the more likely you were to be a Republican. Today the opposite is true.

The trouble is that people without degrees [*outnumber the college-educated*](https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2022/04/12/10-facts-about-todays-college-graduates/). There are only so many blue-collar workers a party can afford to lose before being tossed from power. That might be why President Biden has continued many of Mr. Trump’s economically populist policies, retaining a 25 percent tariff on a range of Chinese imports, from baseball caps to bicycles.

He has also gone further than Mr. Trump in many ways when it comes to taking steps to rebuild America’s manufacturing base. His administration championed both the infrastructure bill and the [*CHIPS and Science Act*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/03/business/economy/chip-industry-congress.html), which provides subsidies and tax credits for manufacturing advanced computer chips in places like Ohio and Arizona. At every turn, Mr. Biden has championed unions, recognizing the role they played in creating the middle class.

And yet there’s no guarantee that workers will care. Some workers have been disillusioned by unions because of scandals, like the greed and corruption (including stories of siphoned union dues) that [*have embroiled the U.A.W. in Detroit*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/07/31/business/uaw-autoworkers-union-corruption.html). Most American workers aren’t in a union, and most nonunion workers don’t want to be, [*according to a recent Gallup poll*](https://news.gallup.com/poll/398303/approval-labor-unions-highest-point-1965.aspx).

Nevertheless, many young people see hope in the flurry of new organizing efforts, especially in industries not previously unionized.

Union drives could help hospitality workers gain the job security and pay that autoworkers achieved decades ago, once again transforming the prospects of the American middle class.

But even with a champion in the White House, unionizing is still a grind. Lex Blom, a 29-year-old who spearheaded the effort at the Great Lakes Coffee Roasting Company, told me that it took months to get a hearing at the National Labor Relations Board. By that time, the coffee shop owners opted to [*close the store forever*](https://www.freep.com/story/money/2022/05/24/great-lakes-coffee-midtown-detroit-closure-union/9907283002/) rather than bargain with a union.

“All of our workers’ hearts were broken,” she told me. She credited two Democratic members of Congress from Michigan, Rashida Tlaib and Andy Levin, not the White House, for helping her unionizing effort.

At a time when many employers are having a hard time keeping the doors open because of elusive workers and inflation, it’s unclear whether Mr. Biden’s strong advocacy for unions will generate more support than opposition.

“It’s still a tough sell,” Marick Masters, a Wayne State University professor who studies labor relations, told me.

It’s too much to expect Mr. Biden to reverse a decades-long trend of blue-collar workers leaving the Democratic Party. But at least it’s a start.

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[***Egypt's Leader Receives Lift In Gaza Chaos***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69VB-CRY1-JBG3-60V3-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Body**

President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi of Egypt grew increasingly unpopular amid a deep economic crisis. But the war in neighboring Gaza has given him a vital role on the international stage.

President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi of Egypt woke up on Oct. 7 remarkably unpopular for someone considered a shoo-in for a third term -- guaranteed by his authoritarian grip on the country to dominate elections that begin on Sunday, but badly damaged by a slow-motion economic collapse.

The ensuing weeks have eclipsed all of that, with war displacing financial worries as the top item on many Egyptians' minds, lips and social media feeds. For Western partners and Persian Gulf backers, the crisis has also highlighted Egypt's vital role as a conduit for humanitarian aid to Gaza and a mediator between Israel and Hamas, the armed Palestinian group that led the attack on Israel on Oct. 7 and set off the war.

Mr. el-Sisi, a former general with a knack for outlasting setbacks, appeared to have caught yet another break, one that has allowed him to position himself as a champion of the Palestinian cause at home and an indispensable regional leader abroad.

In Cairo these days, a widespread boycott of Western companies associated with support for Israel has transformed the simple act of serving a Pepsi into a serious faux pas. Egyptians struggling to cover the basics after nearly two years of record-setting inflation have opened their wallets to help victims of the Gaza war.

And in a country where protests have been banned for years, hundreds of people have braved arrest to march in solidarity with the Palestinians.

The three-day presidential vote that started on Sunday is expected to rubber-stamp Mr. el-Sisi's hold for another six-year term: None of his three challengers stand a chance of unseating him. Barring a few lonely signs, the face looming over what seemed like every street in Cairo from billboards, banners and posters this weekend was Mr. el-Sisi's, and none of the 20 eligible voters interviewed around Cairo on Sunday were familiar with the other candidates.

A government news release proclaimed an ''unprecedented high turnout'' as buses sponsored by pro-Sisi parties dropped voters off at polling stations by the dozens and as companies gave employees time off to vote.

Nevertheless, the president will need to steer carefully, analysts and diplomats said. The economic crisis that had punctured Mr. el-Sisi's aura of invulnerability is still bleeding households, companies and the nation's finances. Gaza or no Gaza, Egypt is expected to devalue its currency, the pound, after the election, promising further pain for its people.

''Most of us are married and have kids, and now the 200 pounds in my hand feels like 20,'' said Ahmad Hassan, 43, a security guard from the ***working-class*** neighborhood of Imbaba. Like many others interviewed on Sunday, he said voting would be useless. ''I want change,'' he said. ''And with me or without me, he'll win anyway.''

With public support for the Palestinians at a high, many Egyptians are alert to any sign that their government may be complicit in the suffering in Gaza, whether by acceding to Israeli restrictions on the aid flowing from Egypt into the territory or proposals to move Gazans into Egypt in exchange for aid -- an idea that is widely opposed across the Arab world.

''The government definitely doesn't want to test the patience of the Egyptian people, not when it comes to Palestine,'' said Hesham Sallam, a scholar of Arab politics at Stanford's Center on Democracy, Development and the Rule of Law.

Like many in Cairo these days, Aya Khalil, 34, a private art teacher, said she no longer buys anything before checking its provenance against online lists of Western brands blacklisted for their support for Israel.

''Me boycotting these brands is just a drop in the ocean, but I'm doing the only thing I can do,'' she said.

Like many other Egyptians, she questioned whether the government was doing enough to pump aid into Gaza. Egypt blames Israel for limiting the aid, but calls to end the 16-year-old joint Israeli-Egyptian blockade of Gaza and for Egypt to stop giving Israel any say over Egypt's border crossing with Gaza have grown in recent weeks.

Yet Egypt cannot afford to alienate Israel, with which it has developed a strong, if hush-hush, security partnership in the Sinai Peninsula, or to agitate Western backers, particularly when it needs all the financial support it can get.

Many Egyptians despair of the dire economic picture and borrow month after month just to pay for the basics. Sugar recently doubled in price in some places, and inflation, already running above 35 percent annually, is expected to worsen if the government devalues the currency.

The currency's official value has already fallen by half since the crisis began in early 2022. It is worth far less on the black market.

Before Hamas's attack on Israel, signs of Mr. el-Sisi's growing unpopularity were unmistakable.

An upstart challenger, Ahmed al-Tantawy, was drawing support around Egypt with criticisms of the president that few others here had dared voice since he began throttling dissent in recent years. Activists and liberals spoke expectantly of Mr. el-Sisi's eventual downfall. Sensing strength in numbers, many Egyptians no longer bothered to lower their voices before trashing their president.

Abroad, the International Monetary Fund and wealthy gulf benefactors had grown impatient waiting for Egypt to make good on its promises of economic reform, and no calculator could figure how the country would avoid defaulting on its $165 billion in foreign debts.

Washington was in an uproar over accusations that Egypt had bribed a senior U.S. senator in return for official favors and sensitive information, causing Congress to block an extra $235 million in military aid for the Sisi government.

Within days of Israel's assault on Gaza in retaliation for the Oct. 7 attacks, however, Mr. el-Sisi's wobble appeared to have steadied.

''With every war that comes, it's a good chance for him to make it his excuse for the economic crisis,'' said Salah Ali, an engineer from the southern city of Aswan employed to build what is supposed to be the president's marquee legacy project, a costly new capital city that has helped swell Egypt's debt.

''What do you mean, 'elections'?'' he added, sarcastically, echoing a widespread belief that the outcome is predetermined, despite assertions from a government spokesman, Diaa Rashwan, that the vote shows Egypt to be on an ''earnest path toward genuine political pluralism.''

The one Sisi challenger who had generated some momentum, Mr. al-Tantawy, was pushed out of the presidential race after government agents violently prevented his supporters from registering enough endorsements to put him on the ballot just before the war erupted, his campaign said, a headline quickly buried by the avalanche of news from Gaza. On trial for what rights group call trumped-up charges, he has said 137 members of his campaign have been detained.

The three other men who did wind up on the ballot are little known. Even the one with some opposition support has refrained from all but the mildest critiques of the president, perhaps fearing the fate of independent-minded candidates in the 2018 election, when all serious challengers to Mr. el-Sisi were arrested.

Analysts say Egypt is dragging its feet over meeting the conditions of the $3 billion I.M.F. bailout granted last year. But the fund's director, Kristalina Georgieva, has said that the I.M.F. is ''very likely'' to bolster the amount of the loan anyway in light of the war.

The European Union, fearing another migration crisis, is likewise accelerating some $10 billion in funding for Egypt.

And liberal activists, Sisi supporters and many people in between have found themselves in a rare moment of unity, condemning Israel's siege and bombardment of Gaza and rejecting the idea of Gazans' being forced into Egypt's Sinai Peninsula, which borders the territory.

Many fear such displacement would mean the Palestinians would lose their own land forever and bring Hamas into a historically and emotionally charged part of Egypt, eventually drawing Egypt into a war with Israel.

Mr. el-Sisi was quick to read the room.

''The aim of the stifling blockade on the strip, of cutting water and power and preventing the entry of aid, is to push the Palestinians toward Egypt,'' Mr. el-Sisi said in a joint news conference with the German chancellor on Oct. 18, one of several times he has made clear that the answer is no.

''We reject the liquidation of the Palestinian cause and the forced displacement in Sinai.''

But Mr. el-Sisi was also strategically harnessing Egyptians' fury and grief over the war, analysts and diplomats say.

On Oct. 20, groups close to the government organized a day of nationwide pro-Palestinian demonstrations that the government said drew hundreds of thousands of people, a figure that could not be independently verified.

Extensively covered on state media, the rallies were festooned with banners that included Mr. el-Sisi's photo next to images of Jerusalem's Al-Aqsa Mosque -- a less-than-subtle attempt to yoke the Palestinian cause to Mr. el-Sisi's.

''Without Sisi, we'd be doomed,'' said Reda Saad, 42, an employee at Egypt's state-owned gas company who had brought her four children to one rally, when asked how she rated his handling of the crisis.

She said she was ''still angry'' about Egypt's economic meltdown but had put that aside in the face of Gaza's suffering.

''That's one thing,'' she said, ''and this is another.''

But dozens of people were arrested in separate marches the same day in which demonstrators chanted anti-Sisi slogans, making clear that government attempts to channel pro-Palestinian passions risk churning up domestic discontents.

''I'm just waiting for him to resign or leave,'' said Omar, a government employee in El-Arish, near the Gaza border. He asked to be identified only by his first name to avoid retaliation.

Until then, he said, ''We'll keep living this terrible reality.''

Mourad Hijazy contributed reporting.Mourad Hijazy contributed reporting.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/10/world/middleeast/egypt-election-gaza-war.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/10/world/middleeast/egypt-election-gaza-war.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: A campaign poster in Cairo for President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi of Egypt. The country's three-day presidential vote started on Sunday. (PHOTOGRAPH BY KHALED DESOUKI/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE -- GETTY IMAGES) (A8) This article appeared in print on page A1, A8.

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[***In Arizona, Bad Feelings About the Economy Sour Some Voters on Biden***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69MK-JCB1-JBG3-64YK-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** US

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**Byline:** Jack Healy

**Highlight:** The White House has hailed new investments and new jobs, yet many voters in a battleground state are chafing at inflation and housing costs.

**Body**

The White House has hailed new investments and new jobs, yet many voters in a battleground state are chafing at inflation and housing costs.

If President Biden hopes to replicate his narrow victory in Arizona, he will need disillusioned voters like Alex Jumah. An immigrant from Iraq, Mr. Jumah leans conservative, but he said he voted for Mr. Biden because he could not stomach former President Trump’s anti-Muslim views.

That was 2020. Since then, Mr. Jumah, 41, said, his economic fortunes cratered after he contracted Covid, missed two months of work as a trucking dispatcher, was evicted from his home and was forced to move in with his mother. He said he could no longer afford an apartment in Tucson, where rents have risen sharply since the pandemic. He is now planning to vote for Mr. Trump.

“At first I was really happy with Biden,” he said. “We got rid of Trump, rid of the racism. And then I regretted it. We need a strong president to keep this country first.”

His anger helps explain why Mr. Biden appears to be [*struggling in Arizona and other closely divided 2024 battleground states*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/05/us/politics/biden-trump-2024-poll.html), according to a recent poll by The New York Times and Siena College.

Surveys and interviews with Arizona voters find that they are sour on the economy, despite solid job growth in the state. The Biden administration also fails to get credit for a parade of new companies coming to Arizona that will produce lithium-ion batteries, electric vehicles and [*computer chips*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cuUeLaIH-M8) — investments that the White House hails as emblems of its push for a next generation of American manufacturing.

Breanne Laird, 32, a doctoral student at Arizona State University and a Republican, said she sat out the 2020 elections in part because she never thought Arizona would turn blue. But after two years without any pay increases and after losing $170,000 trying to fix and flip a house she bought in suburban Phoenix, she said she was determined to vote next year, for Mr. Trump.

She bought the investment property near the peak of the market last year, and said she watched its value slip as mortgage rates rose toward 8 percent. She said she had to max out credit cards, and her credit score fell.

Arizona’s housing market fell farther than most parts of the country after the 2008 financial crisis, and it took longer to recover. Few economists are predicting a similar crash now, but even so, Ms. Laird said she felt frustrated, and was itching to return Mr. Trump to power.

“I’m even further behind,” she said. “I see the value in voting, and plan to vote as much as possible.”

A [*majority*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/11/07/us/elections/times-siena-arizona.html) of Arizona voters in the recent New York Times/Siena survey rated the country’s economy as poor. Just 3 percent of voters said it was excellent.

Arizona experienced some of the worst inflation in the country, largely because [*housing costs*](https://eller.arizona.edu/departments-research/centers-labs/economic-business-research/arizona-economic-outlook) shot upward as people thronged to the state during the pandemic. Average monthly rents in Phoenix rose to $1,919 in September from $1,373 in early 2020, a 40 percent increase according to Zillow. Average rents across the country rose about 30 percent over the same period.

Home prices and rents have fallen from their peaks this year, but even so, economists say that the state is increasingly unaffordable for middle-class families, whose migration to Arizona has powered decades of growth in the state.

Arizona’s economy sprinted out of the pandemic, but economists said the speed of new hiring and consumer spending in the state has now eased. The state unemployment rate of 4 percent is about equal to the national average, and the quarterly [*Arizona Economic Outlook*](https://eller.arizona.edu/departments-research/centers-labs/economic-business-research), published by the University of Arizona, predicts that the state will keep growing next year, though at a slower pace.

Arizona has added 280,000 jobs since Mr. Biden took office, according to the [*federal Labor Department,*](https://data.bls.gov/pdq/SurveyOutputServlet) compared with 150,000 during Mr. Trump’s term. Phoenix just hosted the Super Bowl, usually a high-profile boost to the local mood and economy.

Barely a week goes by without Arizona’s first-term Democratic governor, Katie Hobbs, visiting a [*groundbreaking*](https://azgovernor.gov/office-arizona-governor/news/2023/09/governor-katie-hobbs-celebrates-jobs-strong-workforce-and) or job-training event to talk up the state’s economy or the [*infrastructure money*](https://www.kold.com/2023/10/31/governor-hobbs-joins-us-secretary-energy-announce-energy-transmission-projects/) arriving from Washington.

Mr. Biden was even farther behind Mr. Trump in another poll being released this week by the Phoenix-based firm Noble Predictive Insights. That survey of about 1,000 Arizona voters said Mr. Trump had an eight-point lead, a significant swing toward Republicans [*from this past winter,*](https://www.noblepredictiveinsights.com/post/no-significant-leads-in-a-2024-presidential-election-among-az) when Mr. Biden had a two-point edge.

Mike Noble, the polling firm’s chief executive, said that Mr. Trump had built his lead in Arizona by consolidating support from Republicans and — for the moment — winning back independents. Respondents cited immigration and inflation as their top concerns.

“Economists say, ‘Look at these indicators’ — People don’t care about that,” Mr. Noble said. “They care about their day-to-day lives.”

Bill Ruiz, the business representative of Local 1912 of the Southwest Mountain States Carpenters Union, said the Biden administration’s infrastructure bill and CHIPS Act were bringing billions of dollars into Arizona, and helping to power an increase in union jobs and wages. Carpenters in his union were working 7 percent more hours than they were a year ago, and the union’s membership has doubled to 3,400 over the past five years.

“We’re making bigger gains and bigger paychecks,” he said. “It blows me away people don’t see that.”

Political strategists say Mr. Biden could still win in Arizona next year, if Democrats can reassemble the just-big-enough coalition of moderate Republicans and suburban women, Latinos and younger voters who rejected Mr. Trump by 10,000 votes in 2020. It was the first time in more than two decades that a Democrat had [*carried*](https://www.270towin.com/states/Arizona) Arizona and its 11 electoral votes.

The same pattern was seen in last year’s midterm elections, when Arizona voters elected Democrats running on abortion rights and democracy for governor, attorney general and secretary of state, defeating a slate of Trump-endorsed hard-right Republicans.

Abortion is still a powerful motivator and a winning issue for Democrats, but many Arizona voters now say their dominant concerns are immigration, inflation and what they feel is a faltering economy.

Grant Cooper, 53, who retired from a career in medical sales, is the kind of disaffected Republican voter that Democrats hope to peel away next year. He supports abortion rights and limited government, and while he voted for Mr. Trump in 2020, he said he would not do so again.

He said his personal finances and retirement investments were in decent shape, and he did not blame the president for the spike in gas prices in 2022. Still, he said he plans to vote for a third-party candidate next year, saying that both Mr. Biden and Mr. Trump were out-of-touch relics of a two-party system that was failing to address long-term challenges.

“They squibble and squabble about the dumbest things, rather than looking at things that could improve our economy,” he said. “The Republicans are fighting the Democrats. The Democrats are fighting the Republicans. And what gets done? Nothing.”

David Martinez, 43, is emblematic of the demographic shift that has made Arizona such a battleground. He and his family moved back to Phoenix after 15 years in the San Francisco Bay Area, where he still works remotely in the tech industry. He voted for Mr. Biden in 2020, and said he was worried about the threat Mr. Trump poses to free elections, democracy and America’s future in NATO.

His ***working-class*** friends and extended family don’t share the same concerns. These days, the political conversations with them usually begin and end with the price of gas (now [*falling*](https://www.gasbuddy.com/charts)) and eggs (still high).

“It falls on deaf ears,” Mr. Martinez said of his arguments about democracy. “They feel down about Biden and inflation and his age. They’re open to giving Trump a second term or skipping the election entirely.”

Camille Baker contributed reporting.

Camille Baker contributed reporting.

PHOTOS: President Biden’s popularity in Arizona has slipped since he took office, polls indicate. Right, voters waited in line to cast their ballots at dawn in Guadalupe in 2020. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY PETE MAROVICH FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES; ADRIANA ZEHBRAUSKAS FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A20.

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[***Was My Boyfriend Financially Controlling? Was My Girlfriend?; Modern Love***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69VB-S6D1-JBG3-61FG-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** STYLE

**Length:** 1544 words

**Byline:** Melissa Febos

**Highlight:** The common denominator between the two relationships had not been gender or sexual orientation. It had been me.

**Body**

This essay is part of a Modern Love project on the intersection of money and relationships.

In my mid-20s, I was close to broke. Not struggling-to-keep-the-lights-on-broke, but constantly-doing-basic-math-in-my-head-broke. I had some lingering bad debt that I’d been transferring between credit cards for years. My yearly income was under $20,000. In therapy (the cost of which caused additional consternation), I talked a lot about the low hum of anxiety that attended my days, the fear that my financial insecurity was evidence that I was doing something wrong.

I had a boyfriend at the time, a kind person. He wasn’t the last man I would ever date, but close to it. He worked long hours as a TV editor; he wasn’t rich, but had no debt and earned what seemed to me then like a king’s ransom: something like a grand a week. He was the first romantic partner I’d ever lived with and the first whose income was more than triple mine. When we moved into our small one-bedroom, he suggested an equitable scale for paying our living expenses in which I contributed about a third. I don’t think the word equitable was yet a part of my vocabulary, but we both knew I could never have afforded an equal share.

I was grateful for his generosity, but deeply uneasy about the arrangement. Every month, when I wrote him a check, my body coursed with a potent combination of shame and fear. Though I understood intellectually that our arrangement was fair, I still felt like a failure. I was terrified by the idea of dependency, which seemed like an ominous gateway.

I’d been employed ever since my parents, both from ***working class*** backgrounds, had secured me my first work permit at 14. I came to understand financial independence as freedom. When I’d moved out of my childhood home as a teenager, I refused much help from my parents because I knew it gave them a stake in how I lived. The years I spent in my early 20s as a sex worker had confirmed my suspicion that there was no such thing as free money.

I had been clean and sober for three years when my boyfriend and I moved in together, but even at my addicted bottom, I’d been obsessively self-sufficient. No matter how messy my life got, I always made rent. But at 26, an unpublished writer and student, I was deeply in debt for the first time. I’d later come to understand this as the ordinary predicament of most budding artists who don’t come from money.

In our second year of living together, my boyfriend offered to pay off my credit card debt. My payments were barely touching the principal, he pointed out. I nodded, but felt the blood rush out of my face.

“That’s really generous,” I said. “But that idea makes me feel … uncomfortable.” This was an understatement. I felt like vomiting.

“You can think of it as loan, if you want,” he said.

Over the years we lived together, I started cooking more. I liked to cook, and as a child with both Puerto Rican and Italian grandmothers, I had been raised to enjoy feeding people. I don’t know when I started doing his laundry, but it soon became routine as well.

“It’s a little weird that you’re doing all of this,” he said to me once. I brushed it off. “It’s fine,” I said. “I’m home more often than you.” And in some ways, it was fine. Folding laundry was easier than writing.

It wasn’t only in our home that things got weird. I covered my tattoos in front of his parents. I certainly didn’t tell them I was writing a book about my years as an addict and sex worker; in fact, I told almost no one. I amassed a rich collection of cardigans. My life started to feel like a kind of cosplay. I’d never looked so conventional. And I had never asked for or accepted financial help.

In our third year together, he and I started talking about having a baby and getting married. While these prospects excited me on some level, they also filled me with trepidation. How had I gone from a dominatrix who mostly dated women to a boring teacher who lived with a man in an apartment she couldn’t afford? At what point did the costume cease to be play and become my real life?

What happened was exactly the thing I should have expected: I fell in love with a woman and left him. The breakup was agony, made worse by the fact of his generosity and my inability to repay him. Out of guilt, I went to weeks of post-breakup couples’ therapy with him and abandoned most of our shared belongings. After a few months, however, I threw away those cardigans and got some new tattoos. Then, I published that book about everything I’d learned to hide.

When I reflected on our relationship, I recoiled from my dismay and bafflement, and turned toward self-disgust, which felt safer. What on earth had possessed me? The patriarchy, I decided: I had stepped into that old hoary theater of heterosexuality and found myself typecast, complete with laundry and dishes and cardigans.

The story might have ended there. I stayed with that woman — whom I still refer to as “my best ex” — for three years. Then, I found myself in love with a different woman. Though I was less broke at this point, she was in a similarly distant tax bracket. She was prone to grand gestures and expensive gift-giving: She bought me plane tickets, massages, expensive meals, jewelry and Gucci sunglasses. I was stunned by this showering, and even more so by my acceptance of it.

“I want to take care of you,” she often said. Every time she uttered those words, I felt a flash of fear. Look what had happened the last time I let someone take care of me! But behind that fear was something else. A swooning feeling. A ravenous hunger. To my own surprise, I found that I desperately wanted to be taken care of.

For a time, the narcotic effect of her grand gestures of care obscured the reality of our dynamic: It was the most unstable I’d ever known. We fought constantly. I obsessed over our relationship to the exclusion of almost everything else in my life.

And yet I once again strove to become the good wife — completing mundane administrative tasks on her behalf, carrying her coat at public events and making myself small to avoid conflict.

When I left her, my life was in ruins. I had become estranged from friends and family. And I had again become a stranger to myself. But my eyes were also opened: I saw that the common denominator between those two relationships had not been gender or sexual orientation, nor even financial difference. It had been me.

The very quality that had made me so proud — my need for control over my own independence, my inability to gracefully accept help — had generated an imbalance in me. I could not accept the healthy support of one lover and ran headlong into a warped dynamic with another.

In the aftermath, I came to see the relationship with my TV editor boyfriend with more nuance. I had spent the years leading up to our relationship as a kind of career criminal, braced for judgment, violence, arrest and humiliation. I’d always held down a job, sure, but my life had been precarious and vulnerable in all the ways being an addict and sex worker make a life and a woman. I would have been embarrassed to admit it at the time, but there was relief in the sheer vanilla quality of my life with him. I didn’t blame myself for craving that comfort, only for refusing to recognize it.

In some moments, it had also been tempting to reduce the story of that tumultuous relationship with the woman who wanted to take care of me to an easily digested narrative: She had been a controlling mastermind. Or perhaps we had both been temporarily possessed by a toxic chemistry. Whatever partial truths existed in those explanations, I knew it had been that same ravenous hunger for care — produced by my staunch, lifelong refusal of it — that had driven me back to her again and again. That there was only one person who could render me capable of a more balanced manner of loving: me.

As I’ve aged, the comfort of blaming someone or something else for my hardships has become rare. I try to hold myself accountable with more tenderness than recrimination. When I become a stranger to myself, the explanation is always complicated.

The intervening years have taught me better how to give and receive all kinds of resources, including money. My wife and I are pretty good at not playing out our issues in that particular area. Neither of us craves the kind of care one should only expect from a parent or a god, and we both know how to ask for help when we need it. We are just two adults, each taking responsibility for ourselves, and choosing every day to live alongside each other. It can be a lot more work, but costs us less in the end.

Melissa Febos is the author of four books, including “Girlhood,” winner of the National Book Critics Circle Award in Criticism, and a professor at the University of Iowa.

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[***News / The Perils of Posthumous Revision***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69R5-R421-DXY4-X078-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** By Alexandra Alter

**Body**

A new edition of the best-selling romance writer's 1950 novel removes blatant Jewish stereotypes, stirring debate about whether to tinker with older works.

Georgette Heyer, one of the most popular and influential romance authors of all time, was not a romantic when it came to her work. ''I ought to be shot for writing such nonsense,'' she once declared in a letter to her publisher.

Among her ardent fans, though, she remains revered as the Queen of Regency Romance, a subgenre she essentially created and popularized. Her intricately researched historical narratives are still widely read nearly 50 years after her death; Julia Quinn, whose Regency romance series ''Bridgerton'' spawned the hit Netflix series, called her ''the original.''

To date, Heyer's books have sold around 20 million copies. But some readers have questioned her enduring popularity in light of offensive ethnic and antisemitic stereotypes that occasionally appeared in her work.

Most troubling to readers is her 1950 Regency romance ''The Grand Sophy.'' In a pivotal scene, the novel's heroine confronts a greedy, villainous moneylender named Goldhanger, who is described as a ''swarthy individual, with long, greasy curls, a semitic nose, and an ingratiating leer.''

''It's not a stray comment, it's a whole antisemitic scene,'' said the romance novelist Cat Sebastian, who has read all of Heyer's romances. ''If I recommend her books, it's with a lot of caveats.''

When Heyer's American publisher, Sourcebooks, decided to release new editions of her romances this year, they had to strike a precarious balance. Leaving the original scene could repel some readers. But changing it risked provoking a backlash from fans and scholars who see posthumous revisions as a form of literary reputation laundering, or censorship.

After a lengthy back and forth with the Heyer estate, Sourcebooks made small but significant changes to ''The Grand Sophy.'' In the new version, the moneylender's name has been changed to Grimpstone. References to his Jewish identity and appearance have been deleted, along with other negative generalizations about Jews.

Acknowledgment of the changes appears on the copyright page, which says ''this edition has been edited from the original with permission of the Georgette Heyer Estate.''

The revisions could ensure that ''The Grand Sophy'' remains a romance staple for future generations. But they are also likely to stir up an ongoing debate about whether, and how, publishers and estates should handle insensitive language in older works.

When it was revealed earlier this year that novels by Roald Dahl and Agatha Christie had been edited to remove offensive phrases, many were outraged by what they saw as an attempt to sanitize iconic literary works.

The Heyer estate's approach bothered Mary Bly, a romance novelist and literary scholar who in 2021 was brought on by Sourcebooks to write introductions for the new editions of the novels. To Bly, changing ''The Grand Sophy'' without acknowledging the flaws in the original felt like an attempt to obscure Heyer's views. After the estate declined to include Bly's explanation of the changes in an afterword, she quit the project.

''They're publishing a bowdlerized text, and I can't have any part in that,'' Bly said. ''You can't hide it.''

Born in Wimbledon in 1902 into a middle-class family, Heyer led a sheltered life and took up writing early, finishing her first novel, ''The Black Moth,'' when she was still a teenager. She went on to write more than 50 books, including mysteries, historical novels and romances.

Even at the height of her success, Heyer was uncomfortable with fame. She shunned interview requests and was often self-deprecating about her work. ''It's unquestionably good escapist literature and I think I should rather like it if I were sitting in an air-raid shelter, or recovering from flu,'' she wrote to her publisher.

Many of Heyer's most popular novels took place during the British Regency era, from the late 1700s to around 1830, and featured smart, self-possessed heroines who were architects of their own fates. Fans have included Queen Elizabeth II; the actor Stephen Fry; and the writers Nora Roberts, A.S. Byatt and Philippa Gregory.

''There is not a Regency author today who is not influenced by Georgette Heyer,'' said Deb Werksman, the executive editor of Sourcebooks Casablanca.

The press began acquiring U.S. rights to Heyer's books from her estate in 2007, and has sold two million copies of her work, but they saw the potential for an even bigger audience. A few years ago, ''Bridgerton'' created a massive appetite for Regency romance, and it seemed like the perfect moment for a Heyer renaissance. Editors at Sourcebooks decided to print new editions with fresh covers, in hopes of expanding Heyer's fan base.

They also worried some of Heyer's language might put off new readers. Within her lighthearted romantic romps, Heyer occasionally trafficked in stereotypes that were common in her era, with negative portrayals of foreigners, ***working-class*** people and Jewish people. Sourcebooks suggested to the estate that they tweak potentially offensive or sensitive phrases, such as deleting a reference to the race of a young Black servant in ''These Old Shades.''

''We don't want to throw off a 25-year-old who's just discovering Heyer,'' said Todd Stocke, senior vice president and editorial director of Sourcebooks.

The publisher asked Bly to write introductions explaining Heyer's historical and literary relevance. A Shakespeare scholar and chair of the English department at Fordham University, Bly publishes historical romances under the pen name Eloisa James, and is a die-hard Heyer fan.

Bly suggested small tweaks to some of the texts, like removing the word ''gypsy'' from ''Frederica.''

But Bly felt ''The Grand Sophy,'' one of her favorite books growing up in Minnesota, would need more radical revisions.

The novel follows an irrepressible young woman named Sophy who visits her cousins in London and proceeds to wreak havoc on their lives -- matchmaking, breaking up engagements, giving the children a pet monkey and taking their horses on a reckless joyride.

The buoyant tone turns ominous when Sophy comes to the rescue of one of her cousins, a gambler who has fallen into debt. Setting out to confront Goldhanger, the moneylender, she finds him in a filthy hovel of an office. He is described as stooped, with hooded eyes, and driven by ''the instinct of his race.'' Elsewhere in the novel, he is referred to as a ''devil'' and a ''bloodsucker.''

To evaluate the text more thoroughly, Sourcebooks brought on Hilary Doda, an assistant professor at Dalhousie University, as a Jewish sensitivity reader. In her report, she noted that some of Heyer's language echoed Nazi-era propaganda that had been exported abroad. Sourcebooks proposed changing the moneylender's name to something less obviously Jewish and deleting or revising the most offensive phrases.

Heyer's estate -- which found no evidence that Heyer engaged with Nazi propaganda -- was leery of dramatically altering her work. This spring, the estate commissioned a response to the sensitivity report from Jennifer Kloester, the author of her authorized biography. Kloester agreed the name change was warranted, and proposed Grimpstone, a village in England, since Heyer often used village names for her characters.

''I don't have a problem with changing the name, if that's the major source of contention and would stop people from reading Heyer,'' Kloester said in an interview. ''It helps to keep Heyer in print for modern readers who would take offense.''

In Bly's proposed afterword, she explained the rationale for the changes. ''Heyer wrote 'The Grand Sophy' in a time when such stereotyped, damaging descriptions were not fully recognized as offensive,'' Bly wrote. ''Unfortunately, the scene perpetuates structural antisemitism, damaging and undervaluing people of the Jewish faith.''

The estate agreed to many of the suggested edits, but not the afterword. Bly felt that was intellectually dishonest, and this summer, she withdrew from the project and asked Sourcebooks to remove her introductions.

Peter Buckman, a literary agent representing Heyer's estate, declined to comment. A message on the estate's website notes that the U.S. editions have been ''lightly edited'' and that in Britain Heyer's publisher will ''leave the books as the author wrote them'' but does ''not endorse the language or depictions in some of these books.''

For some readers of her work, the Jewish stereotypes in ''The Grand Sophy'' are inexcusable, particularly since it was published not long after World War II.

Rose Lerner, a historical romance novelist who is Jewish, has read ''The Grand Sophy'' many times and feels conflicted about it. While she finds the story delightful, she is also disgusted by its bigoted language, she said.

Still, she's uncomfortable with the idea of changing Heyer's words. ''I would rather read the original and decide for myself,'' she said. ''It feels like whitewashing to me.''

Sourcebooks is releasing the new version in the U.S. this fall. But already, it's become polarizing. In a Goodreads discussion group for Heyer fans, a reader who had seen an advance copy commented on the changes made to the moneylender scene in ''The Grand Sophy,'' provoking a heated discussion.

Some said it would make the book better. Others argued it was like removing Shylock from Shakespeare, and that sophisticated readers could put the scene in historical context. Another faction claimed it felt like an effort to cover up Heyer's views.

''Tweaking the scene without comment means exculpating Mrs. Heyer,'' Sabine Payr, a retired robotics researcher in Austria, wrote in the discussion. ''I love GH's novels as everyone else in this group does, but I do not want to be left in the dark about the mind-set of the author.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/30/books/georgette-heyer-romance-novel-antisemitism.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/30/books/georgette-heyer-romance-novel-antisemitism.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: Georgette Heyer in 1949. This article appeared in print on page BR27.

**Load-Date:** November 26, 2023

**End of Document**



[***Closures Across France Threaten Its Pool Parity***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68YK-NXN1-DXY4-X45R-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

August 17, 2023 Thursday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; Foreign Desk; Pg. 5

**Length:** 891 words

**Byline:** By Juliette Guéron-Gabrielle

**Body**

As temperatures rise, a vast but aging system is feeling the strains of rising energy costs, increasing water scarcity and mounting pressure on public budgets.

Last month, in the heat of summer, Annette Schreiner got to her local pool just in time to see a police officer posting a decree informing residents that the pool, closed since December, would not be reopening.

''When the town learned that the pool was closing, people didn't understand,'' Ms. Schreiner said. ''Why would you close a pool when there's a heat wave every summer?''

The reason, said officials where she lives in Montlhéry, just south of Paris, is that the pool had become too expensive to maintain. An increasing number of municipalities in France, where energy has become more expensive and water is ever scarcer, are coming to the same conclusion.

The problem is limited to a relative handful of municipalities in a vast system with more than 6,000 public pools and open-air basins in France, a network denser than those in neighboring countries like Germany and Britain.

But at least a dozen towns and cities across the country have shuttered public pools this summer, reflecting the intersection of several crises for France -- rising energy costs, extreme temperatures and mounting pressure on public budgets -- that are felt most acutely in low-income and ***working-class*** areas.

Last winter, pools were hit particularly hard by the energy crisis that gripped Europe, as the war in Ukraine forced the Continent to stop relying on cheap Russian gas. At that time, Vert Marine, a private company in charge of some French municipal pools, shut 30 of them for three weeks.

''It was a unilateral, brutal decision,'' said Guillaume Perrin, who runs a program to help French counties save energy.

Since then, many pools have reduced their water temperature to save energy and cut their opening hours. Others, like the communes of Descartes and Le Blanc, both in central France, have not reopened their public pools this summer. Still others, like Montlhéry, closed their pools indefinitely. Montlhéry said the spike in energy prices increased the cost of running the pool by a third, as compared to the previous year.

Rising energy costs were frequently cited as the reason for the closures, but others included a national shortage of lifeguards, temporary renovations, or leaks and other problems deemed too costly to fix.

''This winter acted as a true wake-up call for towns,'' Mr. Perrin said. They kept calling him, asking for quick fixes to make their pools more energy efficient. That was not always possible.

''There are two types of deficits for counties, the acceptable kind and the unacceptable kind,'' Mr. Perrin says. ''Energy prices this winter made some pools tip into the unacceptable kind.''

But as heat waves become more frequent in France, conflicts over spending priorities could become more common. Just opposite Montlhéry's closed pool, there is a brand-new soccer stadium. ''They found money for soccer, but not for swimming,'' Ms. Schreiner said.

It is likely that not all local residents will be affected equally by the closure. ''The poorer you are, the more time you spend in the public pool,'' said Cornelia Hummel, a Swiss sociologist who has studied the ways municipal pools create a sense of community.

Poor suburbs on the edges of cities have the fewest number of public pools in France, according to the nation's court of auditors, which is in charge of making sure public money is put to good use.

Near the closed Montlhéry pool, Lucas Thomas sat on the wall around the parking lot where the cars of swimmers used to line up. Mr. Thomas, a 27-year-old truck driver, watched his two daughters, 6 and 2, cycle through the empty lot.

''It was an impeccable pool,'' he said. ''My daughters used to go there during summer or with school.'' The pool closed before his youngest daughter learned how to swim and he said he's not sure how she'll learn now, or when.

''The question of access to water is becoming increasingly political,'' said Professor Hummel. ''It doesn't make sense to close a public pool, because people that can afford it turn to private pools that use more water per person.''

Warming temperatures are helping to deplete the groundwater in France. Earlier this year, several towns in the Var and Ardèche regions in the south refused to issue building permits because their water resources couldn't accommodate any new demand, their mayors said. During a heat wave last July, the Indre region banned the filling of private pools to save water.

''When France invested in pools in the 1970s, it was to develop leisure, and so children could learn how to swim,'' Mr. Perrin said. Some towns did not keep up their pools in the following decades. Marseille, France's second-largest city, lost half of its municipal pools in the span of ten years, according to the court of auditors.

The same day in July that Montlhéry closed its pool, which is now emptied of its water, Marseille dropped the admission fees on its pools, to make the heat wave that was engulfing the city more bearable.

''I am making pools free from today until the heat wave ends,'' the mayor, Benoît Payan, wrote on Twitter. ''Take care of yourselves and of your loved ones,'' he added, as temperatures reached 104 degrees Fahrenheit in the city.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/16/world/europe/france-public-pools.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/16/world/europe/france-public-pools.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: A public pool in Lyon, France, during a heat wave last summer. (PHOTOGRAPH BY OLIVIER CHASSIGNOLE/A.F.P. -- GETTY IMAGES) This article appeared in print on page A5.

**Load-Date:** August 17, 2023

**End of Document**



[***Office Cleaners Are Girding for Strike Over Health Care***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69KY-89N1-DXY4-X4B1-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

November 11, 2023 Saturday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; National Desk; Pg. 17

**Length:** 1352 words

**Byline:** By Stefanos Chen

**Body**

The office cleaners' union is preparing to walk out to protect their health care benefits, amid the worst commercial real estate slump in decades.

Danuta Klimas, an office cleaner, went back to work in Lower Manhattan days after the Sept. 11 attacks, as toxic dust from ground zero hung in the air. She was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer years later.

At the height of the Covid-19 pandemic, she was working in the same building, even after discovering that she had interstitial lung disease.

But at least, she said, her medical bills were covered. For decades, her employer has offered health care plans with no employee premiums or deductibles, saving her thousands of dollars a year.

Now Ms. Klimas, 66, along with thousands of others who mopped, dusted and scrubbed 1,300 buildings during the worst of the pandemic, are sending a message as their bosses signal that they may cut back on health care contributions: Don't mess with our benefits.

''We will fight for this health insurance. It's not negotiable,'' Ms. Klimas said. ''We deserve it.''

The showdown pits a group of essential workers, who toiled at great personal risk while most white-collar workers remained safer at home, against real estate firms that are struggling with the highest ever office vacancy rates and plummeting property values.

The cleaners are part of 32BJ SEIU, a union that represents 20,000 commercial maintenance workers whose four-year contract with landlords and cleaning companies is set to expire Dec. 31. The fight could be a harbinger for both the future of the office market, and one of the many ***working-class*** industries reliant on its recovery.

On Thursday, union members gathered at demonstrations in Midtown Manhattan and at Zuccotti Park downtown, to kick off what many believe will be a protracted fight -- and perhaps their first strike in 27 years.

Chants filled the air as they rallied for a new contract: ''If we don't get it? Shut it down!''

In addition to protecting their health coverage, the workers are seeking wage increases, retirement fund improvements and other benefits.

''This is really about the future of working people in this city,'' said Manny Pastreich, the union president, who expects that real estate companies will target employee health benefits because of the moribund office sector.

A third of the union's office cleaners were temporarily laid off from April to June 2020, when offices were mostly closed, and about 10 percent of the jobs, or 2,000 jobs total, never came back, in part because of the persistence of remote work.

At least 40 union members who worked in commercial buildings died of Covid, he said.

The Realty Advisory Board on Labor Relations, the body that bargains on behalf of real estate owners, managers and cleaning companies, has already signaled that cutbacks are coming.

''Our current contracts are not sustainable,'' Howard Rothschild, the board president, said, noting that the cleaners are among a small minority of American workers who do not pay an annual premium for employer health care.

Mr. Rothschild also noted that the city's office maintenance workers were among the highest paid in the country, with a typical wage of $29 an hour, or about $61,300 a year. The city's median household income is about $75,000.

The union contract covers workers -- mostly cleaners, but also some porters and repair people -- at a wide range of buildings, including office towers in Hudson Yards and the World Trade Center, tourist attractions like the Empire State Building, universities and transit hubs, and The New York Times headquarters.

Health care costs have surged this year for both employers and workers, thanks to inflation and a rebound in medical service demand, according to a recent survey by KFF, a nonprofit health policy research group.

Workers paid an average $6,575 in 2023 for a family premium, an increase of nearly $500 since last year. Nearly a quarter of employers surveyed said they would require workers to pay more in the next two years because of their own rising costs, said Matthew Rae, a co-author of the report.

Godwin Dillon, 42, an office cleaner and single father who lives in Bushwick, Brooklyn, felt those costs acutely when he was temporarily laid off in 2020 from his job at 85 Broad Street. (Tenants at the building include WeWork, the office space company that filed for bankruptcy this week.)

Mr. Dillon, who is diabetic, typically pays $20 for 90 days of insulin, but when his employer-paid health care expired near the end of his unemployment, he said he had to pay $600 for a month's supply.

And while he has since returned to work, his rent, $1,700 at the start of the pandemic, has climbed to $2,100 a month, a 23 percent jump in three years.

''You can't do it off a single income no more,'' he said.

The negotiations begin at one of the worst times for the commercial real estate industry. In Manhattan, 22 percent of office space was vacant last quarter, or about twice the rate of empty space before the pandemic, said Stijn Van Nieuwerburgh, a professor of finance at Columbia Business School who tracks the commercial market.

Coupled with high interest rates and falling rents, real estate firms are ''in the most difficult environment for offices that has maybe ever existed,'' he said, estimating that New York City offices were worth 42 percent less than before the pandemic.

''These companies are struggling for survival,'' he said. ''And when you're in survival mode, there isn't a whole lot to give.''

The union has said its commercial building maintenance division is prepared to go on strike. It would be the first time since the winter of 1996, when the group picketed outside of office buildings for a month in the cold and snow to demand higher pay.

Building managers hired temporary workers, but dysfunction was rampant: Garbage piled up, bathrooms were filthy and some white-collar workers began bringing their own toilet paper to the office.

The office market has since changed dramatically. With most offices already engaged in hybrid work schedules, disruptions to building services could spur more employees to work remotely, muting the strike's effect, said Dr. Van Nieuwerburgh. But he said a strike could also hurt commercial landlords, who are desperate to bring people back to the office.

The strike would be most visible in Manhattan, but its effects might be more strongly felt in the other boroughs, where the majority of workers live, including 4,600 in the Bronx and 4,500 in Queens, according to union figures.

Oralia Mendoza, 50, who lives in East Elmhurst, Queens, has been working full time as a cleaner in a Manhattan office building for five years. Ms. Mendoza, originally from Ixtapa Zihuatanejo, on the Pacific Coast of Mexico, was previously paid $10 an hour, plus tips, as a waitress in a Queens restaurant.

The cleaner job, which pays around $29 an hour, has been a huge boon, she said, but added health care costs would make it hard for her and her 15-year-old daughter to afford their $2,450 a month apartment.

''The prices don't go much lower than what we are paying,'' she said in Spanish. ''We would be forced to look for a second job or move.''

For Ena Softley, 66, who has been a New York City office cleaner for 37 years, there is also a moral imperative. Early in the pandemic, she said she became gravely ill with Covid while on the job, and was out of work from March to May 2020. Her doctor warned her not to return.

But she had to come back, not least of all to keep her medical coverage. She credits her health care plan for getting her access to quality medicine and doctors, with no major out-of-pocket expenses. She needs regular checkups for lingering health issues.

''We are begging America and New York to see -- we are in service jobs, we work so hard, we sacrificed our lives when Covid came,'' she said. ''But we do it because we choose to serve, and we love our jobs.''

''If they roll back health care,'' she said, ''it would be devastating.''

Wesley Parnell contributed reporting.Wesley Parnell contributed reporting.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/09/nyregion/office-cleaners-union-strike.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/09/nyregion/office-cleaners-union-strike.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: ''We will fight for this health insurance. It's not negotiable,'' Danuta Klimas, an office cleaner, said. ''We deserve it.'' (PHOTOGRAPH BY MICHELLE V. AGINS/THE NEW YORK TIMES)

Oralia Mendoza said having to pay health care costs might force her to move from her East Elmhurst, Queens, apartment.

Ena Softley became seriously ill with Covid in 2020, making the health coverage her employer provides essential. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY JANICE CHUNG FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A17.

**Load-Date:** November 11, 2023

**End of Document**



[***When France Needs Them Most, Its Public Pools Appear Fragile***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68YC-64J1-DXY4-X1R9-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

August 16, 2023 Wednesday 09:27 EST

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**Section:** WORLD; europe

**Length:** 907 words

**Byline:** Juliette Guéron-Gabrielle

**Highlight:** As temperatures rise, a vast but aging system is feeling the strains of rising energy costs, increasing water scarcity and mounting pressure on public budgets.

**Body**

As temperatures rise, a vast but aging system is feeling the strains of rising energy costs, increasing water scarcity and mounting pressure on public budgets.

Last month, in the heat of summer, Annette Schreiner got to her local pool just in time to see a police officer posting a decree informing residents that the pool, closed since December, would not be reopening.

“When the town learned that the pool was closing, people didn’t understand,” Ms. Schreiner said. “Why would you close a pool when there’s a heat wave every summer?”

The reason, said officials where she lives in Montlhéry, just south of Paris, is that the pool had become too expensive to maintain. An increasing number of municipalities in France, where energy has become more expensive and water is ever scarcer, are coming to the same conclusion.

The problem is limited to a relative handful of municipalities in a vast system with more than 6,000 public pools and open-air basins in France, a network denser than those in neighboring countries like Germany and Britain.

But at least a dozen towns and cities across the country have shuttered public pools this summer, reflecting the intersection of several crises for France — rising energy costs, extreme temperatures and mounting pressure on public budgets — that are felt most acutely in low-income and ***working-class*** areas.

Last winter, pools were hit particularly hard by the energy crisis that gripped Europe, as the war in Ukraine forced the Continent to stop relying on cheap Russian gas. At that time, Vert Marine, a private company in charge of some French municipal pools, shut 30 of them for three weeks.

“It was a unilateral, brutal decision,” said Guillaume Perrin, who runs a program to help French counties save energy.

Since then, many pools have reduced their water temperature to save energy and cut their opening hours. Others, like the communes of Descartes and Le Blanc, both in central France, have not reopened their public pools this summer. Still others, like Montlhéry, closed their pools indefinitely. [*Montlhéry said*](https://www.montlhery.fr/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/communique-presse06102022.pdf) the spike in energy prices increased the cost of running the pool by a third, as compared to the previous year.

Rising energy costs were frequently cited as the reason for the closures, but others included a national shortage of lifeguards, temporary renovations, or leaks and other problems deemed too costly to fix.

“This winter acted as a true wake-up call for towns,” Mr. Perrin said. They kept calling him, asking for quick fixes to make their pools more energy efficient. That was not always possible.

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But as heat waves become more frequent in France, conflicts over spending priorities could become more common. Just opposite Montlhéry’s closed pool, there is a brand-new soccer stadium. “They found money for soccer, but not for swimming,” Ms. Schreiner said.

It is likely that not all local residents will be affected equally by the closure. “The poorer you are, the more time you spend in the public pool,” said Cornelia Hummel, a Swiss sociologist who has studied the ways municipal pools create a sense of community.

Poor suburbs on the edges of cities have the fewest number of public pools in France, according to [*the nation’s court of auditors, which is in charge of making sure public money is put to good use*](https://www.ccomptes.fr/sites/default/files/2018-01/13-piscines-centres-aquatiques-publics-Tome-1.pdf).

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Warming temperatures are helping to deplete the groundwater in France. Earlier this year, several towns in the Var and Ardèche regions in the south refused to issue building permits because their water resources couldn’t accommodate any new demand, their mayors said. During a heat wave last July, the Indre region banned the filling of private pools to save water.

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The same day in July that Montlhéry closed its pool, which is now emptied of its water, Marseille dropped the admission fees on its pools, to make the heat wave that was engulfing the city more bearable.

“I am making pools free from today until the heat wave ends,” the mayor, Benoît Payan, wrote on Twitter. “Take care of yourselves and of your loved ones,” he added, as temperatures reached 104 degrees Fahrenheit in the city.

PHOTO: A public pool in Lyon, France, during a heat wave last summer. (PHOTOGRAPH BY OLIVIER CHASSIGNOLE/A.F.P. — GETTY IMAGES) This article appeared in print on page A5.

**Load-Date:** September 20, 2023

**End of Document**



[***Autoworkers Widen Strike To Key Plant For S.U.V.s***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69G9-KM51-JBG3-60NB-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

October 25, 2023 Wednesday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section B; Column 0; Business/Financial Desk; Pg. 1

**Length:** 1253 words

**Byline:** By Jack Ewing and Neal E. Boudette

**Body**

The United Automobile Workers on Tuesday expanded its strike to General Motors' largest U.S. plant a day after striking at a Ram truck plant.

The United Automobile Workers union shut down production at General Motors' largest U.S. factory on Tuesday, significantly stepping up pressure on the large U.S. automakers as signs multiplied that the six-week strike is taking a toll on profits.

The union told 5,000 workers at G.M.'s plant in Arlington, Texas, to stop working on the same day that the automaker announced a drop in its third-quarter profit and said U.A.W. work stoppages, which have also hit Ford Motor and Stellantis, had cost it $800 million so far.

The strike in Arlington continued the union's strategy of targeting some of the carmaker's most profitable vehicles. The Texas factory makes large sport utility vehicles including the Chevrolet Tahoe, GMC Yukon and Cadillac Escalade.

Before the Tuesday expansion, there had been signs that the union and G.M. were close to an agreement. Some analysts said the union's decision to raise the stakes was part of an endgame strategy to squeeze the last dollar from the company.

The U.A.W. president, Shawn Fain, ''has been saying he still had some levers to pull to push the companies, and now he's pulling them,'' said Arthur Wheaton, director of labor studies at Cornell's School of Industrial and Labor Relations. ''So I think this is the union's final push to the companies, saying, 'Let's get this deal done.'''

But it is also possible the companies and the union are still far from striking deals and the U.A.W. is demonstrating that it still has plenty of cards to play.

''My gut feeling is that they're not close and this is trying to impose more cost and say, 'Look, you guys have to get closer to what we want or we'll keeping doing this,''' said Patricia Anderson, a professor of economics at Dartmouth College.

On Monday, the union struck a Ram pickup truck plant, the largest U.S. factory operated by Stellantis, which also owns Jeep and Chrysler. The U.A.W. has also struck Ford Motor's largest plant, in Louisville, Ky., which produces large pickup trucks and the Lincoln Navigator S.U.V.

''Another record quarter, another record year; as we've said for months: record profits equal record contracts,'' Mr. Fain said in a statement. ''It's time G.M. workers, and the whole ***working class***, get their fair share.''

G.M. executives had said earlier on Tuesday that they hoped to reach a tentative agreement with the union soon. The Texas walkout dimmed those hopes.

The longer the strike lasts, the greater the risk it will become a drag on the U.S. economy, or make it harder for consumers to find the vehicles they want.

The automakers have been keen to point out the ripple effects that the strikes are having on other workers. Stellantis, the maker of Chrysler and Jeep, said on Tuesday that it laid off 525 workers at two Michigan factories, in Sterling and Warren, that make parts for Ram pickup trucks that are not needed while the assembly line is shut down by the strike.

All told, Stellantis has temporarily laid off more than 2,000 workers because of the strikes. Ford has laid off more than 3,000 workers because of the strike, according to the company. G.M. has laid off about 2,500, including about 140 at a factory in Ohio who made parts for the factory in Arlington and were let go on Tuesday. Another 3,000 workers at G.M. suppliers are temporarily out of work because of the strike, according to the company.

''We are disappointed by the escalation of this unnecessary and irresponsible strike,'' G.M. said in a statement. ''It is harming our team members who are sacrificing their livelihoods and having negative ripple effects on our dealers, suppliers and the communities that rely on us.''

G.M., the largest automaker based in the United States, said on Tuesday that the strike was partly to blame for a 7 percent decline in profit from a year earlier. The company reported that it earned $3.1 billion from July through September. Including the Texas factory, the strike has idled three of the company's vehicle plants and 18 spare-parts warehouses.

Before the U.A.W. expanded the strike, G.M. said Tuesday that work stoppages had lowered its earnings before interest and taxes by about $200 million in the final weeks of the third quarter and by about $600 million since the fourth quarter started on Oct. 1. The automaker estimated that the strike could cost it $200 million a week, though that number will likely grow now that workers at the Texas plant are on strike.

''They've demanded a record contract -- and that's exactly what we've offered for weeks now: a historic contract with record wage increases, record job security and world-class health care,'' the company's chief executive, Mary T. Barra, said in a letter to investors. ''It's an offer that rewards our team members but does not put our company and their jobs at risk.''

G.M. has offered workers a 23 percent increase in pay over four years, lifting the standard wage for veteran employees to more than $40 an hour from $32; newer workers earn a lower rate. Employees working 40 hours a week at the top rate would earn about $84,000 a year, not including extra pay for overtime or profit-sharing bonuses, which have topped $10,000 in the past two years.

Ford and Stellantis have made similar offers.

The union had initially demanded raises of 40 percent, saying that more modest increases will not make up for the erosion in living standards that its members have suffered from inflation and from concessions they made in past contracts.

Mr. Fain has taken a more confrontational approach to negotiations than his predecessors. He has portrayed talks with G.M., Ford and Stellantis as the first step in a broad effort to organize workers at Tesla, Toyota, Honda and other companies which do not have unions at their U.S. factories.

In a video streamed online on Friday, Mr. Fain said that G.M., Ford and Stellantis had not yet put their best offer on the table. ''Despite all the bluster about how much the companies have stretched,'' he said, ''there's clearly still room to move.''

Ms. Anderson noted that Mr. Fain was newly elected, in March, and that there was a risk he could have miscalculated. ''The U.A.W. president is new and not very experienced,'' she said. ''He may be holding out for an unrealistic settlement that just may be costly for both parties, and ending up where they could have settled today.''

Striking the automakers' largest and most profitable plants sends a signal to union members that the U.A.W. leaders have done everything in their power to get the best deal, Mr. Wheaton of Cornell said.

''This shows the members that, 'Look, we took out their biggest moneymakers and pushed them hard as we could,''' he said. ''Then, if there is a tentative deal, they can tell the members: 'You better ratify this. Don't vote this down.'''

This month, nearly 4,000 U.A.W. members at Mack Trucks voted down a tentative agreement that the U.A.W. negotiated with the company, a subsidiary of Volvo Trucks, and went on strike. Union officials are now seeking to secure better terms from the company.

The calendar is probably also an important consideration. Mr. Fain and the union's negotiators have to be careful about asking workers to go into the colder months and the holiday season with only the $500 a week in strike pay, Mr. Wheaton said.

''Walking a picket line in November in Detroit is no fun,'' he said.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/24/business/economy/uaw-general-motors-strike.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/24/business/economy/uaw-general-motors-strike.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: Shawn Fain, president of the United Automobile Workers, with striking autoworkers in Wayne, Mich., in September. (PHOTOGRAPH BY CYDNI ELLEDGE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (B3) This article appeared in print on page B1, B3.

**Load-Date:** October 25, 2023

**End of Document**



[***For Max Beckmann, Art’s Ironist, Crisis and Rediscovery; Art Review***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69KS-9VY1-DXY4-X3CF-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

November 10, 2023 Friday 16:40 EST

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**Section:** ARTS; design

**Length:** 1379 words

**Byline:** Jason Farago

**Highlight:** A real vigor emerges in this exhibition at the Neue Galerie, which focuses on the painter’s unflinching Weimar scenes.

**Body**

A real vigor emerges in this exhibition at the Neue Galerie, which focuses on the painter’s unflinching Weimar scenes.

Before the war (the First World War, I mean; with so many wars one can lose count), Max Beckmann was painting clean, traditionalist self-portraits and lush pictures of bathers by the sea. He was a neoconservative with no time for Matisse or Picasso, and certainly no interest in the coming of abstraction. Then, when the war broke out, the artist volunteered for the medical corps of the Imperial German Army. He got posted to Flanders, where he witnessed the murderous, meaningless second [*Battle of Ypres*](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/11/10/arts/design/ypres-exhibitions-world-war-i.html). He sketched the Belgian landscape, and the doctors and orderlies.

A war offers no exceptions for those with an artistic temperament, and painters would fight, and die, for both the Allies and the Axis. Otto Dix, Beckmann’s fellow ironist, enlisted at once and served in the artillery corps. Franz Marc, whose expressionist paintings Beckmann always disliked, joined the cavalry, painted military camouflage, and died at Verdun. The painter Umberto Boccioni and the poet Wilfred Owen, on the other side of the front lines, would also not live to see the armistice.

“I have been drawing,” Beckmann wrote to his wife one evening, after a day caring for men who’d survived the trenches. “That protects one from death and danger.” It was wishful thinking. Though he never served at the front, Beckmann had a nervous breakdown by the end of 1915. The war went on, but Beckmann, now in Frankfurt, began painting biblical scenes with nightmarish directness: a sharp-angled “[*Descent from the Cross*](https://www.moma.org/collection/works/79759),” a color-starved “Christ and the Sinner,” crushed into tight spaces, sapped of all his early emotion. By 1918 it would all be over. A revolution would come to Germany, as it had already come to Beckmann’s easel.

Three color-starved wartime pictures sit at the opening of [*“Max Beckmann: The Formative Years, 1915-1925,”*](https://www.neuegalerie.org/maxbeckmannformativeyears) a concentrated dose of alienated modernism now at the Neue Galerie. The artist has always been well-represented in this city’s museums — a full [*MoMA retrospective in 2003*](https://www.nytimes.com/2003/06/27/arts/art-review-chuckling-darkly-at-disaster.html), a smaller one [*at the Met in 2016-17*](https://www.nytimes.com/2016/10/21/arts/design/review-max-beckmann-in-new-york-a-belated-but-full-blown-homage-to-a-german-modernist.html), and prime positions in Weimar politics-and-parties shows like the Met’s 2006 “[*Glitter and Doom*](https://www.nytimes.com/2006/11/24/arts/design/24germ.html)” — in part because Beckmann was an adopted New Yorker. Condemned by the Third Reich as a “degenerate” artist, he spent his later life in the Netherlands and eventually the United States.

This new show, however, zooms in on what he made in his 30s, before the Nazis came to power. It’s a show about crisis and rediscovery, and about how the romantic and expressionistic aspirations (or pretensions) of the early 1900s would be distilled into the hard-boiled objectivity of the Weimar years. The midcareer focus is tight, maybe a little too tight; I wished for a few very early works, and many more of Beckmann’s wartime drawings, to illustrate the scale of his break with the past. Several of the paintings, including two self-portraits and the cold cafe scene “[*Paris Society*](https://www.guggenheim.org/artwork/503),” appeared in exhibitions at this very museum just a few years back.

Yet a real vigor emerges in this show — curated by the historian Olaf Peters, who also put together the Neue’s impressive exhibitions on [*Weimar Berlin*](https://www.nytimes.com/2015/10/02/arts/design/hope-and-dread-are-infused-in-berlin-metropolis.html) and on [*painting and politics in the 1930s*](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/04/05/arts/design/-before-the-fall-review-german-and-austrian-art-neue-galerie.html) — as it moves from the war years (staged in a prologue on the second floor) into the 1920s (in the main exhibition galleries on the third). In small woodcuts and drypoint etchings of the early 1920s, the shallow spaces and hard angles Beckmann initially applied to Christian motifs get redeployed for portraits, party scenes and acid views of Weimar society. Look at “[*In the Tram*](https://www.artic.edu/artworks/17866/in-the-tram),” a Berlin public transport etching from 1922 and one of many scenes Beckmann made of departures and arrivals. A woman at left crosses her bony hands. A grown man at right is sucking his thumb. At center is a war veteran, whose low-slung homburg casts a shadow over his heavy eyes: a dark band that contrasts with the white gauze wrapping his absent nose.

Unlike Dix, who was awarded the Iron Cross for his frontline service, Beckmann did not depict the war head-on. He preferred satire, effrontery, and a certain artistic sacerdotalism, especially in his portfolio of 10 dense lithographs with the memorable title “Hell.” It dates from 1919, when Berlin was still in a state of post-revolutionary violence (that’s why the new national assembly had to meet in Weimar). Dancers in a nightclub become gunners in the street. Torturers, dressed both in ***working-class*** rags and rich men’s finery, rampage through a family’s house. Under a lamppost we see Beckmann himself, unmistakable with his sharp jaw and bowler hat, gripping the arm of a fellow veteran whose sunken eye and cross-hatched left cheek suggest a brutal mutilation.

The real hell, for Beckmann, was the one to which survivors were condemned — and the Neue Galerie is displaying not just the full portfolio (though some sheets are hard to see high over the fireplace) but also preliminary drawings, including an extraordinary cartoon of [*the murder of Rosa Luxemburg*](https://collections.mfa.org/objects/261739), her arms outstretched like in that earlier “Descent from the Cross.”

The imbalance and precarity that Beckmann pictured in the “Hell” portfolio recurs, more literally and comically, in an awkward series of narrow vertical-format paintings of circus performers and funfair revelers. “[*Carnival*](https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/beckmann-carnival-t03294)” (1920), inspired by a famous German altarpiece, imagines two of the artist’s friends in commedia dell’arte costume, while on the floor a man in a monkey mask grasps a trumpet with his feet. (In this show’s catalog, Peters identifies the masked figure as Beckmann himself.)

In “The Trapeze” (1923), a tangle of bodies with hints of Léger, no fewer than seven acrobats crowd one another’s motions, tumbling one over the other in a hopelessly failed circus act. Scrunched tight against the picture plane, like butterflies under glass, these aerialists and saltimbanques only wink at the upheavals and uncertainties Beckmann depicted in the “Hell” series. But they do suggest the way to the major achievements of Beckmann’s later career — above all “[*Departure*](https://www.moma.org/collection/works/78367),” his triptych of sailing noblemen and bound prisoners, which you can go see at MoMA.

I’ve never had a great passion for Beckmann’s carnival and variety-show pictures. They’re too eccentric for me, too illustrative, and, what can I say, I prefer a dirty Berlin nightclub to a day at the circus. The more urgent paintings and prints here are those that hold fast to the greatest virtue of German art of the years after World War I: Sachlichkeit, or “objectivity,” a view of society purged of emotion, which saw the substance of things on their surfaces. That sober and analytical gaze — a “naturalism against one’s own self,” as Beckmann put it in 1917 — was an artistic project born from disastrous war and political disenchantment, and what its practitioners understood was that theirs was not a time for dreaming. The time had come to look hard, and get real.

Max Beckmann: The Formative Years, 1915-1925

Through Jan. 15 at the Neue Galerie, 1048 Fifth Avenue, Manhattan; 212-628-6200, [*neuegalerie.org*](https://www.neuegalerie.org/maxbeckmannformativeyears).

Max Beckmann: The Formative Years, 1915-1925 Through Jan. 15 at the Neue Galerie in Manhattan; 212-628-6200, neuegalerie.org.

PHOTOS: Max Beckmann’s analytical gaze: “Self-Portrait With White Cap, 1926,” on display at the Neue Galerie. (PHOTOGRAPH BY ARTISTS RIGHTS SOCIETY (ARS), NEW YORK; VIA CHRISTIE’S IMAGES) (C1); Above, from left, three of Max Beckmann’s nightmarish biblical scenes: “Descent From the Cross,” “Adam and Eve” and “Christ and the Sinner,” all from 1917. Below, “Paris Society,” begun in 1925 and reworked in 1931 and again in 1947. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY ANNIE SCHLECHTER/NEUE GALERIE; ARTISTS RIGHTS SOCIETY (ARS), NEW YORK; VIA SOLOMON R. GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM); bove, “In the Tram,” from 1922. The shallow spaces and hard angles Beckmann initially applied to Christian motifs were reapplied to acid views of Weimar society. Right, “Trapeze” (1923) shows acrobats tumbling one over the other in a hopelessly failed circus act. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY ARTISTS RIGHTS SOCIETY (ARS), NEW YORK; VIA DRYPOINT MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS, BOSTON; ARTISTS RIGHTS SOCIETY (ARS), NEW YORK; VIA TOLEDO MUSEUM OF ART) (C2)This article appeared in print on page C1, C2.

**Load-Date:** November 11, 2023

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[***Lombardo Ousts Sisolak In Nevada Governor Race***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:66V9-Y1T1-DXY4-X4BS-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

November 12, 2022 Saturday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; Politics; Pg. 13

**Length:** 319 words

**Byline:** By Jennifer Medina

**Body**

Joseph Lombardo, the Clark County sheriff, ran as a law-and-order Republican who would focus on reducing regulations.

LAS VEGAS -- Joseph Lombardo, the Clark County sheriff who rose to prominence after the 2017 mass shooting in Las Vegas, defeated Gov. Steve Sisolak of Nevada, a Democrat who faced intense criticism over pandemic-era shutdowns, according to The Associated Press.

Mr. Sisolak conceded to Mr. Lombardo shortly before The A.P. called the race on Friday. ''It appears we will fall a percentage point or so short of winning,'' he said in a statement. ''Obviously that is not the outcome I want, but I believe in our election system, in democracy and honoring the will of Nevada voters. So whether you voted for me or Sheriff Lombardo, it is important that we now come together to continue moving the state forward.''

Mr. Lombardo focused much of his campaign tying Mr. Sisolak to President Biden, who won the state in 2020, but whose approval ratings have been dismal. Mr. Lombardo was endorsed by former President Donald J. Trump during the Republican primary this year, but did not make his policies or personality central to his campaign in the fall.

Instead, Mr. Lombardo presented himself as a law-and-order Republican who would focus on reducing regulations in the state, where the economy remains largely dependent on the gambling industry. Public opinion polls repeatedly showed that voters in Nevada, with a large ***working-class*** population, viewed the economy as the most important issue.

Economic conditions are mixed in the state. Mr. Sisolak often focused on the recovery since the start of the pandemic more than two years ago, as unemployment dropped to 4.4 percent from 28.5 percent in April of 2020. But inflation remains stubbornly high, and Mr. Lombardo consistently attacked what he called ''Bidenflation'' and high gasoline prices, which he similarly attributed to Democrats.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2022/11/11/us/politics/nevada-governor-sisolak-lombardo.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/11/11/us/politics/nevada-governor-sisolak-lombardo.html)

**Graphic**

This article appeared in print on page A13.

**Load-Date:** November 12, 2022

**End of Document**



[***U.A.W.’s Expanding Strikes Could Signal an Endgame or a Long Struggle***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69G4-X071-DXY4-X023-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

October 24, 2023 Tuesday 12:38 EST

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**Section:** BUSINESS; economy

**Length:** 1275 words

**Byline:** Jack Ewing and Neal E. Boudette

**Highlight:** The United Automobile Workers on Tuesday expanded its strike to General Motors’ largest U.S. plant a day after striking at a Ram truck plant.

**Body**

The United Automobile Workers on Tuesday expanded its strike to General Motors’ largest U.S. plant a day after striking at a Ram truck plant.

The United Automobile Workers union shut down production at General Motors’ largest U.S. factory on Tuesday, significantly stepping up pressure on the large U.S. automakers as signs multiplied that the six-week strike is taking a toll on profits.

The union told 5,000 workers at G.M.’s plant in Arlington, Texas, to stop working on the same day that [*the automaker announced a drop in its third-quarter profit*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/24/business/economy/general-motors-earnings.html) and said U.A.W. work stoppages, which have also hit Ford Motor and Stellantis, had cost it $800 million so far.

The strike in Arlington continued the union’s strategy of targeting some of the carmaker’s most profitable vehicles. The Texas factory makes large sport utility vehicles including the Chevrolet Tahoe, GMC Yukon and Cadillac Escalade.

Before the Tuesday expansion, there had been signs that the union and G.M. were close to an agreement. Some analysts said the union’s decision to raise the stakes was part of an endgame strategy to squeeze the last dollar from the company.

The U.A.W. president, Shawn Fain, “has been saying he still had some levers to pull to push the companies, and now he’s pulling them,” said Arthur Wheaton, director of labor studies at Cornell’s School of Industrial and Labor Relations. “So I think this is the union’s final push to the companies, saying, ‘Let’s get this deal done.’”

But it is also possible the companies and the union are still far from striking deals and the U.A.W. is demonstrating that it still has plenty of cards to play.

“My gut feeling is that they’re not close and this is trying to impose more cost and say, ‘Look, you guys have to get closer to what we want or we’ll keeping doing this,’” said Patricia Anderson, a professor of economics at Dartmouth College.

On Monday, the union struck a Ram pickup truck plant, the largest U.S. factory operated by Stellantis, which also owns Jeep and Chrysler. The U.A.W. has also struck Ford Motor’s largest plant, in Louisville, Ky., which produces large pickup trucks and the Lincoln Navigator S.U.V.

“Another record quarter, another record year; as we’ve said for months: record profits equal record contracts,” Mr. Fain said in a statement. “It’s time G.M. workers, and the whole ***working class***, get their fair share.”

G.M. executives had said earlier on Tuesday that they hoped to reach a tentative agreement with the union soon. The Texas walkout dimmed those hopes.

The longer the strike lasts, the greater the risk it will become a drag on the U.S. economy, or make it harder for consumers to find the vehicles they want.

The automakers have been keen to point out the ripple effects that the strikes are having on other workers. Stellantis, the maker of Chrysler and Jeep, said on Tuesday that it laid off 525 workers at two Michigan factories, in Sterling and Warren, that make parts for Ram pickup trucks that are not needed while the assembly line is shut down by the strike.

All told, Stellantis has temporarily laid off more than 2,000 workers because of the strikes. Ford has laid off more than 3,000 workers because of the strike, according to the company. G.M. has laid off about 2,500, including about 140 at a factory in Ohio who made parts for the factory in Arlington and were let go on Tuesday. Another 3,000 workers at G.M. suppliers are temporarily out of work because of the strike, according to the company.

“We are disappointed by the escalation of this unnecessary and irresponsible strike,” G.M. said in a statement. “It is harming our team members who are sacrificing their livelihoods and having negative ripple effects on our dealers, suppliers and the communities that rely on us.”

G.M., the largest automaker based in the United States, said on Tuesday that the strike was partly to blame for a 7 percent decline in profit from a year earlier. The company reported that it earned $3.1 billion from July through September. Including the Texas factory, the strike has idled three of the company’s vehicle plants and 18 spare-parts warehouses.

Before the U.A.W. expanded the strike, G.M. said Tuesday that work stoppages had lowered its earnings before interest and taxes by about $200 million in the final weeks of the third quarter and by about $600 million since the fourth quarter started on Oct. 1. The automaker estimated that the strike could cost it $200 million a week, though that number will likely grow now that workers at the Texas plant are on strike.

“They’ve demanded a record contract — and that’s exactly what we’ve offered for weeks now: a historic contract with record wage increases, record job security and world-class health care,” the company’s chief executive, Mary T. Barra, said in a letter to investors. “It’s an offer that rewards our team members but does not put our company and their jobs at risk.”

G.M. has offered workers a 23 percent increase in pay over four years, lifting the standard wage for veteran employees to more than $40 an hour from $32; newer workers earn a lower rate. Employees working 40 hours a week at the top rate would earn about $84,000 a year, not including extra pay for overtime or profit-sharing bonuses, which have topped $10,000 in the past two years.

Ford and Stellantis have made similar offers.

The union had initially demanded raises of 40 percent, saying that more modest increases will not make up for the erosion in living standards that its members have suffered from inflation and from concessions they made in past contracts.

Mr. Fain has taken a more confrontational approach to negotiations than his predecessors. He has portrayed talks with G.M., Ford and Stellantis as the first step in a broad effort to organize workers at Tesla, Toyota, Honda and other companies which do not have unions at their U.S. factories.

In a video streamed online on Friday, Mr. Fain said that G.M., Ford and Stellantis had not yet put their best offer on the table. “Despite all the bluster about how much the companies have stretched,” he said, “there’s clearly still room to move.”

Ms. Anderson noted that Mr. Fain was newly elected, in March, and that there was a risk he could have miscalculated. “The U.A.W. president is new and not very experienced,” she said. “He may be holding out for an unrealistic settlement that just may be costly for both parties, and ending up where they could have settled today.”

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“This shows the members that, ‘Look, we took out their biggest moneymakers and pushed them hard as we could,’” he said. “Then, if there is a tentative deal, they can tell the members: ‘You better ratify this. Don’t vote this down.’”

This month, nearly 4,000 U.A.W. members at Mack Trucks [*voted down a tentative agreement*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/09/business/economy/uaw-mack-trucks-strike.html) that the U.A.W. negotiated with the company, a subsidiary of Volvo Trucks, and went on strike. Union officials are now seeking to secure better terms from the company.

The calendar is probably also an important consideration. Mr. Fain and the union’s negotiators have to be careful about asking workers to go into the colder months and the holiday season with only the $500 a week in strike pay, Mr. Wheaton said.

“Walking a picket line in November in Detroit is no fun,” he said.

PHOTO: Shawn Fain, president of the United Automobile Workers, with striking autoworkers in Wayne, Mich., in September. (PHOTOGRAPH BY CYDNI ELLEDGE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (B3) This article appeared in print on page B1, B3.

**Load-Date:** October 25, 2023

**End of Document**



[***Lacey Township, N.J.: A Waterfront Community With a Working-Class Vibe; Living in***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6306-V0C1-DXY4-X3RV-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

June 23, 2021 Wednesday 22:54 EST

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**Section:** REALESTATE

**Length:** 1677 words

**Byline:** Jill P. Capuzzo

**Highlight:** In this Ocean County township, where housing prices are substantially less than in surrounding areas, ‘everybody’s so nice and down to earth.’

**Body**

In this Ocean County township, where housing prices are substantially less than in surrounding areas, ‘everybody’s so nice and down to earth.’

As he opened up the throttle of his new 23-foot motorboat, Casey Quinn boasted that he could get from the dock at the back of his house in Forked River, N.J., to the Barnegat Inlet in less than 18 minutes. A heavy chop on the bay, and a less than seaworthy passenger, forced him to slow down a bit, so the trip out to the Atlantic Ocean took about 20 minutes instead.

Ready waterway access is a primary draw for this Ocean County waterfront — but not beachfront — community. Also, it is separated from the Atlantic coast beaches by the bay, so housing prices are substantially less than those in areas fronting the ocean.

Defined by the three branches of the Forked (pronounced FORK-id) River, and the numerous channels off those branches, the Forked River area of Lacey Township is paradise for boaters, those who like to fish or clam, and anyone who gravitates toward the water.

“It’s on the map now,” said Mr. Quinn, 29, a real estate investor and sales agent whose grandfather came here in the 1960s. “I see the population changing, and it’s a little bittersweet. But you can’t blame anyone. It’s really everything you want, at an affordable price.”

When they decided to blend their Howell, N.J., households this spring, Angela Viviani and Robert Chambers were thrilled to discover that they could afford a waterfront home large enough to accommodate seven children in Lanoka Harbor, another community in Lacey Township. In April, they closed on a 3,000-square-foot house with five bedrooms and a loft, with a cash offer of $665,000 that was $20,000 above asking price.

“It’s just so beautiful and relaxing,” said Ms. Viviani, the marketing director for an independent living facility. “When you go to bed at night, you see the lights on the water, and the stars. I’ve never been so at peace and happy.”

Thomas Zemaneck, an avid fisherman, discovered the area two years ago while looking for a summer getaway from his home in Montville, N.J., about 100 miles north. He found a three-bedroom ranch house with a dock in Forked River, which he bought for $337,000. Most weekends, he and his son, Thomas Jr., take one of their boats out to the ocean to catch tuna, striped bass and even shark.

“I come down on a Friday night, and I can be out on the ocean early Saturday morning,” said Mr. Zemaneck, 63, a crane operator in New York City. “Everybody’s so nice and down to earth here. It’s like a ***working-class*** town, with a real homey feel.”

While there are million-dollar-plus homes facing Barnegat Bay, farther inland there are much more modest bungalows and ranch houses, and many now serve as homeowners’ primary residences. Jeff Connell, a real estate broker with Coldwell Banker, said that when he first came to Lacey Township as a child, about 20 percent of the population lived there year-round. Now, he estimated, it’s about 60 percent.

“At that time, the only way to make a living here was out on the bay, or in the woods,” said Mr. Connell, 64, referring to the fishing and hunting that shaped life in the township before expanded roadways brought commuters from North Jersey and New York City, and before the 1969 opening of the Oyster Creek nuclear power plant brought thousands more to the area. The cooling tower at the south end of Forked River is a physical landmark, but the nuclear reactor was shut down in 2018 and is in the process of being decommissioned.

“Now you’ve got people who come here to retire, plus families and working people — nurses and mechanics,” Mr. Connell said. “It’s an inexpensive place to live, with a lot of people who are just normal.”

What You’ll Find

Covering nearly 100 square miles (more than 82 of them land), Lacey Township comprises three communities: Forked River, where three quarters of the township’s 28,000 residents live, said Veronica Laureigh, the township administrator; Lanoka Harbor, another bay-front area north of Forked River, where 20 percent of the population lives; and Bamber Lake, in the Pine Barrens, where fewer than 1,000 people live. Almost two-thirds of the township is in the protected Pinelands, and most of the residential neighborhoods are east of the Garden State Parkway.

The north, middle and south branches of the Forked River and numerous tributaries provide ample opportunities to own waterfront homes, from elevated shoreline colonials built after Hurricane Sandy to the few remaining fishing shacks built by the developer Charles Pearl in the mid-20th century.

A different type of waterfront living can be found in the neighborhoods that surround the three Cedar Lakes west of Route 9, where houses are more modest and residents can walk to the freshwater beaches to swim or fish.

Running north to south, Route 9 serves as the commercial corridor of Lacey Township, with big-box stores and supermarkets at the northern end and diners, nurseries and ice cream shops farther south on the two-lane road. Most of the marinas lie along the northern and southern banks of Forked River’s north fork, which is also where some of the township’s best preserved Victorian homes are.

Three new townhouse complexes at the north end of Route 9, in various stages of development, will add about 400 new units in the next few years, said Ms. Laureigh, 54, a lifelong resident.

“I’d like to think of us as the sleepy little town we once were,” she added, “but we haven’t been that in eons.”

What You’ll Pay

As in so many suburban communities, the housing market in Lacey Township has heated up considerably since the pandemic struck. In early June, there were 88 homes on the market, 21 of them in contract. The most expensive was a five-bedroom waterfront house built in 1998 in Forked River, with an in-ground pool, listed for $1.6 million; the least expensive was a gutted two-bedroom house built in 1955 in Lanoka Harbor, listed for $150,000.

The average sale price through June 1 of this year was $342,045, up from $257,500 during the same period a year ago, according to the Monmouth Ocean Multiple Listing Service. Inventory is moving quickly, with the average days on the market shrinking from 52 last June to just 13 days currently.

Although the 800-acre nuclear power station has been shut down, the state still pays significant taxes to the township, reducing residential property taxes by about a third compared with those in neighboring towns, Ms. Laureigh said.

The Vibe

Whether it’s fishing in the bay or swimming in the lakes, an appreciation of water is nearly a prerequisite to living in Lacey. Much of the activity starts at one of the marinas along the north fork, where some spend the weekend aboard their boats, even if they live in town.

The next stop is Tices Shoals, a low-water sandbar in Barnegat Bay, just off the inland coast of Island Beach State Park. On a sunny Saturday, hundreds of boats drop anchor there for a floating party, with walkable access to the ocean beaches. By the end of the day, many end up at Captain’s Inn and Tiki Bar, a sprawling waterfront restaurant and bar that occupies both sides of East Lacey Road; if you’re lucky, you can pull into one of the restaurant’s 25 slips.

The lifeguard-protected Cedar Lake beaches are popular, and residents can buy a seasonal beach pass for just $5. A new floating playground with slides and obstacle courses on Lake Barnegat, called the Wibit, can be enjoyed for a separate fee.

The township offers swimming lessons, summer day camp and other recreational programs at its many parks. Landlubbers have several alternatives, from hiking trails in the Pine Barrens to the 7.6-mile Barnegat Branch Trail for biking and hiking along abandoned railroad lines.

The Schools

Lacey Township’s public school system has four elementary schools, three of which go up to fourth grade; the fourth, Mill Pond Elementary, in Lanoka Harbor, includes fifth and sixth grades. Students in seventh and eighth grades attend Lacey Township Middle School, which enrolls about 670 students, then continue on to Lacey Township High School, which has about 1,130 students in ninth through 12th grades.

In 2019-20, the average SAT scores at Lacey Township High School were 545 in reading and writing and 534 in math, compared with state averages of 536 in each. High school students can participate in the College Academy, where they can take up to 64 credits of college-level courses at Ocean County College and earn an associate degree while in high school.

Private school options, which are limited, include St. Joseph Grade School, a Roman Catholic school in neighboring Toms River, and Lighthouse Christian Academy, in Manahawkin. Both serve students in prekindergarten through eighth grade.

The Commute

Lacey Township is about 80 miles south of New York City. The drive takes about 90 minutes, depending on traffic.

The only public transportation option is the bus, which takes about two hours and 20 minutes. The trip starts at Route 9 and Lacey Road, on New Jersey Transit’s No. 559 line, and runs to Toms River, where riders transfer to the 319 or 137 line and continue on to Port Authority. The one-way fare is $22.75; a monthly pass is $496.

The History

The [*Forked River State Game Farm*](https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1972/11/05/103478058.html?pageNumber=112) was New Jersey’s first state-run game farm, on property just off Route 9 that the state’s fish and game commission acquired in 1912 from a former master of a sailing freighter. Every year, the farm would raise and release thousands of pheasants to be hunted by sportsmen and women who visited the farm. In later years, the game farm’s management sought the assistance of residents of the neighboring juvenile rehabilitation center. The game farm is now part of the Edwin B. Forsythe National Wildlife Refuge.

For weekly email updates on residential real estate news, [*sign up here*](https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1972/11/05/103478058.html?pageNumber=112). Follow us on Twitter: [*@nytrealestate*](https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1972/11/05/103478058.html?pageNumber=112).

PHOTO: Large marinas along the various forks or branches of Forked River stand ready to serve the very active boating community along Barnegat Bay in Ocean County. (PHOTOGRAPH BY TONY CENICOLA/THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** June 24, 2021

**End of Document**



[***'Depressing' Domino Effect: Working Class Is Struggling, And Their Colleges Are, Too***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:62BY-GSF1-DXY4-X10F-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; Foreign Desk; Pg. 6

**Length:** 1754 words

**Byline:** By Stephanie Saul

**Body**

The community colleges largely serving low-income, Black and Latino students are reeling, and experts worry that inequality in education will increase.

The coronavirus pandemic has been uniquely hard on America's ***working class***, causing higher unemployment among people without college degrees and eliminating low-wage jobs by the millions. Now, the education system created to help those very workers also is in jeopardy.

Colleges of all types are struggling under the shadow of the coronavirus, but the nation's community college system has been disproportionately hurt, with tens of thousands of students being forced to delay school or drop out because of the pandemic and the economic crisis it has created.

Enrollment is down by 9.5 percent at the more than 1,000 two-year colleges in the United States compared with numbers from last spring, according to figures from the National Student Clearinghouse, a nonprofit organization that found a similar drop last fall. That is more than double the loss experienced by four-year schools.

Community college enrollment among Black and Hispanic students has declined even more sharply, with a 19 percent drop from fall 2019 to fall 2020 among Black students and a 16 percent drop among Hispanic students. Of the nation's five million students enrolled at community colleges, about 40 percent are Black or Latino and nearly half are low-income, according to the American Association of Community Colleges.

''Many of our students come to college with challenges,'' said Tracy D. Hall, president of Southwest Tennessee Community College in Memphis. ''Now you add a pandemic to that, it just exacerbates it.''

Community colleges, a vast majority of which are state-run schools, have historically provided a low-cost alternative for students who lack financial backing from their parents or academic preparation for four-year colleges. They also are a critical training ground for students seeking jobs in local businesses, from auto mechanics and welders to dental hygienists. About 27 percent of the nation's more than 17 million college students are enrolled in two-year programs.

President Biden, whose wife, Dr. Jill Biden, is a professor at a community college, has cited the importance of community colleges to educational equity. In the coming weeks, he is expected to propose making two-year schools free as part of the $3 trillion rebuilding plan that he began rolling out on Wednesday.

By arranging free tuition for many, though possibly not all, students, the Biden plan would also free up other forms of federal aid to low-income students, such as Pell Grants, to pay for things like housing, food or books, according to congressional aides who have been briefed on aspects of the proposal. Food and housing insecurity are often cited as major reasons for low-income students to drop out of college.

Over all, community colleges in Tennessee have lost about 10 percent of their total enrollment, mirroring the national figures. Southwest, a two-year public school with seven locations in the western part of the state, has lost 19 percent of its enrollment in the past year, making it one of the most profoundly affected of Tennessee's 13 community colleges.

At Southwest, about 800 Black men have paused their studies. Now there is concern that the pandemic will permanently derail their educational paths, along with low-income and minority students across the country -- potentially deepening educational inequities with white students.

''It's depressing,'' said Russ Deaton, executive vice chancellor of the Tennessee Board of Regents, which oversees community colleges in the state. ''A lot of the students we've lost were loosely tethered to higher education anyway. It didn't take much to push them out of the education path.''

Many community college students are adults -- the average age is 28 -- and even before the pandemic, they struggled to stay in school, juggling academic work with financial pressures, child care needs and even homelessness. Before the pandemic, statistics showed that at least 40 percent of students at community colleges left school before earning a certificate or degree.

For these students, the pandemic upset an already difficult balancing act, leaving many just plain exhausted. For Corey Ray Baranowski -- a 33-year-old father of five children, age 5 months to 11 years old -- the breaking point came last year.

Before the health crisis, Mr. Baranowski and his wife juggled their large family, several jobs and studies at Jackson State Community College, another school that was hit hard by the pandemic, in Jackson, Tenn., 90 miles northeast of Memphis.

The dominoes started tumbling last spring, when the pandemic reached his small community of Lexington, Tenn.

First, the school system where both Mr. Baranowski and his wife, a photographer, had worked as substitute teachers shut down. Then, that same day, their three school-age children were sent home to learn remotely. Their community college also suspended in-person classes.

''It was unsettling,'' Mr. Baranowski recalled. He and his wife, then expecting their fifth child, struggled to keep up their own schoolwork while making sure the children did theirs, overloading the family's home computer capacity -- and their multitasking skills.

''There were some bologna sandwiches and peanut butter and jelly going on, trying to manage money,'' Mr. Baranowski said. Overwhelmed, he dropped two classes last spring and decided not to re-enroll this year.

But in August, Mr. Baranowski found a job at a juvenile correctional center. The couple hopes to return to college next fall.

''My goal is to graduate and become a teacher,'' he said.

As George Pimentel, the president of Jackson State, puts it, ''Many of our students have just hit the pause button.''

Community colleges normally lose students during boom times when jobs are plentiful, then see enrollment increase during economic downturns as unemployed people seek training for new careers -- as happened after the recession of 2009.

So why is there currently an enrollment bust during a downturn? One theory is that the relief packages enacted by Congress, combined with the hope that jobs will return swiftly once the pandemic is over, have made those who are unemployed less apt to enroll in community colleges to retrain for new careers.

''There's always been a sense that jobs are going to come back as soon as the numbers go down, so why would you start a degree program?'' said Doug Shapiro, executive research director for the National Student Clearinghouse.

Another theory is that many of the skills taught at community colleges do not transfer well to online teaching formats. Rushton W. Johnson, vice president of student affairs at Pellissippi State Community College in Knoxville, Tenn., which has had a 15 percent enrollment decline since last spring, says the pandemic was a ''perfect storm'' for community colleges.

''It's impossible to learn to weld, drive a truck, cook, draw blood, wire a network online, without handling the equipment and tools,'' Mr. Johnson said.

While many low-income students in Tennessee can attend community college tuition-free by using federal and state grants, job disruptions have made it difficult for many to pay for basic living expenses.

Last spring, Katie Dollar, 25, could no longer afford rent when the game arcade where she was working closed because of the pandemic. She packed up and returned home to live with her father, with plans to continue her studies at Pellissippi online.

But the balky satellite internet service at her father's rural Tennessee farm made it impossible for her to participate in remote classes. ''Livestreaming classes was not an option,'' Ms. Dollar, a theater student, said.

She decided not to enroll in the fall, but she is back in school this semester after landing a job at a Trader Joe's and a new apartment.

Enrollment declines have been particularly steep among first-year students who have never attended college at all, including high school graduates of 2020. Freshmen enrollment dropped by 19 percent at community colleges in Tennessee.

The pandemic has also blown a hole in community college budgets, forcing layoffs in some cases. The financial hit to community colleges has been exacerbated by state funding cuts aimed disproportionately at two-year colleges, according to a recent study by the State Higher Education Executive Officers Association. Southwest is facing a budget shortfall -- more than $10 million -- and is hoping to be rescued with funds from the $1.9 trillion stimulus package signed this month by Mr. Biden.

Of the nearly $40 billion that is allocated for colleges in the bill, an estimated $12.7 billion will go to community colleges, according to the American Association of Community Colleges.

With its main campuses in Memphis, a predominantly Black city, Southwest is expected to receive about $12 million from the stimulus package.

Dr. Deaton, of the Tennessee Board of Regents, said that aggressive outreach to students could be the key to encouraging many of them to re-enroll. Community colleges throughout the state are already working to lure back the students who had their education disrupted by the pandemic.

Southwest has begun such outreach, convincing 80 Black male students to return. It also purchased 3,500 laptops for students, installed wireless internet coverage in a parking lot and provided hot spots in some homes to encourage students to stay enrolled.

But Southwest has yet to persuade Charles Moore to come back.

A year ago, Mr. Moore, 20, was supporting himself by waiting tables while studying criminal justice at Southwest. Then the coronavirus spread to the United States and his plans for a college degree fell apart.

First his employer, the Olive Garden, laid him off. When his campus shut down and shifted to remote classes, he struggled to adapt to learning online. He was able to get a new job in security, but it required him to commute into Mississippi, leaving him little time to do his schoolwork. In May, he dropped out.

Mr. Moore says he wants to be a sheriff's deputy, a job that does not require a college degree. So amid the uncertainty and unpredictability of the pandemic, he has made no immediate plans to return to school.

But he still thinks about campus life, about being exposed to new people and ideas, about getting ''that college experience.''

''It felt like I was headed toward something,'' he said.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2021/04/02/us/politics/covid-19-colleges.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/04/02/us/politics/covid-19-colleges.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Corey Ray Baranowski, center, made the honor roll at Jackson State Community College in fall 2019. He did not enroll this semester.

Charles Moore's new job in security meant longer hours, forcing him to drop out of Southwest Tennessee Community College, above. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY WHITTEN SABBATINI FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** April 3, 2021

**End of Document**



[***New York’s Era of Overspending Ends With a Shudder; Mara Gay***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69PS-7M41-JBG3-601V-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

November 24, 2023 Friday 23:16 EST

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 1483 words

**Byline:** Mara Gay

**Highlight:** Fiscal reality is finally hitting the city. Will Mayor Adams make the right choices when cutting the budget?

**Body**

After years of heady spending, [*the budget cuts announced by Mayor Eric Adams*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/16/nyregion/nyc-budget-cuts-schools-police-trash.html) last week hit New York City like a punch to the gut: Most libraries would be closed on Sundays. The expansion of the city’s signature prekindergarten program would be delayed. So would efforts to improve New York’s notoriously dirty streets and keep rats at bay. The city’s police force would be pared down in coming years.

Fiscal reality has caught up with a stunned city. The brutal cuts come as Mr. Adams scrambles to fill a $7 billion budget deficit in the next year. The Citizens Budget Commission, a nonpartisan watchdog group, estimates that the budget gap could be significantly higher, [*closer to $10.6 billion*](https://cbcny.org/advocacy/statement-new-york-city-november-2023-financial-plan). New Yorkers may want to brace themselves. Much deeper cuts to city services could be ahead.

How did the nation’s largest city get into this fix? Over the past decade, city government [*grew significantly*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/12/31/nyregion/de-blasio-budget-unions-nyc.html), as did the size of its budget. Former Mayor Bill de Blasio hired [*tens of thousands of workers*](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/06/15/nyregion/high-number-city-employees-bill-deblasio.html), expanding government services after years of relative austerity under former Mayor Michael Bloomberg during the Great Recession. Some of this spending went to important investments, like creating the city’s free prekindergarten program. Other funds were put to far more questionable use, like a [*disastrous $1 billion mental health initiative*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/03/22/nyregion/thrivenyc-mental-health-.html) that never got off the ground. Mr. Bloomberg had also left office with unsettled labor contracts in the city’s municipal work force. Mr. de Blasio settled them, giving the workers [*significant raises*](https://www.nytimes.com/2014/05/09/nyregion/de-blasio-new-york-budget.html).

The heavy spending far outpaced inflation but was made sustainable, for a time, by a flood of revenues that poured into City Hall from Wall Street, high income taxes and tourism, which boomed. Then the pandemic hit, bringing the economy to a standstill. Federal Covid relief kept the city going, but over the past year those funds began to dry up, and the city’s economy [*didn’t recover as quickly*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/06/20/business/economy/new-york-city-economy-coronavirus.html) from the pandemic as other regions’ did. At the same time, thousands of migrants began arriving at the city’s doorstep in need of shelter.

The crisis has been building for years. From time to time over the past decade, the city’s mayors and City Council leaders would put away money in a rainy-day fund, citing budget deficits in faraway years. Modest cuts were made here and there. But mostly, the spending continued. By this year, the portion of the budget funded by the city, rather than the state or federal government, had grown by $21 billion since fiscal year 2017, or 35 percent, according to the Citizens Budget Commission. Even adjusted for inflation, the budget during that period increased by a whopping $7.2 billion, or 10 percent.

The lack of fiscal discipline, particularly under Mr. de Blasio, was wildly irresponsible. And now Mr. Adams is being forced to make the hard decisions.

New York mayors regularly overstate the size of deficits while underestimating revenue. The tradition is politically useful, helping mayors slash programs they don’t like, drum up support for those they do and test the public’s tolerance for certain cuts over others. Some New Yorkers are [*skeptical*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/21/nyregion/nypd-budget-cuts.html/), for example, that Mr. Adams’s proposed cuts to the police department would ever really take place.

What is all too certain is that, unlike in previous years, the budget gaps are immediate and large. Across New York City, officials and independent budget experts are scouring the nearly [*$113 billion*](https://www.nyc.gov/assets/omb/downloads/pdf/nov23-fp.pdf) budget, hunting for [*savings that will preserve the most essential programs*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/19/opinion/new-york-city-budget-cut-eric-adams.html). This is a vital exercise.

The City Council has an important role to play here by pushing the mayor to get serious about transparency around the budget, too. Already, its efforts have led to questions about the Adams administration’s financial management of the migrant crisis so far. In one itemized report to the City Council, for instance, the Adams administration said it spent [*$538 million*](https://council.nyc.gov/budget/fy2024/) on “services and supplies.” For half a billion dollars in taxpayer money, the Adams administration should be able to detail what those expenses really are.

The council speaker, Adrienne Adams, and the finance chair, Justin Brannan, called Mr. Adams’s cuts “[*too blunt*](https://council.nyc.gov/press/2023/11/16/2506/)” and said the administration could find much-needed savings by using nonprofit groups to provide services to migrants instead of private contractors. That is admittedly a heavy lift, especially in a city with a housing crisis. But with basic services on the line in New York, it’s worth it.

There are some other promising, smart ideas as well. For instance, Brad Lander, the city’s comptroller, has pointed to about $1.5 billion in [*annual claims*](https://comptroller.nyc.gov/reports/annual-claims-report/) against the city as one area for reform. About $139 million of those claims come from car accidents with city vehicles. But while many of these ideas will yield savings in the long term, they won’t necessarily help New York out of its current crisis. After years of putting off the inevitable, the time for painful cuts has arrived.

So far, no one has more clearly articulated the danger of these cuts than the rapper and former New Yorker Cardi B. “What’s going to happen to my nieces, what’s going to happen to my nephews, what’s going to happen to cousins, my aunts, my friends that’s living in the hood?” Cardi asked in an [*Instagram Live*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oSRV-NNpMcg) video on Sunday.

This message shouldn’t be easily dismissed. The cuts come at a time when poor and ***working-class*** residents of the city are already struggling with the spiraling costs of housing and essentials, including food. New York was the epicenter of the pandemic in the United States. More than 45,000 people died after the federal, state and municipal governments failed the city’s residents.

Recovery has been slow. The unemployment rate in New York remains [*nearly double*](https://projects.thecity.nyc/hows-new-york-city-doing/index.html) the national average. At the same time, the bureaucratic hiring process throughout much of the city’s municipal government has resulted in thousands of unfilled jobs in human services agencies, leading to [*extended wait times*](https://gothamist.com/news/nyc-rate-of-processing-food-stamp-cash-assistance-applications-hits-record-lows) to receive vital federal benefits for food stamps and other assistance. This is unacceptable and is something Mr. Adams needs to fix. More than [*89,000 people*](https://www.nyc.gov/assets/dhs/downloads/pdf/dailyreport.pdf) are living in city shelters. One-third of renters are spending at least half of their income on rent.

New York City’s chronic overspending clearly helped produce this problem. But the state also has a responsibility to the city. So does the federal government.

Adams administration officials say New York has spent $2.7 billion over the past 20 months to house migrants crossing the southern border, and the city expects to spend up to [*$11 billion*](https://www.politico.com/news/2023/11/20/new-york-eric-adams-budget-00128222) through fiscal year 2025, which begins in July. Mr. Adams has vehemently demanded the White House reimburse the city for these ongoing expenses, and asked for much more help from the state. He’s right. Though the migrants didn’t create the city’s budget crisis, the cuts to city services would be far less steep if New York was properly reimbursed for them.

Helping New York City would be good business for Washington. In 2022 alone, New York City’s economy made up 4.7 percent of the country’s economic output, according to the Citizens Budget Commission. In the five years before the pandemic, taxpayers in New York State [*sent $142.6 billion*](https://rockinst.org/issue-area/balance-of-payments-2021/) more to the federal government than they received. Now is the time for the federal government to return the favor.

The New York governor, Kathy Hochul, this week signaled a willingness to help with paying for migrant services and public safety. But she also said she would oppose any effort to raise taxes in Albany, cutting off a much larger potential revenue source for the city.

“I don’t have the answers today on what we’ll do, other than I know we’ll be there to help the city once again,” Ms. Hochul [*said*](https://www.cbsnews.com/newyork/news/new-york-city-budget-cuts-gov-kathy-hochul-wont-propose-tax-hikes/) at a news conference. Since it is New York City that drives the state’s economy, fills its coffers and funds the bulk of its regional transit system, it should be in Ms. Hochul’s interest to do everything she can to find the city some relief.

For the Biden administration, there are national politics to consider. Strikingly, Cardi B questioned how the country can afford to fight foreign wars yet expects the poorest Americans to absorb cuts to basic services like libraries, education, sanitation and the police. In raising this point, Cardi B became part of a long tradition of Black American artists and others who, with sharp tongues, have [*questioned*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=goh2x_G0ct4) the nation’s priorities. If deeper cuts do come to New York, or elsewhere, American voters most affected may begin to ask themselves the same question.

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PHOTO (PHOTOGRAPH BY TODD HEISLER/THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A20.

**Load-Date:** November 28, 2023

**End of Document**



[***They Risked Their Lives to Clean New York Offices. Now They May Strike.***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69KJ-XTK1-DXY4-X2G7-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Section:** NYREGION

**Length:** 1420 words

**Byline:** Stefanos Chen

**Highlight:** The office cleaners’ union is preparing to walk out to protect their health care benefits, amid the worst commercial real estate slump in decades.

**Body**

The office cleaners’ union is preparing to walk out to protect their health care benefits, amid the worst commercial real estate slump in decades.

Danuta Klimas, an office cleaner, went back to work in Lower Manhattan days after the Sept. 11 attacks, as toxic dust from ground zero hung in the air. She was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer years later.

At the height of the Covid-19 pandemic, she was working in the same building, even after discovering that she had interstitial lung disease.

But at least, she said, her medical bills were covered. For decades, her employer has offered health care plans with no employee premiums or deductibles, saving her thousands of dollars a year.

Now Ms. Klimas, 66, along with thousands of others who mopped, dusted and scrubbed 1,300 buildings during the worst of the pandemic, are sending a message as their bosses signal that they may cut back on health care contributions: Don’t mess with our benefits.

“We will fight for this health insurance. It’s not negotiable,” Ms. Klimas said. “We deserve it.”

The showdown pits a group of essential workers, who toiled at great personal risk while most white-collar workers remained safer at home, against real estate firms that are struggling with the highest ever office vacancy rates and plummeting property values.

The cleaners are part of 32BJ SEIU, a union that represents 20,000 commercial maintenance workers whose four-year contract with landlords and cleaning companies is set to expire Dec. 31. The fight could be a harbinger for both the future of the office market, and one of the many ***working-class*** industries reliant on its recovery.

On Thursday, union members gathered at demonstrations in Midtown Manhattan and at Zuccotti Park downtown, to kick off what many believe will be a protracted fight — and perhaps their first strike in 27 years.

Chants filled the air as they rallied for a new contract: “If we don’t get it? Shut it down!”

In addition to protecting their health coverage, the workers are seeking wage increases, retirement fund improvements and other benefits.

“This is really about the future of working people in this city,” said Manny Pastreich, the union president, who expects that real estate companies will target employee health benefits because of the moribund office sector.

A third of the union’s office cleaners were temporarily laid off from April to June 2020, when offices were mostly closed, and about 10 percent of the jobs, or 2,000 jobs total, never came back, in part because of the persistence of remote work.

At least 40 union members who worked in commercial buildings died of Covid, he said.

The Realty Advisory Board on Labor Relations, the body that bargains on behalf of real estate owners, managers and cleaning companies, has already signaled that cutbacks are coming.

“Our current contracts are not sustainable,” Howard Rothschild, the board president, said, noting that the cleaners are among a small minority of American workers who do not pay an annual premium for employer health care.

Mr. Rothschild also noted that the city’s office maintenance workers were among the highest paid in the country, with a typical wage of $29 an hour, or about $61,300 a year. The [*city’s median household income*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/28/nyregion/nyc-income-gap-wages.html) is about $75,000.

The union contract covers workers — mostly cleaners, but also some porters and repair people — at a wide range of buildings, including office towers in Hudson Yards and the World Trade Center, tourist attractions like the Empire State Building, universities and transit hubs, and The New York Times headquarters.

Health care costs have surged this year for both employers and workers, thanks to inflation and a rebound in medical service demand, according to [*a recent survey by KFF*](https://www.kff.org/health-costs/report/2023-employer-health-benefits-survey/), a nonprofit health policy research group.

Workers paid an average $6,575 in 2023 for a family premium, an increase of nearly $500 since last year. Nearly a quarter of employers surveyed said they would require workers to pay more in the next two years because of their own rising costs, said Matthew Rae, a co-author of the report.

Godwin Dillon, 42, an office cleaner and single father who lives in Bushwick, Brooklyn, felt those costs acutely when he was temporarily laid off in 2020 from his job at 85 Broad Street. (Tenants at the building include WeWork, the office space company that [*filed for bankruptcy*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/06/business/wework-bankruptcy.html) this week.)

Mr. Dillon, who is diabetic, typically pays $20 for 90 days of insulin, but when his employer-paid health care expired near the end of his unemployment, he said he had to pay $600 for a month’s supply.

And while he has since returned to work, his rent, $1,700 at the start of the pandemic, has climbed to $2,100 a month, a 23 percent jump in three years.

“You can’t do it off a single income no more,” he said.

The negotiations begin at one of the worst times for the commercial real estate industry. In Manhattan, 22 percent of office space was vacant last quarter, or about twice the rate of empty space before the pandemic, said Stijn Van Nieuwerburgh, a professor of finance at Columbia Business School who tracks the commercial market.

Coupled with high interest rates and falling rents, real estate firms are “in the most difficult environment for offices that has maybe ever existed,” he said, estimating that New York City offices were worth 42 percent less than before the pandemic.

“These companies are struggling for survival,” he said. “And when you’re in survival mode, there isn’t a whole lot to give.”

The union has said its commercial building maintenance division is prepared to go on strike. It would be the first time since the winter of 1996, when the group picketed outside of office buildings for a month in the cold and snow to demand higher pay.

Building managers hired temporary workers, but dysfunction was rampant: Garbage piled up, bathrooms were filthy and some white-collar workers began bringing [*their own toilet paper*](https://www.nytimes.com/1996/02/06/nyregion/even-cleaner-smells-sweet-as-strike-ends.html) to the office.

The office market has since changed dramatically. With most offices already engaged in hybrid work schedules, disruptions to building services could spur more employees to work remotely, muting the strike’s effect, said Dr. Van Nieuwerburgh. But he said a strike could also hurt commercial landlords, who are desperate to bring people back to the office.

The strike would be most visible in Manhattan, but its effects might be more strongly felt in the other boroughs, where the majority of workers live, including 4,600 in the Bronx and 4,500 in Queens, according to union figures.

Oralia Mendoza, 50, who lives in East Elmhurst, Queens, has been working full time as a cleaner in a Manhattan office building for five years. Ms. Mendoza, originally from Ixtapa Zihuatanejo, on the Pacific Coast of Mexico, was previously paid $10 an hour, plus tips, as a waitress in a Queens restaurant.

The cleaner job, which pays around $29 an hour, has been a huge boon, she said, but added health care costs would make it hard for her and her 15-year-old daughter to afford their $2,450 a month apartment.

“The prices don’t go much lower than what we are paying,” she said in Spanish. “We would be forced to look for a second job or move.”

For Ena Softley, 66, who has been a New York City office cleaner for 37 years, there is also a moral imperative. Early in the pandemic, she said she became gravely ill with Covid while on the job, and was out of work from March to May 2020. Her doctor warned her not to return.

But she had to come back, not least of all to keep her medical coverage. She credits her health care plan for getting her access to quality medicine and doctors, with no major out-of-pocket expenses. She needs regular checkups for lingering health issues.

“We are begging America and New York to see — we are in service jobs, we work so hard, we sacrificed our lives when Covid came,” she said. “But we do it because we choose to serve, and we love our jobs.”

“If they roll back health care,” she said, “it would be devastating.”

Wesley Parnell contributed reporting.

Wesley Parnell contributed reporting.

PHOTOS: “We will fight for this health insurance. It’s not negotiable,” Danuta Klimas, an office cleaner, said. “We deserve it.” (PHOTOGRAPH BY MICHELLE V. AGINS/THE NEW YORK TIMES); Oralia Mendoza said having to pay health care costs might force her to move from her East Elmhurst, Queens, apartment.; Ena Softley became seriously ill with Covid in 2020, making the health coverage her employer provides essential. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY JANICE CHUNG FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A17.

**Load-Date:** November 11, 2023

**End of Document**



[***Johnny Depp Film About Louis XV Will Open Cannes Film Festival***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67Y3-RCS1-DXY4-X0RC-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

April 5, 2023 Wednesday 14:22 EST

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**Section:** MOVIES

**Length:** 472 words

**Byline:** Julia Jacobs

**Highlight:** The inclusion of “Jeanne du Barry,” directed by Maïwenn, is Depp’s first public embrace by the film industry since he won a bitter defamation trial against his ex-wife Amber Heard.

**Body**

The inclusion of “Jeanne du Barry,” directed by Maïwenn, is Depp’s first public embrace by the film industry since he won a bitter defamation trial against his ex-wife Amber Heard.

Johnny Depp’s first major film since winning a lurid and contentious defamation trial last year — a costume drama in which he plays King Louis XV of France — will open the Cannes Film Festival in May, the festival [*announced*](https://www.festival-cannes.com/en/press/press-releases/jeanne-du-barry-by-maiwenn-will-open-the-76th-festival-de-cannes/) on Wednesday.

Depp filmed the period drama, “Jeanne du Barry,” shortly after [*the trial*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/06/01/arts/depp-heard-trial.html?), in which the jury found that his ex-wife Amber Heard had defamed him when she described herself in a 2018 op-ed in The Washington Post as a “public figure representing domestic abuse.” During six weeks of testimony, which riveted the nation, he and Heard battled over her allegations that he had physically and sexually abused her. Heard initially appealed the verdict, but then announced that she intended [*to settle the dispute*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/12/19/arts/amber-heard-johnny-depp-settlement.html).

Since Depp’s victory in court, he has tiptoed back into the public eye, appearing in a fashion show backed by Rihanna and at the MTV Video Music Awards; he also started a TikTok [*account*](https://www.tiktok.com/@johnnydepp?lang=en). But the Cannes premiere is the actor’s first public embrace by the film industry since the trial, where he denied Heard’s allegations of physical and sexual abuse and tried to portray her as the aggressor in the relationship.

“Jeanne du Barry” is directed by and stars the French actress and filmmaker Maïwenn, who plays the title character, a ***working-class*** woman and courtesan who becomes the favorite of the king. Maïwenn’s film [*“Polisse”*](https://www.nytimes.com/2012/05/18/movies/polisse-directed-by-and-starring-maiwenn.html) won the Jury Prize at Cannes in 2011.

Her new film will premiere on May 16, after the festival’s opening ceremony, and will debut in French movie theaters on the same day. Fifteen months after its theatrical release, Netflix will stream the movie on its service only in France.

Depp, 59, had also appealed a narrow part of the jury’s decision in the defamation case, in which they held him liable for a defamatory statement that his lawyer had made about Heard. His lawyers said last year that Heard had agreed to pay $1 million to end the case, far less than what the jury in Virginia had initially called on her to pay.

His victory in the trial surprised some legal observers, because a judge in Britain had ruled in an earlier case that there was evidence that Depp had assaulted Heard. The British ruling came in a libel suit that Depp had filed after The Sun, a tabloid newspaper, called him a “wife beater” in a headline. The judge in that case ruled that the defendants had shown that what they published was “substantially true.”

Nicole Sperling contributed reporting.

Nicole Sperling contributed reporting.

PHOTO: Maïwenn as Jeanne du Barry, with Johnny Depp as King Louis XV of France in “Jeanne du Barry.” (PHOTOGRAPH BY Stéphanie Branchu/Why Not Productions FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** May 15, 2023

**End of Document**



[***Former N.F.L. Player Will Challenge Cruz For Texas Senate Seat***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6856-NMR1-DXY4-X3TR-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

May 4, 2023 Thursday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; National Desk; Pg. 14

**Length:** 491 words

**Byline:** By J. David Goodman

**Body**

Mr. Allred, a Democrat and former N.F.L. linebacker, said he would try to unseat Mr. Cruz, who held off Beto O'Rourke in 2018.

HOUSTON -- Representative Colin Allred, a Dallas-area Democrat who defeated an incumbent Republican to gain his seat in 2018, announced on Wednesday that he would challenge Senator Ted Cruz of Texas next year.

In a three-minute video, Mr. Allred, 40, a former civil rights lawyer who played as a linebacker in the N.F.L., presented himself as a bipartisan politician whose ***working-class*** upbringing would enable him to overcome the long odds: No Democrat has won statewide office in Texas since the 1990s.

''We don't have to be embarrassed by our senator,'' he said, after describing Mr. Cruz as someone who ''cheered on the mob'' during the Capitol riot and who left Texas to go to the resort city of Cancun, Mexico, during the 2021 winter storm and power grid failure that killed hundreds of Texans. ''We can get a new one.''

Mr. Allred came into office riding a wave of Democratic enthusiasm that nearly unseated Mr. Cruz during his last re-election fight, a 2018 victory over Beto O'Rourke, then a little-known representative from El Paso. Mr. O'Rourke lost by about 2.5 percentage points, a thin margin in the Republican-dominated state.

The same year, Mr. Allred defeated Representative Pete Sessions, a Republican, in a Dallas-area district that has since been redrawn to become more favorable for Democrats.

Almost from the start, Mr. Allred has shown an ability to attract interest from donors, outraising Mr. Sessions and continuing to demonstrate the kind of strong fund-raising ability that would be necessary in a statewide race in Texas.

Mr. Cruz is highly unpopular among Texas Democrats, but he has so far survived all attempts to oust him.

Enthusiasm is also low among many Texas Democrats, who watched Mr. O'Rourke lose badly to Gov. Greg Abbott last year despite his well-funded campaign.

And Mr. Allred, whose decision to enter the race began emerging in news reports before Wednesday's announcement, has seen expectations for his campaign set low: The magazine Texas Monthly suggested that he was a ''replacement-level candidate.'' In other words, as good as any other Democrat but not a star.

Nick Maddux, a spokesman for Mr. Cruz's campaign, described Mr. Allred as a ''far-left radical'' in a statement on Wednesday. ''His voting record is completely out-of-touch with Texas,'' he said. ''For over a decade, Sen. Cruz has been leading the fight for jobs, freedom, and security in Texas.''

Mr. Allred's announcement video acknowledged that he was a long shot, presenting himself as an underdog who ''never knew'' his father, and pulled himself up into elite football, law school and Congress. He said he would focus on Texas issues, not divisive cultural ones, discussing rural hospital closures and prescription drug prices in his video.

As for Mr. Cruz, he said: ''All hat, no cattle.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/03/us/politics/colin-allred-ted-cruz-texas-senate.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/03/us/politics/colin-allred-ted-cruz-texas-senate.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Colin Allred, a former civil rights lawyer, will try to become the first Democrat to win a statewide election in Texas since the 1990s.

Mr. Allred won his seat in Congress in 2018, the same year Beto O'Rourke ran against and narrowly lost to Ted Cruz for Senate. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY TAMIR KALIFA FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A14.

**Load-Date:** May 4, 2023

**End of Document**



[***Rep. Colin Allred of Texas Will Challenge Ted Cruz for Senate***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6852-3GV1-JBG3-63G3-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

May 3, 2023 Wednesday 10:39 EST

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**Section:** US; politics

**Length:** 545 words

**Byline:** J. David Goodman

**Highlight:** Mr. Allred, a Democrat and former N.F.L. linebacker, said he would try to unseat Mr. Cruz, who held off Beto O’Rourke in 2018.

**Body**

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HOUSTON — Representative Colin Allred, a Dallas-area Democrat who defeated an incumbent Republican to gain his seat in 2018, announced on Wednesday that he would challenge Senator Ted Cruz of Texas next year.

In a [*three-minute video*](https://twitter.com/ColinAllredTX/status/1653727403536183301), Mr. Allred, 40, a former civil rights lawyer who played as a linebacker in the N.F.L., presented himself as a bipartisan politician whose ***working-class*** upbringing would enable him to overcome the long odds: No Democrat has won statewide office in Texas since the 1990s.

“We don’t have to be embarrassed by our senator,” he said, after describing Mr. Cruz as someone who “cheered on the mob” during the Capitol riot and who left Texas to [*go to the resort city of Cancun, Mexico*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/02/18/us/politics/ted-cruz-storm-cancun.html), during the 2021 winter storm and power grid failure that [*killed hundreds of Texans*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/03/25/us/texas-winter-storm-death-toll.html). “We can get a new one.”

Mr. Allred came into office riding a wave of Democratic enthusiasm that nearly unseated Mr. Cruz during his last re-election fight, [*a 2018 victory over Beto O’Rourke*](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/11/06/us/ted-cruz-wins-texas-senate-race.html), then a little-known representative from El Paso. Mr. O’Rourke lost by about [*2.5 percentage points*](https://www.nytimes.com/elections/results/texas-senate), a thin margin in the Republican-dominated state.

The same year, Mr. Allred defeated Representative Pete Sessions, a Republican, in a Dallas-area district that has since been redrawn to become more favorable for Democrats.

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And Mr. Allred, whose decision to enter the race began emerging in news reports before Wednesday’s announcement, has seen expectations for his campaign set low: The magazine Texas Monthly suggested that he was a “[*replacement-level candidate*](https://www.texasmonthly.com/news-politics/who-is-colin-allred-ted-cruz-senate-race/).” In other words, as good as any other Democrat but not a star.

Nick Maddux, a spokesman for Mr. Cruz’s campaign, described Mr. Allred as a “far-left radical” in a statement on Wednesday. “His voting record is completely out-of-touch with Texas,” he said. “For over a decade, Sen. Cruz has been leading the fight for jobs, freedom, and security in Texas.”

Mr. Allred’s announcement video acknowledged that he was a long shot, presenting himself as an underdog who “never knew” his father, and pulled himself up into elite football, law school and Congress. He said he would focus on Texas issues, not divisive cultural ones, discussing rural hospital closures and prescription drug prices in his video.

As for Mr. Cruz, he said: “All hat, no cattle.”

PHOTOS: Colin Allred, a former civil rights lawyer, will try to become the first Democrat to win a statewide election in Texas since the 1990s.; Mr. Allred won his seat in Congress in 2018, the same year Beto O’Rourke ran against and narrowly lost to Ted Cruz for Senate. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY TAMIR KALIFA FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A14.

**Load-Date:** May 4, 2023

**End of Document**



[***Tuesday Was Great for Democrats. It Doesn’t Change the Outlook for 2024.***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69KB-XD01-DXY4-X1D4-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

November 8, 2023 Wednesday 13:18 EST

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**Section:** UPSHOT

**Length:** 1375 words

**Byline:** Nate Cohn

**Highlight:** A pattern continued with success in low-turnout elections, which favors highly engaged voters. Presidential years tend to be different.

**Body**

A pattern continued with success in low-turnout elections, which favors highly engaged voters. Presidential years tend to be different.

Almost every Tuesday election since the Supreme Court’s decision to overturn Roe v. Wade has brought good news for Democrats.

Last night was no exception.

Abortion rights and marijuana legalization [*prevailed*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/11/07/us/elections/results-ohio-issue-1-abortion-rights.html?action=click&amp;pgtype=Article&amp;state=default&amp;module=election-results&amp;context=election_recirc&amp;region=RaceLink) [*in*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/11/07/us/elections/results-ohio-issue-2-legalize-marijuana.html) Ohio. Democrats [*held*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/11/07/us/elections/results-kentucky-governor.html?action=click&amp;pgtype=Article&amp;state=default&amp;module=election-results&amp;context=election_recirc&amp;region=NavBar) the governor’s mansion in Kentucky, [*took*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/11/07/us/elections/results-virginia-state-legislature.html?action=click&amp;pgtype=Article&amp;state=default&amp;module=election-results&amp;context=election_recirc&amp;region=NavBar) full control of the State Legislature in Virginia and [*won*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/11/07/us/elections/results-pennsylvania.html?action=click&amp;pgtype=Article&amp;state=default&amp;module=election-results&amp;context=election_recirc&amp;region=StateNavMenu) a Supreme Court election in Pennsylvania. They even [*were competitive*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/11/07/us/elections/results-mississippi.html?action=click&amp;pgtype=Article&amp;state=default&amp;module=election-results&amp;context=election_recirc&amp;region=StateNavMenu) in Mississippi.

In one sense, the results were no surprise. The polls showed Democrats and their causes ahead in these races, and the party has excelled in low-turnout special elections over the last year.

But the results were especially elating for Democrats against the backdrop of the latest polls, including [*the newest*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/05/us/politics/biden-trump-2024-poll.html) New York Times/Siena College poll, which seemed to spell doom for the Democrats. There was no doom Tuesday night.

To many, the contradiction between Democrats’ success at the ballot box and their struggles in surveys seems to suggest the polling can’t be right.

It’s an understandable response — but it’s probably wrong.

There’s no contradiction between the polling and Tuesday’s election results. There’s not even a contradiction between the polling and the last year of special elections.

Put simply: Tuesday’s results don’t change the picture for President Biden heading into 2024.

The polls and the election results are surprisingly easy to reconcile. The surveys show millions of voters who dislike Mr. Biden but remain receptive to other Democrats and support liberal causes. The polls also show Democrats with particular strength among the most highly engaged voters, who dominate low-turnout elections like Tuesday’s, while Mr. Trump shows his greatest strength among the less engaged voters who turn out only in presidential races.

As a result, the same data showing Mr. Biden in jeopardy is entirely consistent with Democratic strength Tuesday. The fact that many of the voters he will need are now supporting other Democrats and liberal causes, as they did Tuesday, may ultimately be exactly what allows Mr. Biden to win in the end. But it doesn’t mean his political position is secure. If anything, his weakness among even these voters reveals the extent of his liabilities.

The crossover vote

The polls showed the Democrat winning Kentucky. They showed abortion rights and marijuana legalization prevailing in Ohio — and showed them to be popular in many red states all over the country. They also show that voters disapprove of Mr. Biden and that Mr. Trump leads in the battleground states.

How can all of this be true? Well, the implication is that the polling shows millions of people who dislike the president but support abortion rights and other Democrats. This doesn’t prove that the polls are right about Mr. Biden’s weakness, but if the polls were right about Ohio, Kentucky and elsewhere, perhaps they’re right about the president as well.

Tuesday night’s Ohio exit poll was a good example. Mr. Biden had a 39 percent approval rating among the voters who made abortion and marijuana legal in the state. Only 25 percent said he should even run for re-election, less than the 35 percent who said the same for Mr. Trump.

Similarly, the Times/Siena polls nailed the Democratic victories in the Senate battlegrounds last fall, but they also showed Mr. Biden with a 39 percent approval rating. Last week, we had him at 38 percent across the same four states.

Before moving on, it’s worth dwelling on how surprising the latest election results might be if we didn’t have the hard election vote tallies to prove it. Abortion rights winning in red states? A Democratic governor winning re-election in Kentucky? It might seem quite unlikely or at least far from guaranteed. But it was all in the polling — and so is Mr. Biden’s weakness among young and nonwhite voters.

The turnout

A second factor is that Democrats appear to have an advantage among the most highly engaged voters, who make up the preponderance of the electorate in a special election, a midterm or an off-year general election.

This is partly because Democrats have made steady gains among college-educated, older and white voters, who tend to vote more regularly than young, nonwhite and ***working-class*** voters. It’s also partly because Democrats enjoy a turnout advantage beyond demographics, as the party’s activist base has been highly motivated to defend abortion rights, democracy and defeat Mr. Trump, dating all the way to the aftermath of his victory in 2016.

As I [*noted last week*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/30/upshot/biden-voters-midterms-2024.html), Times/Siena polling shows Mr. Biden leading among regular voters — the kinds who vote in primaries and midterms — but trailing among registered voters who don’t vote in those elections. The same split was evident in the latest Times/Siena battleground polls. Mr. Biden led by two points among previous primary voters and one point among those who voted in the midterms. He trailed by double digits among everyone else.

These kind of high-turnout party members aren’t ordinary Democrats — they’re very loyal Democrats. Many disapprove of Mr. Biden, but they’re ideologically consistent liberals and they’re vehemently against Mr. Trump. The same cannot be said for lower-turnout voters — including less engaged Democrats, nonwhite voters, and so on — who aren’t so ideological, and whose dissatisfaction with Mr. Biden could yield a very different outcome. It certainly does in the polling right now.

This Democratic advantage in low-turnout elections is a big deal. It probably explains the entire Democratic overperformance in special elections over the last year, based on an analysis of the nearly two dozen special elections with sufficient data for analysis, using a combination of Times/Siena polling and records from L2, a voter file vendor.

The Ohio [*exit poll*](https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2023/11/07/ohio-issue-1-exit-poll-results/) offers yet another piece of evidence: Self-reported Biden voters outnumbered Trump voters by two points, even in a state Mr. Trump won by eight points.

Next fall, this Democratic turnout advantage will do a lot less to help Mr. Biden and Democrats. To be clear, it should help: In a close race, it might offer a narrow path to a Biden victory, especially in the relatively old, white, Midwestern battleground states. But millions of irregular voters will return to the polls, even though they have made up a sliver of the electorate in recent special and off-year elections.

Today, these less engaged voters are expressing very different attitudes from superficially similar highly engaged voters. They’re so dissatisfied with Mr. Biden that many of them tell pollsters they’ll back Mr. Trump. Others probably just wouldn’t vote if the election were held today. Either way, the presidential electorate would be significantly worse for Democrats than the one they’ve learned to love on nearly every Tuesday night.

The great question for the next year is whether these less engaged, less ideological, disaffected, young and nonwhite voters who don’t like Mr. Biden will return to his side once the campaign gets underway. The optimistic case for Mr. Biden centers on their disengagement: Perhaps he’ll win them back once the campaign reminds them of the stakes. The issues that powered Democratic strength Tuesday, like abortion, will be a central part of how he hopes to do so.

But these voters aren’t just disengaged, they’re also nonideological and disaffected. The issues that animate more regular voters, like abortion, might not be assured to win over these voters. Almost by definition, the two million Ohio voters who didn’t turn out Tuesday but who probably will next November aren’t the ones especially motivated by abortion, even if they support abortion rights in a poll. Instead, they might vote on pocketbook issues like the economy or on Mr. Biden’s age.

Either way, Mr. Biden’s path to re-election hinges on whether he can persuade these disaffected, less ideological voters to return to his side and then to turn out in his favor. Nothing about Tuesday’s results suggest this will be any easier.

PHOTO: Abortion rights supporters after a victory in the Ohio referendum Tuesday. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Megan Jelinger/Agence France-Presse — Getty Images FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** November 8, 2023

**End of Document**



[***22 of the Funniest Novels Since 'Catch-22'***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BK2-9401-JBG3-626J-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

March 17, 2024 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section BR; Column 0; Book Review Desk; Pg. 14

**Length:** 4432 words

**Byline:** By Dwight Garner, Alexandra Jacobs, Jennifer Szalai and Cari Vander Yacht

**Body**

When it comes to fiction, humor is serious business. If tragedy appeals to the emotions, wit appeals to the mind. ''You have to know where the funny is,'' the writer Sheila Heti says, ''and if you know where the funny is, you know everything.'' Humor is a bulwark against complacency and conformity, mediocrity and predictability.

With all this in mind, we've put together a list of 22 of the funniest novels written in English since Joseph Heller's ''Catch-22'' (1961). That book presented a voice that was fresh, liberated, angry and also funny -- about something American novels hadn't been funny about before: war. Set during World War II and featuring Capt. John Yossarian, a B-25 bombardier, the novel presaged, in its black humor, its outraged intelligence, its blend of tragedy and farce, and its awareness of the corrupt values that got us into Vietnam, not just Bob Dylan but the counterculture writ large.

Heller gave writers permission to be irreverent about the most serious stuff -- the stuff of life and death. The Czech novelist Milan Kundera, who went into exile in France after satirizing his country's Communist regime, told Philip Roth: ''I could always recognize a person who was not a Stalinist, a person whom I needn't fear, by the way he smiled. A sense of humor was a trustworthy sign of recognition. Ever since, I have been terrified by a world that is losing its sense of humor.''

It's in the spirit of warding off that dire scenario that we offer this list: a resolutely idiosyncratic assemblage of novels -- 22 in all, get it? -- culled from the past six decades by three very different Times book critics.

Here, you will not find books stuffed with jokes. For the most part, our picks will not induce knee slapping. (''Any man who will not resist a pun will not lie up-pun me,'' the great Eve Babitz wrote.) The humor these authors embrace traverses the gamut, from sardonic to screwball, mordant to madcap, droll to deranged. Writing in Heller's shadow, but in an idiom all their own, these novelists apply his satirical tool kit -- along with their own screwdrivers and shivs -- to whole other categories of human experience, from race and gender to dating, aging, office cubicles and book publishing itself. The critic Albert Murray understood that wit is power, and that knowing where the funny is takes us closer to the nub of things. Best of all, it's available to anyone. As Murray wrote, ''It is always open season on the truth.''

'The Wig,' by Charles Wright (1966)

Charles Wright is not a name on many people's radar. Indeed, he is often confused with the Tennessee-born poet of the same name. But his potent novels deserve a resurgence. Wright wrote three between 1963 and 1973: ''The Messenger,'' ''The Wig'' and ''Absolutely Nothing to Get Excited About.'' Each is about a young and sensitive Black veteran of the Korean War who may or may not wish to become a writer and is trying to find a foothold in New York City. All are worth reading, but the prize is ''The Wig.'' Wright's hero senses he needs a gimmick to succeed in the white world, and he decides, with the help of a jar of hair relaxer, to create a luminous mane that comes to be known as ''the wig.'' His hair is so resplendent, and later so vividly red, that he wonders: ''Would Time magazine review this phenomenon under Medicine, Milestones, The Nation, Art, Show Business or U.S. Business?'' The hair takes his narrator only so far. But Wright's analysis of racial politics in America is an electric pleasure. --DG

READ IF YOU LIKE: Chris Rock's documentary ''Good Hair,'' struggling writers, Bob Kaufman's poetry, the films of Charles Burnett, restaurant mascots, Eddie Murphy's ''S.N.L.'' skit ''White Like Me.''

'Portnoy's Complaint,' by Philip Roth (1969)

Upon its publication in 1969, Roth's novel caused 100,000 Jewish mothers to plotz. The book is one long, vivid monologue from a lust-ridden young New Jersey man named Alexander Portnoy, as delivered to his psychoanalyst, Dr. Spielvogel. Alexander has mother issues. Mrs. Portnoy worries about everything, including the health of his two primary orifices. (''Alex, I don't want you to flush the toilet,'' she cries. ''I want to see what you've done in there.'') This novel made headlines for its graphic scenes of self-pleasuring; Alexander makes use of a cored-out apple, an empty milk bottle and (infamously) a piece of liver bound for his family's dinner table. Beneath the antic comedy is a sophisticated coming-of-age novel that digs deeply not only into sex but into issues of assimilation and social class. It was the firecracker that augured a great career, and it still delivers a bang. --DG

READ IF YOU LIKE: ''Shiva Baby,'' Lil Dicky, psychotherapy, ''Curb Your Enthusiasm,'' the fiction of Joshua Cohen, liver cutlets, mom tattoos.

'Oreo,' by Fran Ross (1974)

Ross's ''Oreo,'' her first and only novel, was published in 1974 and sank with barely a trace. Frustrated, Ross abandoned fiction to write for Richard Pryor. It's time for the culture to catch up to ''Oreo.'' It's about a young woman, half-Black, half-Jewish, on a quest to find her absent father, and the sexy humor flies freely from the first pages. Ross delights in language, mixing Yiddish with Black vernacular and turning words like ''friedan'' (as in Betty) and ''kuklux'' into verbs. In an introduction to a 2015 reissue, the novelist Danzy Senna got at why this book continues to resonate: '''Oreo' resists the unwritten conventions that still exist for novels written by Black women today. There's nothing redemptively uplifting about her work. The title doesn't refer to the Bible or the blues. The work does not refer to slavery. The character is never violated, sexually or otherwise.'' Ross's book is also among the great, joyful American food novels. One woman cooks so well that people are driven, quite literally, out of their minds. --DG

READ IF YOU LIKE: Pam Grier movies, Zabar's, Edna Lewis's cookbooks, Richard Pryor.

'Tales of the City,' by Armistead Maupin (1978)

Maupin's series of novels about San Francisco life begins in 1978 with ''Tales of the City.'' You can dip into these warm, accessible, heavily peopled and sweet-and-sour novels almost anywhere, but for the purposes of this list we're going to stick with the first three, which have been collected under the title ''28 Barbary Lane.'' The address is that of a large house, presided over by a pot-growing, free-spirited landlady, and occupied by diverse residents, gay, straight and otherwise. Has any other American writer loved his city so much and so well? San Francisco, under Maupin's gaze, becomes the setting for an elaborate comedy of manners, and the early novels were among the first mainstream works to put queer and straight characters on equal footing. Maupin's men and women came here to find themselves, and to find others like them. That they so often succeed makes these novels glow in your hands. ''This city,'' one character says, ''loosens people up.'' Maupin's novels are shaggy in spirit but shrewd in their observations. His prose brightens existence, and clarifies the things that matter. --DG

READ IF YOU LIKE: Sourdough bread, reruns of ''Friends'' and ''Will & Grace,'' David Sedaris, the documentary ''The Times of Harvey Milk.''

'Mrs. Caliban,' by Rachel Ingalls (1982)

Dorothy, a lonely housewife, falls in love with Larry, a giant sea creature who is open-minded and curious, eager to learn what he can about her and her world. Unlike Dorothy's inattentive, philandering husband, Larry can tell she's a marvel. Watching her closely as she clears up after breakfast, he asks if the ''dress'' she's wearing -- a nightgown and a bathrobe -- is ''a garment of celebration.'' The premise might be over the top, but the comedy is gentle: a (literal!) fish-out-of-water tale tempered by suburban sadness. Before meeting Larry, Dorothy lost a son; she also had a miscarriage. She imagines having a baby with her merman beau. A half-monster? Maybe. But also: ''Born on American soil to an American mother -- such a child could become president.'' --JS

READ IF YOU LIKE: The novels of Richard Yates, Daryl Hannah in ''Splash,'' herpetology, Guillermo del Toro's film ''The Shape of Water.''

'The Secret Diary of Adrian Mole, Aged 13¾,' by Sue Townsend (1982)

You can write from the point of view of an adolescent boy very earnestly and sincerely, as Judy Blume does in ''Then Again, Maybe I Won't'' -- or you can hover over the young fella with a wink, as Townsend does in this book that started a national franchise (with Mole eventually aging to ''the prostrate years'' of 39¼). Adrian is an only child in Thatcher-era England with ***working-class*** parents who are not getting along: His father drinks; his mother is discovering feminism. He has pimples, wet dreams, a paper route, an elderly friend and a huge crush on a classmate named Pandora. Convinced he is an intellectual, with an impressive reading list, he submits poems to the BBC. He maybe uses the word ''dead'' a wee bit much, but his naïve observations of complicated adult affairs in brief journal entries are pure life. --AJ

READ IF YOU LIKE: Mike Leigh movies, ''Diary of a Wimpy Kid,'' ''Fawlty Towers.''

'Heartburn,' by Nora Ephron (1983)

Lemonade. You won't find a recipe for it in Ephron's novel (though there are excellent ones for sorrel soup and Lillian Hellman's pot roast), but it's what she made of her lemon of a marriage to the Watergate reporter Carl Bernstein with this short but perfectly tart roman à clef that set tongues flapping and booksellers' cash registers a-chinging. Ephron had been a successful journalist herself; her only novel -- at under 200 pages, really more of a novella -- was a sort of palate cleanser before she made her name in Hollywood. And she brought her full show-business instincts to the character of Rachel Samstat (was that a play on samizdat?): a pregnant cookbook writer who attends group therapy, shops at Bloomingdale's and flies the Eastern shuttle (R.I.P.). With the rat-a-tat pace of 1940s screwball comedies and one-liners flying like fake fur, ''Heartburn'' is the quintessence of getting the last laugh. --AJ

READ IF YOU LIKE: Shiv and Tom's marriage in ''Succession,'' Stanley Tucci's memoir ''Taste,'' Laurie Colwin.

'Money: A Suicide Note,' by Martin Amis (1984)

''Money'' represents Amis, son of funny dad Kingsley, at the peak of his early Mick Jaggery powers, drawing from his experience working on the screenplay for the Stanley Donen sci-fi bomb ''Saturn 3.'' The novel -- ''novels ... they're all long, aren't they. I mean they're all so long'' is one of many arch lines -- burrows into the debauched transcontinental life of one John Self, an ad man with base appetites and offensive thoughts who drives a Fiasco sports car and is making his first feature film, or so he thinks. Supporting characters include Lorne Guyland (get it?), an actor based on Kirk Douglas; Selina Street, Self's unfaithful girlfriend; New York City in all its rich filth ... and Martin Amis. ''Some people will do anything to get their names in print,'' the narrator notes dryly. As a messy, bitter, split-open capsule of '80s celebrity and consumption, ''Money'' is priceless. --AJ

READ IF YOU LIKE: ''Othello,'' Dudley Moore in ''Arthur,'' the Patrick Melrose novels, authorial intrusion.

'The Mezzanine,' by Nicholson Baker (1988)

Baker is our master of the minute. The stream of consciousness in ''The Mezzanine,'' his first novel, is really more of a rivulet: the thoughts of an ordinary young man named Howie during a lunch hour spent contemplating the crazy variety of shampoo at a CVS (with once-glorious brands like Prell and Alberto V05 ''now in sorry vassalage on the bottom shelf of Aisle 1B''); buying new shoelaces; eating lunch that includes popcorn and a carton of milk; sitting in the sun reading Aurelius' ''Meditations''; and taking a short escalator ride back to work. Digressive, deeply footnoted, listy and lyrical, this novel is a perfect postcard from a time before smartphones hijacked the imagination and ''15-year cycles of journalistic excitement about one issue or another'' shrank to maybe 15 months, if not minutes. It's proof, in just under 150 pages, that the funniest things in life -- peculiar and ha-ha -- are those we wouldn't dare say out loud. --AJ

READ IF YOU LIKE: ''Seinfeld,'' Target runs, Maurice Ravel, paper drinking straws, scene-stealing footnotes, Samuel Beckett.

'A Far Cry From Kensington,' by Muriel Spark (1988)

Leave it to Spark to keep a profusion of plots delightfully contained with her spare, wry style. Told from the point of view of one Mrs. Hawkins, who spends her sleepless nights looking back on her life as a young war widow and book editor in 1950s London, this slip of a novel includes, among other things, anonymous threats, a fraudulent book publisher, the pseudoscience of radionics, the metaphysics of evil, a love story and an endorsement of cats. Mrs. Hawkins is brisk, smart and plain-spoken; she gets herself into a load of trouble when she insists that a well-connected hack writer named Hector Bartlett is, as she (repeatedly and unapologetically) puts it, a ''pisseur de copie.'' The epithet is this book's reliable refrain, always good for a laugh, but Spark's sly wit is what shimmers throughout. --JS

READ IF YOU LIKE: Mysteries, nimble adverbs, Barbara Pym, unreliable women, extreme candor.

'American Psycho,' by Bret Easton Ellis (1991)

''American Psycho,'' Ellis's novel about Patrick Bateman, a young Wall Street serial killer with an education from Exeter and Harvard, set off a moral panic when it was published in 1991. Feminist groups proposed boycotts; Ellis received death threats; his book tour was scuttled; a review in this newspaper was titled ''Snuff This Book!'' But over time -- thanks in no small part to the director Mary Harron's 2000 film adaptation -- the deadpan humor and acid satire in Ellis's novel became more apparent. Bateman, an ardent fan of Donald J. Trump, is a brazen sendup of a blank and soulless Wall Street generation. The skewering of New York City's restaurant scene in the 1980s (eagle carpaccio, anyone?) is just one of this novel's dark and uncommon delights. Like Tony Soprano and Walter White from ''Breaking Bad,'' Bateman has become a grinning all-American antihero. Who in recent literary fiction has created a more indelible villain? His blood-flecked smile contains American multitudes. --DG

READ IF YOU LIKE: ''Bodies Bodies Bodies,'' mud soup and charcoal arugula, ''A Clockwork Orange,'' very nice business cards, Huey Lewis and the News, ''Stan'' by Eminem, tarps.

'Bridget Jones's Diary,' by Helen Fielding (1996)

Fielding's what-the-hell sophomore novel -- few remember her first, ''Cause Celeb'' -- is a fizz-making time capsule of office flirtation before #MeToo (where else were pre-apps working people supposed to meet people?); weight anxiety before Ozempic (feminism hasn't conquered that either); and Cool Britannia overtaking a long reign of conservatism. And lest anyone dismiss the book as repackaged fish wrap (it started as a column in The Independent newspaper) or worse (shudder, ''chick lit''), let me remind you that its classic love plot is adroitly borrowed from Jane Austen's ''Pride and Prejudice,'' with a male hero named Darcy, other characters resembling Mr. Wickham and Mrs. Bennet, and keen observation of English manners and mores. Intertextuality, baby. Fielding gets the inner dialogue of a 30-something female Londoner raised on women's magazines, potato crisps and telly exactly right. Reveling in life's pleasures and acknowledging its anxieties, replete with relatable humiliations, this novel was the original bullet journal -- one that actually exploded onto the best-seller list. With good reason. --AJ

READ IF YOU LIKE: ''Fleabag,'' ''I Hate Suzie,'' chocolate, mini-breaks.

'The Quick and the Dead,' by Joy Williams (2000)

''All God's critters got a place in the choir,'' to quote the Bill Staines folk song, of which this thunderous novel, set in the desert Southwest, is like a minor-key version. There is taxidermy galore; a grim nursing home where ground greyhound meat might be on the menu; a trio of motherless teenage girls -- one of whom really, really dislikes cats; cactuses that take bullets. Mortality, in its messiness and surprise, splatters almost every page. A dead wife's ghost rears up to taunt her widower for lusting after his male gardener, and nobody says boo. Indignant about ecological injustice, unblinking toward ravages to the American West and quite violent, this book will make you cry until you laugh. --AJ

READ IF YOU LIKE: Noël Coward's ''Blithe Spirit,'' ''Eating Animals'' by Jonathan Safran Foer, ''Blazing Saddles,'' Sam Shepard.

'Then We Came to the End,' by Joshua Ferris (2007)

At least before the pandemic, many people spent more time at work than with their families. Like the television series ''The Office,'' whose American version came out around the same time as Ferris's novel, ''Then We Came to the End'' explores the idea that one's colleagues form -- certainly not a family, everyone knows not to buy that idea! -- some kind of misshapen collective, with interesting dynamics. The book, which takes its title from the first line of Don DeLillo's first novel, ''Americana,'' and relies inventively on the first-person plural, is set at an ad agency in Chicago during the dot-com bust. The specter of layoffs looms over the employees, who are anxiously competing to succeed at an impossible-seeming pro bono campaign: making people with breast cancer laugh. From Aeron chairs to emails, free food and tedious meetings, Ferris invokes the most mundane accouterments of white-collar culture for satire so dry it crackles. --AJ

READ IF YOU LIKE: ''Office Space,'' ''Severance,'' quiet-quitting TikToks, ''Bartleby the Scrivener.''

'The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao,' by Junot Díaz (2007)

This book is so terribly dark, and yet light and laugh-inducing. It concerns the titular Oscar Wao, an overweight and nerdy young man -- ''I'm a Morlock,'' he whispers, regarding himself in the mirror after a Dungeons & Dragons campaign -- who desperately wants to lose his virginity. It's also nothing less than the history of the Dominican Republic, specifically under the brutal rule of Rafael Trujillo, a.k.a. El Jefe, ''the Dictatingest Dictator Who Ever Dictatored.'' The ultimate joke here is the ''fukú,'' the name for a curse of the New World, which can explain any misfortune or tragedy (and there is tragedy aplenty in these pages). Told in freewheeling, profane Spanglish by Yunior, Oscar's rueful roommate from Rutgers, and laced with footnotes, the novel argues for writing as the thing that unjinxes, jolting and reordering old defeatist beliefs. --AJ

READ IF YOU LIKE: ''Jojo Rabbit,'' fast food, J.R.R. Tolkien, ''Akira,'' golden-age comic books, the Latin American Boom.

'I Am Not Sidney Poitier,' by Percival Everett (2009)

Everett is in the news this year because of the success of the film ''American Fiction,'' based on his darkly comic 2001 novel, ''Erasure.'' That book is well worth attending to, as are many in this prolific writer's oeuvre. But his flat-out funniest novel is ''I Am Not Sidney Poitier,'' from 2009. It's about a young man, an orphan, whose name is Not Sidney Poitier. He resembles the actor, and he seems to tumble through Poitier's entire filmography, sometimes in dream form. The effect is wild, extravagant and hysterical. One detail among many: Young Not Sidney lives for several years with Ted Turner, the CNN mogul, whose dialogue is pure bloviating inanity. He walks around asking questions like, ''Can you get fat in a weightless environment?'' As Not Sidney moves through the American South, contending with racist cops, Klan gatherings and a stint on a prison chain gang, the humor crackles and delivers visceral punches. --DG

READ IF YOU LIKE: Turner Classic Movies, media jokes, metafictional sentences like ''Silence fell on the table like a bad simile,'' Spike Lee films, critiques of trickle-down economics.

'Lightning Rods,' by Helen DeWitt (2011)

Did DeWitt really go there? Oh yes, she did. Joe, her sad sack of a hero, lands on a business plan to help corporate America boost productivity and reduce sexual harassment in one fell swoop: Women employed as ''lightning rods'' will supply office workers with anonymous, consensual sex on demand. A specially designed wall facilitates this ''innovation.'' The book's language is upbeat and can-do, while the bawdy market it depicts is utterly depraved. But DeWitt refuses to hang back, pushing her satire as far as it will go. Productivity does go up; sexual harassment does go down. Some of the lightning rods parlay the money they make into fabulous law careers. Joe has found the back door to the American dream: Make it sleazy, but also briskly efficient. --JS

READ IF YOU LIKE: Entrepreneurship, ''Secretary,'' bathroom architecture, WFH.

'Pym,' by Mat Johnson (2011)

Chris Jaynes -- a Black professor who has been sacked from his teaching job for refusing to serve on the campus diversity committee -- learns that the mythical island in ''The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket,'' Edgar Allan Poe's only novel, might in fact be real. So Jaynes puts together an all-Black expedition to the South Pole, hoping to find the Black islanders from Poe's book. What they find is Poe's white protagonist, Arthur Pym, very much alive, his 200-year-old body and his 200-year-old racism spectacularly well preserved. They also find enormous, grunting white beings whom Pym calls ''perfection incarnate.'' These creatures enslave Jaynes and his crew, who must plot an escape. Riffing on an old-fashioned adventure tale, Johnson spins a satirical fantasy all his own. --JS

READ IF YOU LIKE: Antiquarian manuscripts, down parkas, MF Doom's ''Take Me to Your Leader,'' Little Debbie snack cakes, the Abominable Snowman.

'The Sellout,' by Paul Beatty (2015)

Beatty's ''The Sellout'' might be this critic's favorite novel published this century. It's certainly the funniest. It's about a young Black man, born on the outskirts of Los Angeles, who becomes a seller of artisanal watermelon and weed. (One strain is called Anglophobia.) From this cannabis seed of a plot, Beatty takes aim at the American experiment. Real blood is spilled: The narrator's father is shot dead by police officers, basically for driving while Black. After a series of increasingly outrageous events, the narrator revives some of history's most shameful racial injustices and ends up defending himself in front of the Supreme Court. ''After a long pause,'' Beatty writes, ''I finally faced the bench and said, 'Your Honor, I plead human.''' Beatty's prose is ardent: He will put you in mind of the most esteemed Black comics of the past half-century (and of another author on this list, Charles Wright), but the humor bubbles up organically from his own literary sensibility. ''Bugs Bunny,'' Beatty points out, ''wasn't nothing but Br'er Rabbit with a better agent.'' --DG

READ IF YOU LIKE: Craft cannabis, Donald Glover, Los Angeles, the films ''Get Out'' and ''American Fiction.''

'Private Citizens,' by Tony Tulathimutte (2016)

Scathing, upsetting and generous all at once, this novel, about millennial friends in pre-2008-crash San Francisco, thrums with Tulathimutte's sly intelligence and unerring comic timing. Do-gooder Cory, cynical Linda, porn-addicted Will and passive Henrik start out like sitting ducks: self-regarding, irritating, easy to lampoon. Linda can't get past the ''two-week mark'' of a relationship before she starts feeling repulsed; Cory's bookshelf includes a copy of ''Atlas Shrugged,'' ''which she'd read just to hate it better.'' The book then takes a turn, getting simultaneously darker -- much darker -- and lighter. The characters become weirder and friendlier. The warm flashes make the satire cut deeper: Tulathimutte loves these imperfect young humans while seeing them for who they are. --JS

READ IF YOU LIKE: Exhibitionism, eavesdropping, David Foster Wallace, ''The Big Chill.''

'My Year of Rest and Relaxation,' by Ottessa Moshfegh (2018)

Moshfegh writes with a misanthropic aplomb that spills over into acid comedy. ''My Year of Rest and Relaxation,'' set in the year or so before 9/11, is about a young woman who becomes joyfully addicted to antidepressants and other meds, and to the sleep that results. Like Ivan Goncharov's Oblomov, she finds it hard to get out of bed. A practiced lotus-eater, she finds a drug that will help her realize her ambition to sleep nearly all the time. One problem: She begins to sleepwalk. (Once, she wakens to find that she has gone out and had her pubic hair waxed.) Moshfegh tugs at the political ramifications of her story; the impulse to sleep through a troubled period of history is not uncommon. Vastly more uncommon are the probity and wit she extracts from this dream of a story. --DG

READ IF YOU LIKE: ''Chaise Longue'' by Wet Leg, Trazodone, Fran Lebowitz, clean sheets, Aubrey Plaza.

'Lake of Urine: A Love Story,' by Guillermo Stitch (2020)

Fans of offbeat writers such as Flann O'Brien, Stella Gibbons and J.P. Donleavy, and admirers of the off-color puns in ''Finnegans Wake,'' here is a book for you. Stitch's ''Lake of Urine'' is a strange, warty, high-flying satire about love, lust and demented varieties of female empowerment. More specifically, it's about Urine and Noranbole Wakeling, sisters around whom young men lurk. Urine is sensitive and lovely -- and of gladiatorial disposition. Woe to men who aim to woo her. One arrives for a date to find that she has erected a huge wicker structure on a hilltop spelling out his name alongside an obscenity. Then she sets it, and his effigy, alight. We learn about ''the time she garroted Timothy Spencer's pony because he had been sitting on it when he had glanced at the hem of her frock.'' This novel appears to be set in the distant past, yet characters have USB ports. Urine winds up running an international conglomerate with an exorcist on the board of directors. I'm not sure I've ever read a book quite like this. Every character who wanders through it is, to use Primo Levi's words, ''as disheveled and bristly as a cat returning from a rooftop jamboree.'' --DG

READ IF YOU LIKE: Mud, Emma Stone in ''Poor Things,'' anecdotes about pickles, Monty Python, the droll music of David Berman.

Special thanks to Heritage Auctions.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/14/books/funny-novels-humor.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/14/books/funny-novels-humor.html)

**Graphic**

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[***A Nascent ‘YIMBY’ Movement***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:687T-S2N1-DXY4-X0XS-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** BRIEFING

**Length:** 1400 words

**Byline:** David Leonhardt

**Highlight:** Housing has become so expensive that college graduates are leaving New York, Los Angeles and other expensive cities.

**Body**

Housing has become so expensive that college graduates are leaving New York, Los Angeles and other expensive cities.

For generations, my mother’s family was solidly Northeastern. It was based around Philadelphia, and people rarely moved farther away than New England. But over the past two decades, all that has changed.

I am the only member of my generation who still lives in the Northeast — if you count the Washington, D.C., area as part of the Northeast. My sister lives in Colorado. My first cousins have moved to California, Colorado and Texas. Job opportunities and housing costs are major reasons for our dispersion.

My family is part of a national pattern. Over the past decade, college graduates have joined a trend that was already evident among lower-income Americans. They are increasingly moving out of the country’s most expensive metropolitan areas, according to [*a Times analysis of census data*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/05/15/upshot/migrations-college-super-cities.html).

Since even before the Covid pandemic began, more working-age college graduates have been leaving New York, Chicago and Los Angeles than moving to those areas. Over the past few years — as remote work became more common — the list of regions losing college-educated workers has grown to include San Francisco and Washington. Many of the people leaving those places have moved to less expensive major metro areas, like Atlanta, Austin, Dallas, Denver, Houston, Nashville, Phoenix and Tampa.

“My living room is bigger than any apartment in New York I ever had,” said Eduardo Lerro, 45, a former public-school teacher who now lives in Minneapolis and works as a consultant.

In many ways, the trend is a healthy one. Americans are responding rationally to financial incentives and building lives for themselves in new places. It helps that more cities have added amenities once associated with the Northeast and the West Coast.

“Many smaller and more affordable cities are simply more desirable than they used to be,” said my colleague Emily Badger, who did [*the new analysis*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/05/15/upshot/migrations-college-super-cities.html) along with Robert Gebeloff and Josh Katz. “There’s good Indian and Thai food to be found in more places. There are growing tech-worker scenes outside of the Bay Area. Many midsize cities have redeveloped their downtowns over the last 20 years.”

‘Grim indictment’

At the same time, the pattern highlights a major problem in many large U.S. metro areas: Housing has become so expensive that even professionals with relative high salaries are choosing to leave. Emily calls it “a pretty grim indictment of these places.” It is arguably the Democratic Party’s biggest failure at the local and state levels, given that the most expensive regions tend to be run by Democrats.

For people who chose to move, the decision can create inconveniences. My family, for example, has a harder time getting everybody together than when I was growing up. But the biggest hardships fall on ***working-class*** families that choose to remain in the country’s most expensive regions.

There are millions of such families. The relocation rate of Americans without a college degree has even declined in recent years, for complex reasons, as Emily notes. For these families, the cost of housing is a major barrier to a middle-class life.

All of which helps explain why the nascent effort to encourage more home-building in expensive regions — sometimes called the YIMBY movement, for Yes in My Backyard — may be one of the most important movements in American politics today.

Go deeper

Read more about the subject in recent Times coverage:

* President Biden is trying to appeal to ***working-class*** voters by emphasizing his plans to [*create jobs that do not require a college degree*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/15/us/politics/biden-working-class-voters.html).

1. New York City’s Black population [*has declined by nearly 200,000 people*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/01/31/nyregion/black-residents-nyc.html), or about 9 percent, in the past two decades, Troy Closson and Nicole Hong write.
2. Can New York fix its housing problems? [*It depends on the suburbs*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/29/nyregion/nyc-suburbs-homes-hochul.html).
3. “Housing is at long last [*a political priority,*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/28/opinion/new-york-housing-crisis.html)” Mara Gay of Times Opinion writes, while Peter Coy explains that [*Herbert Hoover deserves some blame*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/04/14/opinion/housing-nimby-zoning.html).
4. From Ezra Klein’s podcast: [*Why housing is so expensive*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/07/19/opinion/ezra-klein-podcast-jenny-schuetz.html), particularly in blue states, and how one California lawmaker [*is trying to change things*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/04/28/opinion/ezra-klein-podcast-scott-wiener.html).

THE LATEST NEWS

Politics

* The special counsel John Durham [*accused the F.B.I.*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/15/us/politics/trump-russia-investigation-durham.html) of ignoring mitigating facts in its Russia investigation. His report not find evidence of politically motivated misconduct, as Donald Trump had suggested.

1. An assailant [*with a baseball bat attacked two aides*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/15/us/politics/connolly-staffers-attacked.html) to a Democratic congressman in Virginia.
2. Black taxpayers have been [*far more likely to be audited*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/15/us/politics/irs-black-americans-tax-audit.html), the I.R.S. acknowledged.
3. Biden and Speaker Kevin McCarthy are meeting today to try to strike a debt limit deal. The White House expressed optimism. McCarthy [*said the two sides were not in a good place*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/16/us/politics/biden-mccarthy-debt-ceiling.html).
4. Philadelphia is holding a mayoral primary today. The [*winner will almost certainly lead the city*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/14/us/politics/philadelphia-mayor-democratic-.html).

Other Big Stories

* Turkey’s president, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, [*leads in an election*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/15/world/middleeast/turkey-election-polls-erdogan.html) that will head to a runoff this month.

1. A gunman [*opened fire on a residential street*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/15/us/farmington-new-mexico-shooting.html) in New Mexico, killing three people. The police said officers killed the 18-year-old shooter.
2. Russia [*arrested a former employee of the U.S. Embassy*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/15/world/europe/robert-shonov-detained-russia-moscow.html) in Moscow, Russian state media reported. His nationality is unknown.
3. The [*Tony Awards ceremony will proceed*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/15/theater/agreement-tony-awards-writers-strike.html) as scheduled on June 11. The writers’ union said it would not picket the show.
4. The W.H.O. recommends [*against using artificial sweeteners*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/15/well/eat/sweeteners-weight-loss-who.html): They don’t reduce weight and could increase the risk of Type 2 diabetes.

Opinions

Prosecutors have kept innocent people in prison. Not every prosecutor is willing to [*reconsider a conviction*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/16/opinion/randall-dale-adams-judicial-system.html), Lisa Belkin writes.

Christopher Blackwell has lived in state prisons, crumbling penitentiaries and isolation, but [*he was unprepared for a county jail*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/16/opinion/sunday/abuse-jail-prison.html).

Here are columns by Michelle Goldberg on [*school prayers*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/15/opinion/christian-nationalism-election-2024.html) and Paul Krugman on [*the economy*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/15/opinion/americans-negative-economy.html).

MORNING READS

Domestic diva: At 81, Martha Stewart is a [*swimsuit issue cover star*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/15/style/martha-stewart-sports-illustrated-cover.html).

Chonkosaurus: A [*hefty snapping turtle*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/14/us/snapping-turtle-chicago-chonkosaurus.html) has fans online.

“Succession”: Alan Ruck, who plays Connor, [*is ready to leave*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/15/arts/television/succession-alan-ruck.html) the Roy family.

Sports craze: It’s tennis vs. pickleball vs. padel. [*Or is it*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/11/sports/tennis/pickleball-platform-tennis-padel.html)

Healthy eyes: Are carrots good? Is blue light bad? [*Experts weigh in*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/15/well/live/eyesight-vision-habits.html).

Travel chaos: This gear will [*help you get through delays*](https://www.nytimes.com/wirecutter/blog/gear-for-air-travel-chaos/).

Advice from Wirecutter: The best stuff to [*bring to the beach*](https://www.nytimes.com/wirecutter/blog/cheap-things-for-beach/).

Lives Lived: The champion poker player Doyle Brunson — a.k.a. Texas Dolly — won 10 World Series of Poker events and influenced players with his definitive guide to Texas hold ’em and other games. [*He died at 89*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/15/sports/doyle-brunson-dead.html).

SPORTS NEWS FROM THE ATHLETIC

N.H.L. playoffs: Wyatt Johnston, 20, [*scored the clincher*](https://theathletic.com/4522602/2023/05/15/kraken-stars-game-7-score-result/) in the Stars’ victory over the Kraken, becoming the youngest player ever to net a game-winning goal in a Game 7.

N.B.A. lottery: The raffle to see which team will [*have the opportunity*](https://theathletic.com/4514339/2023/05/15/victor-wembanyama-nba-draft-lottery-breakdown/) to draft 7-foot-4 wunderkind Victor Wembanyama is tonight.

Side-eye glances: A [*strange moment*](https://theathletic.com/4522891/2023/05/16/yankees-blue-jays-aaron-judge/) in the Yankees’ win in Toronto last night led to tension between the two teams.

ARTS AND IDEAS

The big world of tiny objects

“The largest miniature dollhouse convention” — which recently drew more than 3,000 people in Chicago — may sound silly to some, but it is a serious matter for the sellers, Emma Orlow writes in The Times. Attendees sifted through thousands of tiny objects that fill tiny homes, including sponges, chocolate fondue fountains, rocking chairs and barbecue sets. [*Step inside the event through these photos*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/13/style/tom-bishop-chicago-international-miniatures-show.html).

PLAY, WATCH, EAT

What to Cook

Use your air fryer to make anything. Try [*grilled cheese*](https://cooking.nytimes.com/recipes/1023974-air-fryer-grilled-cheese), [*chicken breasts*](https://cooking.nytimes.com/recipes/1023761-air-fryer-chicken-breast), [*broccoli*](https://cooking.nytimes.com/recipes/1023612-air-fryer-broccoli) or [*cheesecake*](https://cooking.nytimes.com/recipes/1022925-air-fryer-cheesecake).

What to Watch

“Queen Charlotte: A Bridgerton Story” is set in [*an alternate, racially diverse*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/11/arts/television/queen-charlotte-bridgerton-history-shonda-rhimes.html) Regency-era Britain.

What to Read

Henry Threadgill’s memoir unfolds from his maddening Vietnam War experience [*to his boundary-pushing jazz career*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/15/books/review/henry-threadgill-easily-slip-into-another-world.html), Dwight Garner writes.

Now Time to Play

The pangram from yesterday’s Spelling Bee was competed. Here are [*today’s puzzle*](https://www.nytimes.com/puzzles/spelling-bee) and [*the Bee Buddy*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/upshot/spelling-bee-buddy.html), which helps you find remaining words.

And here are [*today’s Mini Crossword*](https://www.nytimes.com/crosswords/game/mini), [*Wordle*](https://www.nytimes.com/games/wordle/index.html) and [*Sudoku*](https://www.nytimes.com/puzzles/sudoku/easy).

Thanks for spending part of your morning with The Times. See you tomorrow. — David

P.S. Times journalists won [*nine awards*](https://www.nytco.com/press/new-york-press-club-honors-4/) from the New York Press Club, including one for an investigation of the football star Deshaun Watson.

Here’s [*today’s front page*](https://static01.nyt.com/images/2023/05/16/nytfrontpage/scan.pdf).

[*Sign up here to get this newsletter in your inbox*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing). Reach our team at [*themorning@nytimes.com*](mailto:themorning@nytimes.com).

PHOTO: Eduardo Lerro at his condo in Minnetonka, Minn. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Jenn Ackerman for The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** May 16, 2023

**End of Document**



[***Biden's Student Debt Plan Isn't Ideal. It's Still a Win.***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:667W-YSH1-JBG3-6131-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

August 27, 2022 Saturday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; Editorial Desk; Pg. 20

**Length:** 1105 words

**Byline:** By Tressie McMillan Cottom

**Body**

The Biden administration has finally delivered on its long anticipated student loan cancellation plans. The timing is critical: Midterm elections are around the corner. Just a few weeks ago, the consensus was that the Democratic Party was in trouble. But a series of policy wins has changed that narrative.

President Biden's executive order on student loans is another win.

The top-line debt cancellation numbers do not sound impressive at first: Ten thousand dollars will be forgiven for borrowers who earn less than $125,000 or households earning less than $250,000. But the policy has many layers. Taken together, it is a meaningful response that mostly gets the diagnosis for how we got here right.

The Student Loan Law Initiative at the University of California, Irvine School of Law and the Higher Education, Race and the Economy Lab analyzed Biden's executive order. They estimate that around 41 million debt holders will be eligible for some form of student loan forgiveness, and that 25 million of those people will be eligible for up to $20,000 in student loan forgiveness. Twenty million people, including 3.8 million Black borrowers, could have their entire debts canceled.

That isn't full debt cancellation, but it will help a lot of people. And the people it will help most are those who got the rawest deal. That includes the millions of people who have debt but no degree -- nearly one-third of all borrowers. It also includes people who took on student loans to pay for occupational degrees in blue-collar trades like cosmetology and mechanics. Republicans are criticizing the policy as giving handouts to the rich. They really want to implant the image of a Harvard liberal arts graduate getting a free pass. But cancellation is squarely targeted at the debt that ***working-class*** students have accrued to hold pretty ***working-class*** jobs. The G.O.P. will have a hard time telling those voters that this relief has not improved their lives.

Other parts of the policy address underlying problems that created the student loan boondoggle. Millions of people have paid their loans as promised, following the official guidance of student loan servicers, only to owe more than when they started with because of interest. This negative amortization made it nearly impossible for some borrowers to pay off their loans. And documented problems with public student loan forgiveness programs meant that this burden often fell heaviest on people with public interest careers, such as public defenders, teachers and social workers. Now, income-driven repayments for undergraduate loans will be capped at 5 percent of the borrower's take-home income. If you don't have a lot of discretionary income, that payment could be low -- too low to cover interest on the loan. Previously, this gap added up and increased the total amount owed. Under new guidelines, the government will cover that interest as long as the borrower is making payments. This does not get rid of the scourge of negative amortization for all borrowers. But it does two things: It effectively ends it for public interest workers. That lives up to the promise of public service loan forgiveness, which is that it becomes possible for people to do the work that society desperately needs done without living in eternal debt peonage. It also gives us a model for expanding that option for more borrowers in the future. It is a safe bet that student debt cancellation organizers are paying attention to that possibility.

The other bit of good news in the details of this proposal is targeted relief for borrowers who were also Pell grant recipients. Pell grants are a bright spot in our higher education financing ecosystem. They help reduce the impact of one of the biggest drivers of inequality in higher education access, affordability and returns: family income. As tuition costs have dramatically increased, Pell has struggled to keep up. Earlier this year, the Biden administration increased the maximum amount of money attached to Pell grants. When you add that increase to this proposal's targeted cancellation for anyone who currently or at any time in their undergraduate career qualified for Pell, it is a big help for poor families.

Class -- income and wealth -- is how the Biden administration prefers to deal with racial inequalities that stem from student loan debt. Black borrowers come from poorer families who have less income and less wealth to pay their tuition. Those borrowers take on more student loan debt and their families take on more family loans, like the PLUS program, to help them pay for college. This is acute at lower levels of student loan debt, such as the millions of borrowers that will be included in the $10,000 and $20,000 forgiveness amounts. But these racial differences in debt also show up at the top of distributions. Black borrowers take on a lot of debt to be competitive in the labor market, from associate's degrees to graduate programs. That debt then makes it hard for those borrowers to help their children pay for college. It's a vicious cycle. This program won't help those high-earning but negative wealth borrowers much.

It also won't reduce the cost of college, but it was not designed to. The executive branch does not have a lot of tools it can use to address that. What it does have is the big stick of federal student loan programs. It has used that stick in the past to make college more accessible, but at a cost that became too much for many borrowers to bear. The fight for affordability is primarily a state issue. Like abortion rights, public education and public health initiatives, the real battle for the future of higher education will happen at the state level.

As for the federal fight, organizers will ask for more cancellations. I believe that they should. And while this recent policy is not total debt cancellation, it is far from where the Biden administration started. It accounts for research on how the student loan crisis became such a crisis in the first place. The administration has reformed target areas where abuses are the most egregious: bad student loan servicing companies and predatory for-profit colleges. The latest analysis from Goldman Sachs projects that inflationary pressures will be mild, at most. Restarting payments offsets a lot of the modeled risk. And this relief comes for poor and ***working-class*** families just as they start tuning in to midterm races. It is hard to argue that this is anything but good news for millions of people -- and for the Democrats.

Sometimes policy helps people, and sometimes those people remember it when it is time to vote.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/26/opinion/student-loan-debt-cancellation.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/26/opinion/student-loan-debt-cancellation.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO (PHOTOGRAPH BY DAMON WINTER/THE NEW YORK TIMES)

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**End of Document**



[***On German Stages, Women Take Control; Theater Review***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:66WD-8F81-DXY4-X1DP-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

November 17, 2022 Thursday 15:05 EST

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**Section:** THEATER

**Length:** 1392 words

**Byline:** A.J. Goldmann

**Highlight:** Female-led productions in Hamburg and Munich — including an Annie Ernaux adaptation and a reworking of Ibsen’s “A Doll’s House” — pack both a theatrical and a moral punch.

**Body**

Female-led productions in Hamburg and Munich — including an Annie Ernaux adaptation and a reworking of Ibsen’s “A Doll’s House” — pack both a theatrical and a moral punch.

HAMBURG, Germany — Shortly after the announcement last month that the French writer Annie Ernaux had won the Nobel Prize in Literature, there was a run on the box office at the Deutsches Schauspielhaus here: All the tickets for the theater’s adaptation of Ernaux’s 2000 memoir, “Happening,” sold out.

In Annalisa Engheben’s minimal production, the audience sits in an oval formation in a small, blindingly white room in an upper foyer of the Schauspielhaus, one of Hamburg’s main theaters. In the center of the room is a sculptural assemblage of hard plastic limbs: a knotty tangle of arms, legs and buttocks designed by the South Korean set designer Sanghwa Park.

For little over an hour, the actresses Sandra Gerling, Josefine Israel and Sasha Rau perform around, under and on top of Park’s massive sculpture. With calm and steely focus, they collectively recite — although “conjure” is perhaps a more accurate word — a nightmarish saga in which Ernaux rid herself of an unwanted pregnancy at age 23, in 1963, when abortion was still a crime in France. (The procedure was legalized there in 1975.)

The adaptation, by Engheben and Finnja Denkewitz, alternates Ernaux’s lengthy descriptive, narrative and philosophical passages with short, focused exchanges of dialogue, and does a commendable job of distilling the book’s essence. As the three actresses circle one another, the audience and the central sculpture, they evoke Ernaux’s story lucidly and directly through spoken word and body language, as well as simple props, including balls of blue yarn and a bucket of water.

By including a number of Ernaux’s ruminations and digressions about the nature of her writing, the working of memory and the ethics of basing literature on real-life stories, Engheben’s production avoids a pitfall that [*the French director Audrey Diwan’s 2021 film version*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/05/movies/happening-review-abortion.html), which won the Golden Lion at the Venice Film Festival, succumbed to: By letting us hear these reflections, the Hamburg production, though tense and claustrophobic, does not feel reduced to a thriller.

“Maybe the true purpose of my life is for my body, my sensations and my thoughts to become writing,” Ernaux muses at the end of “Happening.”

The project of turning life into literature also lies at the heart of the young French author Édouard Louis’s work; this 30-year-old darling of the French literary scene has five best-selling autobiographical novels to his credit. By now, Louis has told the story of his unhappy ***working-class*** childhood from no fewer than three perspectives: his own, in his first novel, “The End of Eddy”; his defeated, alcoholic dad’s, in “Who Killed My Father”; and, most recently, his mother’s, in the 2021 book “A Woman’s Battles and Transformation.”

A dramatic adaptation that uses the novel’s German title, “A Woman’s Freedom,” helped inaugurate the season at the Münchner Kammerspiele, in Munich, last month, where the play formed half a “double feature” with a rewrite of Ibsen’s “A Doll’s House.” Both productions were staged by Felicitas Brucker, a young German director who scored a coup at the Kammerspiele last year with an electrifying staging of Wolfram Lotz’s wild dramatic monologue, [*“The Politicians”*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/10/28/theater/muenchner-volkstheater-uenchner-kammersipele.html); the three extraordinary actors who made that earlier production such a triumph are part of the small cast.

Like “Happening,” the Munich production of “A Woman’s Freedom” is a series of monologues drawn verbatim from the novel and performed by three actors — Katharina Bach, Thomas Schmauser and Edmund Telgenkämper — who take turns inhabiting Louis, his father and, most crucially, his mother, Monique Belleguelle.

Monique, like most of the characters in Louis’s universe, is trapped by her ***working-class*** background. Her life is circumscribed by the violence of poverty, abusive relationships and her crushing duties as wife and mother. But, unlike Louis’s broken father, who is undone by alcoholism and bad health, and let down by French politicians who have abandoned the ***working class***, Monique finds the resolve and the courage to escape her misery. At the end of the book, and the stage adaptation, she moves to Paris, and even gets to enjoy a smoke with Catherine Deneuve.

In front of a simple white wall, the performers bring key scenes vividly to life with energetic performances, in a pared-down production that is hypercharged by projections, music, dancing and broken bottles. Even so, the staging’s overall impact is slight. In Germany in particular, Louis’s works have been proliferating onstage. Despite the dynamic and vibrant performances, “A Woman’s Freedom” lacks the grandly theatrical force of [*Thomas Ostermeier’s 2018 Berlin adaptation of Louis’s “History of Violence,”*](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/06/21/theater/berlin-theater-history-of-violence-decameron.html) arguably the best stage adaptation of the author’s work to date.

Brucker’s “Doll’s House” adaptation, called “Nora” and billed by the theater as “a thriller,” is the more involved and involving of the double-header’s two halves. Although three additional texts by contemporary female authors have been inserted into the play, it remains a largely faithful version of Ibsen’s play about a Norwegian housewife who, over an emotionally trying Christmas, becomes aware of her subjugation and makes the decision to walk out on her family.

A new prologue, by the Israeli author Sivan Ben Yishai, is little more than an extended read-through of the dramatis personae. It quickly grows tiresome, but it’s over before you know it. More meaningful are new passages by the Croatian Swiss author Ivna Zic, in which Nora’s abandoned sons and daughter struggle to come to terms, years later, with their mother’s decision to leave. Last of all, the Austrian writer Gerhild Steinbuch furnishes some fresh monologues for the play’s supporting characters, and Nora herself, including in the final scene.

Ultimately, these new texts make less of an impression than the atmospheric production and the vigorous performances that enliven it. And despite the contemporary interpolations, Brucker’s dramaturgically direct and uncluttered production feels surprisingly like a straightforward version of Ibsen’s late 19th-century play.

In the title role, Bach, a permanent member of the Kammerspiele acting ensemble who is perhaps the company’s most magnetic actress, exudes tremendous power and control. From the beginning of the drama, her affable and genteel demeanor hides a thinly concealed ferocity and strength of character. Once uncoiled by the threat of blackmail and later, the admonishments of her husband, Torvald, her intelligence bursts forth with intoxicating and indomitable force. Along with the other four performers in this reduced version — Bach’s two co-stars from “A Woman’s Freedom,” joined by Svetlana Belesova and Vincent Redetzki — Bach navigates Viva Schudt’s distinctive set, which resembles an upside-down haunted house whose slanted walls the actors scale with the aid of Velcro shoes.

While mores have changed in the century and a half since “A Doll’s House” was first performed, Nora’s awakening to the stifling and infantilized role she has been assigned has lost little of its urgency or its dramatic and psychological persuasiveness. In its day, Ibsen’s play was scandalous: For its German premiere, in Hamburg in 1880, the playwright retooled the ending by making it ambiguous whether Nora stayed or went.

Ibsen’s heroine was as radically out of step with her 19th-century milieu as Ernaux was with French society 80 years later. For them, as for Monique Belleguelle, taking control of their destinies meant overcoming formidable barriers. By letting us, as spectators, witness that process of self-emancipation at close range, these female-led productions in Hamburg and Munich pack both a theatrical and a moral punch.

Das Ereignis. Directed by Annalisa Engheben. Deutsche Schauspielhaus, though Nov. 27.

Nora. Directed by Felicitas Brucker. Münchner Kammerspiele, through Dec. 30.

Die Freiheit einer Frau. Directed by Felicitas Brucker. Münchner Kammerspiele, through Dec. 28.

PHOTO: From left: Josefine Israel, Sandra Gerling and Sasha Rau in “Happening,” directed by Annalisa Engheben at the Deutsches Schauspielhaus in Hamburg, Germany. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Sinje Hasheider FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** November 21, 2022

**End of Document**



[***A Post-Roe Agenda for the G.O.P.***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65DF-5701-DXY4-X0W6-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

May 9, 2022 Monday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; Editorial Desk; Pg. 25; GUEST ESSAY

**Length:** 1532 words

**Byline:** By Patrick T. Brown

**Body**

The leak of Justice Samuel Alito's draft opinion in Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization allows social conservatives a glimpse into a post-Roe future. If his draft ends up the majority opinion, those who marched and prayed and rallied and voted for half a century to recognize in law the value of every human life will soon be celebrating -- and rightly so.

In the wake of such a victory, the movement that describes itself as pro-life and pro-family must encompass a broader vision of policy than just prohibiting access to abortion. Activists who have worked to render abortion not just illegal but also unthinkable are tired of having to respond to the shopworn cliché about being pro-life only until the baby is born. But a world in which states have the power to restrict abortion is one that compels a greater claim on public resources to support expectant mothers facing crisis pregnancies and to seek to make all parents' lives a little easier.

Some Republicans who were elected on anti-abortion rhetoric might find themselves politically vulnerable -- unless they lean into the ongoing political realignment and put themselves on the side of ***working-class*** parents. The end of Roe will mean that pro-family rhetoric will need to be backed up with policy proposals that match.

Culture war issues like critical race theory and gender ideology have led some Republicans to adopt the moniker of a ''parents' party,'' but fully meriting that title requires addressing families' biggest concerns, both culturally and economically. An authentically pro-life, pro-family approach must take seriously the challenges that women and families experience not only during and immediately after pregnancy but also in the years that follow.

The first area of focus needs to be the immediate needs of women facing unexpected pregnancies. As John Seago, the legislative director of Texas Right to Life, told The Atlantic last September, a post-Roe society ''would require a higher level of commitment and investment'' than the work already being done by crisis pregnancy centers and other ministries aimed at supporting mothers.

Some women who choose abortion do so reluctantly or feel forced into it by economic circumstances. Helping women, including low-income and ***working-class*** women, gain access to more resources during pregnancy and after childbirth will reduce the demand for abortion while state legislatures pass bills restricting the supply.

Republican lawmakers should coalesce around a legislative package that takes seriously the unique needs of mothers and their babies. The Biden administration's temporary expansion of Medicaid and Children's Health Insurance Program coverage to mothers for up to one year postpartum should be made permanent. A modest paid leave program should ensure that all parents are able to take at least a few weeks off work around the birth of a child. Funding could be expanded for traditionally bipartisan efforts like home visiting programs and the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children.

The traditional limited-government response might have been to oppose this kind of social spending for fear of encouraging dependency or reducing labor-force participation. But a growing recognition that policy should treat families that want to have a parent at home equitably and should prioritize those early, irreplaceable months of parent-child bonding is gradually leading Republicans in a direction that could come to terms with greater support for expectant and new mothers.

Beyond the programs immediately relevant to childbirth, policymakers should turn their attention to the demands placed on parents after those first, sleepless postpartum nights. Conservative politicians could take a major step toward strengthening the family as the core unit of society by making all working families eligible for an expanded child tax credit.

Before last year's temporary expansion, roughly one-third of American kids -- about 23 million children -- lived in families that received less than the full amount of the child benefit. (For example, before the expansion, a family with two kids making $20,000 annually would be eligible for a child tax credit check of only $2,625, while one making $200,000 would receive the full $4,000.) Changing the suite of child-related benefits in the tax code to a $300 monthly benefit, with an additional $50 per month for children under 6, would be a tangible way of making low-income and ***working-class*** parents' lives easier.

Last year, of course, the Biden administration expanded the child tax credit to virtually all families, including those with no workers. But as I explored for The Times last year, many ***working-class*** parents viewed the idea of unconditional cash benefits going to families without a worker as fundamentally unfair. Polling, too, suggests that child benefits with no connection to work are unpopular.

A conservative pro-family economic agenda would incorporate the insight that work is an important part of being engaged in society and providing for one's family. This principle could be connected to the child tax credit in a method designed to be clear and administratively simple: To be eligible for the monthly payments, families would be required to hit an earnings threshold, such as the single-person federal poverty line ($13,590 a year in 2022). Families with earnings below that threshold would see their benefit scaled down, assuaging conservative concerns about perverse labor force incentives. (Parents who earned 50 percent of the threshold would, for instance, see their monthly child benefit amount reduced by half but continue to be eligible for safety-net programs.)

This approach would create an easily understandable linkage between receiving the child benefit and having at least one parent working and would be partly paid for by collapsing the tangle of existing child benefits, earned-income tax credit adjustments and child care deductions into a straightforward monthly benefit. It would recognize that families shouldn't lose benefits for having additional children and ensure that low-income couples don't face a marriage penalty.

Beyond the tax code, congressional Republicans could play to their supply-side strengths and champion a cost-of-living agenda aimed at some of parents' biggest headaches: health care, child care and housing. They could listen to Robert Orr of the center-right Niskanen Center and boost the number of medical professionals while experimenting with increased cost sharing for maternal and child health care. They could expand child care options by bolstering the capacity of faith-based and community providers rather than relying on large-scale subsidies. And they could lower the cost of housing by attacking environmental regulations and restrictive zoning laws that make it difficult for housing supply to meet demand.

This policy agenda will require Republicans to restrain their usual impulse to reach for tax cuts as a cure-all. But if it is put into practice, they can showcase how parents' lives can be made easier by applying traditional conservative principles about work, incentives and regulation to contemporary problems, without necessitating Build Back Better-style federal intervention.

A favorable Dobbs decision would certainly not turn the G.O.P. into a European-style Christian democratic party overnight. But some state-level action is showing signs of a party trending in a more pro-family direction while retaining its core principles. Texas' backdoor abortion ban got most of the headlines, but the state also passed a bipartisan expansion of Medicaid for mothers up to six months after giving birth. Idaho and Oklahoma, with legislatures dominated by Republicans, have introduced state-level child tax credits, and the politically divided Minnesota may become the 10th to do so, as part of ongoing budget negotiations.

At the national level, key Republican figures, including Senators Marco Rubio and Mitt Romney and the Ohio Senate candidate J.D. Vance, have suggested a more ***working-class***-friendly economic agenda. And whatever else can be said about the Trump presidency, his disruption of conventional G.O.P. policies means certain economic pieties can now be openly questioned.

The end of Roe will require a new type of politics. A G.O.P. that styles itself as more populist has the opportunity to demonstrate its commitment to pregnant women and families writ large. If they fail to do so, they will not only put their political victories at risk but also leave unprotected the very people the movement to end Roe has sought to help: pregnant women and their unborn children.

Patrick T. Brown (@PTBwrites) is a fellow at the Ethics and Public Policy Center, a conservative think tank, and a former senior policy adviser to Congress's Joint Economic Committee.

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**Graphic**

PHOTO (PHOTOGRAPH BY MARK MAKELA/GETTY IMAGES)

**Load-Date:** May 9, 2022

**End of Document**



[***Not the Win We Wanted, but a Win Nonetheless***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:667S-N5N1-JBG3-60B1-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

August 26, 2022 Friday 13:25 EST

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 1110 words

**Byline:** Tressie McMillan Cottom

**Highlight:** Biden’s plan for student loan forgiveness is an important step forward.

**Body**

The Biden administration has finally delivered on its long anticipated student loan cancellation plans. The timing is critical: Midterm elections are around the corner. Just a few weeks ago, the consensus was that the Democratic Party was in trouble. But a series of policy [*wins*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/07/30/us/politics/biden-inflation-economy-approval.html) has changed that narrative.

President Biden’s executive order on student loans is another win.

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That isn’t full debt cancellation, but it will help a lot of people. And the people it will help most are those who got the rawest deal. That includes the millions of people who have debt but no degree — nearly one-third of all borrowers. It also includes people who took on student loans to pay for occupational degrees in blue-collar trades like cosmetology and mechanics. Republicans are criticizing the policy as giving handouts to the rich. They really want to implant the image of a Harvard liberal arts graduate getting a free pass. But cancellation is squarely targeted at the debt that ***working-class*** students have accrued to hold pretty ***working-class*** jobs. The G.O.P. will have a hard time telling those voters that this relief has not improved their lives.

Other parts of the policy address underlying problems that created the student loan boondoggle. Millions of people have paid their loans as promised, following the official guidance of student loan servicers, only to owe more than when they started with because of interest. This negative amortization made it nearly impossible for some borrowers to pay off their loans. And documented problems with public student loan forgiveness programs meant that this burden often fell heaviest on people with public interest careers, such as public defenders, teachers and social workers. Now, income-driven repayments for undergraduate loans will be capped at 5 percent of the borrower’s take-home income. If you don’t have a lot of discretionary income, that payment could be low — too low to cover interest on the loan. Previously, this gap added up and increased the total amount owed. Under new guidelines, the government will cover that interest as long as the borrower is making payments. This does not get rid of the scourge of negative amortization for all borrowers. But it does two things: It effectively ends it for public interest workers. That lives up to the promise of public service loan forgiveness, which is that it becomes possible for people to do the work that society desperately needs done without living in [*eternal debt peonage*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/21/opinion/cancel-student-loan-debt.html). It also gives us a model for expanding that option for more borrowers in the future. It is a safe bet that student debt cancellation organizers are paying attention to that possibility.

The other bit of good news in the details of this proposal is targeted relief for borrowers who were also Pell grant recipients. Pell grants are a bright spot in our higher education financing ecosystem. They help reduce the impact of one of the biggest drivers of inequality in higher education access, affordability and returns: family income. As tuition costs have dramatically increased, Pell has struggled to keep up. Earlier this year, the Biden administration increased the maximum amount of money attached to Pell grants. When you add that increase to this proposal’s targeted cancellation for any people who currently or at any time in their undergraduate career qualified for Pell, it is a big help for poor families.

Class — income and wealth — is how the Biden administration prefers to deal with racial inequalities that stem from student loan debt. [*Black borrowers*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/02/podcasts/transcript-ezra-klein-show-louise-seamster.html) come from poorer families who have less income and less wealth to pay their tuition. Those borrowers take on more student loan debt and their families take on more family loans, like the PLUS program, to help them pay for college. This is acute at lower levels of student loan debt, such as the millions of borrowers that will be included in the $10,000 and $20,000 forgiveness amounts. But these racial differences in debt also show up at the top of distributions. Black borrowers take on a lot of debt to be competitive in the labor market, from associate’s degrees to graduate programs. That debt then makes it hard for those borrowers to help their children pay for college. It’s a vicious cycle. This program won’t help those high-earning but negative wealth borrowers much.

It also won’t reduce the cost of college, but it was not designed to. The executive branch does not have a lot of tools it can use to address that. What it does have is the big stick of federal student loan programs. It has used that stick in the past to make college more accessible, but at a cost that became too much for many borrowers to bear. The fight for affordability is primarily a state issue. Like abortion rights, public education and public health initiatives, the real battle for the future of higher education will happen at the state level.

As for the federal fight, organizers will ask for more cancellations. I believe that they should. And while this recent policy is not total debt cancellation, it is far from where the Biden administration started. It accounts for research on how the student loan crisis became such a crisis in the first place. The administration has reformed target areas where abuses are the most egregious: bad student loan servicing companies and predatory for-profit colleges. The latest analysis from Goldman Sachs projects that inflationary pressures will be mild, at most. Restarting payments offsets a lot of the modeled risk. And this relief comes for poor and ***working-class*** families just as they start tuning in to midterm races. It is hard to argue that this is anything but good news for millions of people — and for the Democrats.

Sometimes [*policy*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/24/business/biden-student-loan-forgiveness.html) helps people, and sometimes those people remember it when it is time to vote.

PHOTO (PHOTOGRAPH BY DAMON WINTER/THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** August 29, 2022

**End of Document**



[***In France, Opposition Parties Vow To Fight Pension Change Together***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67T0-2SV1-DXY4-X54M-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

March 17, 2023 Friday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; Foreign Desk; Pg. 8

**Length:** 1118 words

**Byline:** By Catherine Porter and Constant Méheut

**Body**

Parties from the left and right erupted in anger after learning of the government's plans to adopt the measure without a vote.

PARIS -- Lawmakers filled the grand chamber of the National Assembly, climbing into the crimson-colored seats that curl in a semicircle around a room that has been the crucible of democratic debate in France since the French Revolution. The tension was palpable.

A bill that would extend the legal age of retirement to 64 from 62 had already passed the Senate. Now, the members of the Assembly had just been told they would not be given the chance to vote on the measure. Instead, it would be pushed through in a procedural move permitted by the constitution.

The rebellious left-wing members of France Unbowed burst into rounds of the Marseillaise -- the war-song-turned-national-anthem. They held up white paper signs that announced: ''64 years, It's a No.'' Across the room, members of the far right National Rally -- normally their political enemies, but in this suspended moment, their allies -- pounded on their desks.

The noise came to a climax when the president of the Parliament took her lion-armed seat and announced the arrival of Prime Minister Élisabeth Borne.

''Ladies and Gentleman,'' Ms. Borne began from the speaker's dais. ''If everyone voted according to their conscience and in line with their past positions, we would not be here this afternoon.'' But her words were all but drowned out amid all the singing and banging.

Less than ten minutes later, she was gone from the room, followed by blank-faced government ministers and furious opposition lawmakers, who stormed downstairs to denounce the government before an army of outstretched microphones.

It was a scene like few others in modern French politics, one that left viewers whip-lashed and stunned, wondering if they had witnessed a decisive moment that could jeopardize President Emmanuel Macron's mandate and what would come next.

''Today is the first day of the end of Emmanuel Macron's term,'' Mathilde Panot, the head of France Unbowed in the National Assembly, shouted to a crush of reporters that jammed a marble room downstairs.

Behind another nest of microphones nearby, Marine Le Pen, the leader of the far-right National Rally party, lashed out at the French president. ''It's a total failure for Emmanuel Macron,'' she said, with a sly smile.

Opposition parties vowed to bind together and bring the government down with a no-confidence motion that they planned to introduce on Friday. Later, union leaders announced another national day of strikes and protests for next week -- the ninth such mobilization in two months.

Still, whether those threats would transform into successful action, forcing the government to backtrack, was far from clear. In recent history only one no-confidence motion has succeeded.

The scene that spilled out of the National Assembly captured both the national mood of anger and frustration, and the uncertainty of what comes next.

People flooded across the Seine into the Place de la Concorde, a busy traffic circle that 230 years ago was named Revolutionary Square. It was here that both King Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette lost their heads.

Crowds of students marched in phalanxes, chanting ''All together, all together, general strike!'' Union members roared in with their vans, topped by giant balloons. Protesters poured in, hoisting signs that read ''Democracy is in the Street'' and ''That's enough,'' in a dense crowd that continued to thicken.

People vented their anger at the government's use of a special constitutional power to push through the bill without a ballot.

''It really disgusts me,'' said Romain Le Riguer, a 20-year-old literature student, who had spontaneously come to the plaza. ''For weeks we protested. How can they ignore that? It's so contemptuous.''

For a brief moment, it looked like the crowd would march back to the National Assembly, led by Jean-Luc Mélenchon, a prominent leftist politician. But Mr. Mélenchon quickly disappeared after a brief face-off with lines of armor-clad riot police officers blocking the bridge.

Protesters were bunched into groups and scattered around the square amid a sea of flags and balloons. A man sold jambon-beurre sandwiches out of a van. A woman handed out chocolate. A group of women called ''Les Rosies'' led the crowd in a choreographed dance to Gloria Gaynor's ''I Will Survive.'' They had changed the lyrics to reflect the battle: ''To the grave for the ***working class***. No to 64 years.''

The ambience was festive. There were few of the well-oiled protest features, including protest marshals, union leaders holding long banners or demonstrators blowing foghorns.

''Do you know where the protest is?'' asked one student to a cluster of union members, who laughed and told him they thought he had arrived.

Many vowed to continue protesting for as long as it takes to pressure the government to repeal the law. ''It happened before,'' said Isabelle Mollaret, a children's librarian in the crowd, referring to a wave of demonstrations in 2006 that forced the government to repeal a contested youth-jobs contract.

She held a sign that read, ''Macron, you aren't the boss. Give back the money.''

''We will spontaneously protest all over France and support the workers who are striking and blocking important infrastructure,'' said Ms. Mollaret, 47. ''We will fight him!''

The specter of the Yellow Vest movement remains heavy in the French consciousness. Four years ago, a group of disgruntled ***working class*** protesters vandalized the Arc de Triomphe -- visible just up the street from the Place de la Concorde -- smashed many nearby storefronts and sparred with riot police, leading to hundreds of arrests and stunning the government.

Whether this outpouring of emotion will grow into a similar movement remains to be seen. Later, protesters set fire to wooden pallets and iron fences on the Place de la Concorde. As night fell, riot police unleashed tear gas and charged the crowd in an effort to disperse it. People scattered, with some small groups rampaging through western Paris, flipping scooters and lighting heaps of uncollected trash on fire.

Already, some protesters were calling for general strikes, pointing to 1995, the year when strikes against a previous pension bill paralyzed France for weeks, forcing the government to abandon its plans.

''We need to block the country, totally,'' said Léa Martinez-Comelli, a member of the C.G.T., France's second biggest union. ''Hospitals, schools, garbage, collectors, trains -- everything must stop.''

Aurelien Breeden and Tom Nouvian contributed reporting.Aurelien Breeden and Tom Nouvian contributed reporting.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/16/world/europe/france-pension-protests.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/16/world/europe/france-pension-protests.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Members of La France Insoumise, a left-wing party, outside Parliament in Paris on Thursday. (PHOTOGRAPH BY YOAN VALAT/EPA, VIA SHUTTERSTOCK)

''It's a total failure for Emmanuel Macron,'' said Marine Le Pen. (PHOTOGRAPH BY THOMAS PADILLA/ASSOCIATED PRESS) This article appeared in print on page A8.

**Load-Date:** March 17, 2023

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[***The Pro-Family Agenda Republicans Should Embrace After Roe; Guest Essay***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65D2-HWH1-DXY4-X4BM-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

May 7, 2022 Saturday 22:18 EST

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 1531 words

**Byline:** Patrick T. Brown

**Highlight:** The movement that describes itself as pro-life must encompass a broader vision of policy than just prohibiting access to abortion.

**Body**

The leak of Justice Samuel Alito’s draft opinion in Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization allows social conservatives a glimpse into a post-Roe future. If his draft ends up the majority opinion, those who marched and prayed and rallied and voted for half a century to recognize in law the value of every human life will soon be celebrating — and rightly so.

In the wake of such a victory, the movement that describes itself as pro-life and pro-family must encompass a broader vision of policy than just prohibiting access to abortion. Activists who have worked to render abortion not just illegal but also unthinkable are tired of having to respond to the shopworn cliché about being pro-life only until the baby is born. But a world in which states have the power to restrict abortion is one that compels a greater claim on public resources to support expectant mothers facing crisis pregnancies and to seek to make all parents’ lives a little easier.

Some Republicans who were elected on anti-abortion rhetoric might find themselves [*politically vulnerable*](https://www.washingtonpost.com/us-policy/2022/05/03/gop-families-roe-wade/) — unless they lean into the ongoing political realignment and put themselves on the side of ***working-class*** parents. The end of Roe will mean that pro-family rhetoric will need to be backed up with policy proposals that match.

Culture war issues like critical race theory and gender ideology have led some Republicans to adopt the moniker of a “[*parents’ party*](https://www.wsj.com/articles/youngkin-parents-critical-race-theory-election-virginia-mcauliffe-governor-crt-education-11635949199?mod=opinion_lead_pos5),” but fully meriting that title requires addressing families’ biggest concerns, both culturally and economically. An authentically pro-life, pro-family approach must take seriously the challenges that women and families experience not only during and immediately after pregnancy but also in the years that follow.

The first area of focus needs to be the immediate needs of women facing unexpected pregnancies. As John Seago, the legislative director of Texas Right to Life, told [*The Atlantic*](https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2021/09/texas-abortion-ban-supreme-court/619953/?utm_content=edit-promo&amp;utm_campaign=the-atlantic&amp;utm_term=2021-09-02T11%3A20%3A10&amp;utm_source=facebook&amp;utm_medium=social&amp;fbclid=IwAR09ctIEzMjrH55m0amZ5jo0hxbd_WlYxdDUAulSIVym0HEBf4JGvlCz1vU) last September, a post-Roe society “would require a higher level of commitment and investment” than the work already being done by crisis pregnancy centers and other ministries aimed at supporting mothers.

Some women who choose abortion do so [*reluctantly*](https://bostonreview.net/articles/why-i-provide-abortions/) or feel forced into it by [*economic*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2021/12/14/upshot/who-gets-abortions-in-america.html) circumstances. Helping women, including low-income and ***working-class*** women, gain access to more resources during pregnancy and after childbirth will reduce the demand for abortion while state legislatures pass bills restricting the supply.

Republican lawmakers should coalesce around a legislative package that takes seriously the unique needs of mothers and their babies. The Biden administration’s [*temporary expansion*](https://www.kff.org/policy-watch/postpartum-coverage-extension-in-the-american-rescue-plan-act-of-2021/) of Medicaid and Children’s Health Insurance Program coverage to mothers for up to one year postpartum should be made permanent. A [*modest paid leave*](https://ifstudies.org/ifs-admin/resources/ifs-paidleavereport-final.pdf) program should ensure that all parents are able to take at least a few weeks off work around the birth of a child. Funding could be expanded for traditionally bipartisan efforts like home visiting programs and the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children.

The traditional limited-government response might have been to oppose this kind of social spending for fear of encouraging dependency or reducing labor-force participation. But a growing [*recognition*](https://www.republicanleader.senate.gov/newsroom/remarks/democrats-toddler-takeover-huge-childcare-inflation-and-discrimination-against-religion) that policy should treat families that want to have a [*parent at home*](https://www.nationalreview.com/magazine/2019/03/11/leaning-out/) equitably and should prioritize those early, irreplaceable [*months*](https://www.vox.com/2019/6/5/18637391/david-french-sohrab-ahmari-conservatism-libertarians-divide) of parent-child bonding is gradually leading Republicans in a direction that could come to terms with greater support for expectant and new mothers.

Beyond the programs immediately relevant to childbirth, policymakers should turn their attention to the demands placed on parents after those first, sleepless postpartum nights. Conservative politicians could take a major step toward strengthening the family as the core unit of society by making all working families eligible for an expanded child tax credit.

Before last year’s temporary expansion, roughly one-third of American kids — about 23 million children — lived in families that received less than the full amount of the child benefit. (For example, before the expansion, a family with two kids making $20,000 annually would be eligible for a child tax credit check of only $2,625, while one making $200,000 would receive the full $4,000.) Changing the suite of child-related benefits in the tax code to a $300 monthly benefit, with an additional $50 per month for children under 6, would be a tangible way of making low-income and ***working-class*** parents’ lives easier.

Last year, of course, the Biden administration expanded the child tax credit to virtually all families, including those with no workers. But as I explored for [*The Times*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/09/14/opinion/child-tax-credit-biden.html) last year, [*many* ***working-class*** *parents*](https://ifstudies.org/ifs-admin/resources/ifs-workingclassreport-final.pdf) viewed the idea of unconditional cash benefits going to families without a worker as fundamentally unfair. Polling, too, [*suggests*](https://americancompass.org/essays/child-tax-credit-expansion-survey/) that child benefits with no connection to work are unpopular.

A conservative pro-family economic agenda would incorporate the insight that work is an important part of being engaged in society and providing for one’s family. This principle could be connected to the child tax credit in a method designed to be clear and administratively simple: To be eligible for the monthly payments, families would be required to hit an earnings threshold, such as the single-person federal poverty line ($13,590 a year in 2022). Families with earnings below that threshold would see their benefit scaled down, assuaging conservative concerns about perverse labor force incentives. (Parents who earned 50 percent of the threshold would, for instance, see their monthly child benefit amount reduced by half but [*continue to be eligible*](https://home.treasury.gov/system/files/226/The-Economic-Security-of-American-Households-the-Safety-Net.pdf) for safety-net programs.)

This approach would create an easily understandable linkage between receiving the child benefit and having at least one parent working and would be partly paid for by collapsing the tangle of existing child benefits, earned-income tax credit adjustments and child care deductions into a straightforward monthly benefit. It would recognize that families shouldn’t lose benefits for having additional children and ensure that low-income couples don’t face a marriage penalty.

Beyond the tax code, congressional Republicans could play to their supply-side strengths and champion a cost-of-living agenda aimed at some of parents’ biggest headaches: health care, child care and housing. They could listen to Robert Orr of the center-right Niskanen Center and [*boost*](https://www.niskanencenter.org/the-u-s-has-much-to-gain-from-more-doctors/) the number of medical professionals while experimenting with [*increased cost sharing*](https://americancompass.org/the-commons/insuring-healthcare-for-working-families/) for maternal and child health care. They could expand child care options by bolstering the capacity of [*faith-based and community providers*](https://www.niskanencenter.org/child-care-pluralism-supporting-working-families-in-their-full-diversity/) rather than relying on large-scale subsidies. And they could lower the cost of housing by attacking environmental regulations and restrictive zoning laws that make it difficult for housing supply to meet demand.

This policy agenda will require Republicans to restrain their usual impulse to reach for tax cuts as a cure-all. But if it is put into practice, they can showcase how parents’ lives can be made easier by applying traditional conservative principles about work, incentives and regulation to contemporary problems, without necessitating Build Back Better-style federal intervention.

A favorable Dobbs decision would certainly not turn the G.O.P. into a European-style Christian democratic party overnight. But some state-level action is showing signs of a party trending in a more [*pro-family*](https://www.thepublicdiscourse.com/2021/11/78939/) direction while retaining its core principles. Texas’ backdoor abortion ban got most of the headlines, but the state also passed a [*bipartisan expansion*](https://www.texastribune.org/2021/08/27/texas-medicaid-maternal-mortality-health/) of Medicaid for mothers up to six months after giving birth. Idaho and Oklahoma, with legislatures dominated by Republicans, have introduced state-level child tax credits, and the politically divided Minnesota may become the [*10th*](https://www.ncsl.org/research/human-services/child-tax-credit-overview.aspx#:~:text=State%20Child%20Tax%20Credits%20as%20of%20October%202021,%20%20%20%205%20more%20rows) to do so, as part of ongoing budget negotiations.

At the national level, key Republican figures, including Senators [*Marco Rubio*](https://www.wsj.com/articles/marco-rubio-child-tax-credit-biden-child-allowance-11628877963) and [*Mitt Romney*](https://www.romney.senate.gov/romney-offers-path-provide-greater-financial-security-american-families/) and the Ohio Senate candidate [*J.D. Vance*](https://jdvance.com/issues/), have suggested a more ***working-class***-friendly economic agenda. And whatever else can be said about the Trump presidency, his disruption of conventional G.O.P. policies means certain [*economic pieties*](https://www.manhattan-institute.org/html/how-save-american-worker-consumption-production) can now be openly questioned.

The end of Roe will require a new type of politics. A G.O.P. that styles itself as more populist has the opportunity to demonstrate its commitment to pregnant women and families writ large. If they fail to do so, they will not only put their political victories at risk but also leave unprotected the very people the movement to end Roe has sought to help: pregnant women and their unborn children.

Patrick T. Brown ([*@PTBwrites*](https://twitter.com/ptbwrites)) is a fellow at the Ethics and Public Policy Center, a conservative think tank, and a former senior policy adviser to Congress’s Joint Economic Committee.

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PHOTO (PHOTOGRAPH BY MARK MAKELA/GETTY IMAGES)

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[***Singing and Banging, French Lawmakers Vow to Stop Pension Change***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67SV-HBT1-DXY4-X4XT-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

March 16, 2023 Thursday 23:19 EST

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**Section:** WORLD; europe

**Length:** 1152 words

**Byline:** Catherine Porter and Constant Méheut

**Highlight:** Parties from the left and right erupted in anger after learning of the government’s plans to adopt the measure without a vote.

**Body**

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PARIS — Lawmakers filled the grand chamber of the National Assembly, climbing into the crimson-colored seats that curl in a semicircle around a room that has been the crucible of democratic debate in France since the French Revolution. The tension was palpable.

A bill that would extend the legal age of retirement to 64 from 62 had already passed the Senate. Now, the members of the Assembly [*had just been told*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2023/03/16/world/france-pension-vote#fury-as-french-lawmakers-learn-they-wont-vote) they would not be given the chance to vote on the measure. Instead, it would be pushed through in a procedural move permitted by the constitution.

The rebellious left-wing members of France Unbowed burst into rounds of the Marseillaise — the war-song-turned-national-anthem. They held up white paper signs that announced: “64 years, It’s a No.” Across the room, members of the far right National Rally — normally their political enemies, but in this suspended moment, their allies — pounded on their desks.

The noise came to a climax when the president of the Parliament took her lion-armed seat and announced the arrival of Prime Minister Élisabeth Borne.

“Ladies and Gentleman,” Ms. Borne began from the speaker’s dais. “If everyone voted according to their conscience and in line with their past positions, we would not be here this afternoon.” But her words were all but drowned out amid all the singing and banging.

Less than ten minutes later, she was gone from the room, followed by blank-faced government ministers and furious opposition lawmakers, who stormed downstairs to denounce the government before an army of outstretched microphones.

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People vented their anger at the government’s use of a [*special constitutional power*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/16/world/europe/france-consitituion-article-49-3.html) to push through the bill without a ballot.

“It really disgusts me,” said Romain Le Riguer, a 20-year-old literature student, who had spontaneously come to the plaza. “For weeks we protested. How can they ignore that? It’s so contemptuous.”

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Many vowed to continue protesting for as long as it takes to pressure the government to repeal the law. “It happened before,” said Isabelle Mollaret, a children’s librarian in the crowd, referring to a wave of demonstrations in 2006 that forced the government to [*repeal a contested youth-jobs contract*](https://www.nytimes.com/2006/04/10/world/europe/labor-laws-defeat-in-france-makes-new-reform-efforts-unlikely.html).

She held a sign that read, “Macron, you aren’t the boss. Give back the money.”

“We will spontaneously protest all over France and support the workers who are striking and blocking important infrastructure,” said Ms. Mollaret, 47. “We will fight him!”

The specter of the [*Yellow Vest movement*](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/12/03/world/europe/france-yellow-vest-protests.html) remains heavy in the French consciousness. Four years ago, a group of disgruntled ***working class*** protesters [*vandalized the Arc de Triomphe*](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/12/03/world/europe/france-yellow-vest-protests.html) — visible just up the street from the Place de la Concorde — smashed many nearby storefronts and sparred with riot police, leading to hundreds of arrests and stunning the government.

Whether this outpouring of emotion will grow into a similar movement remains to be seen. Later, protesters set fire to wooden pallets and iron fences on the Place de la Concorde. As night fell, riot police unleashed tear gas and charged the crowd in an effort to disperse it. People scattered, with some small groups rampaging through western Paris, flipping scooters and lighting heaps of uncollected trash on fire.

Already, some protesters were calling for general strikes, pointing to 1995, the year when [*strikes against a previous pension bill paralyzed France for weeks*](https://www.nytimes.com/1995/11/17/world/french-strike-called-over-social-security-plan.html), forcing the government to abandon its plans.

“We need to block the country, totally,” said Léa Martinez-Comelli, a member of the C.G.T., France’s second biggest union. “Hospitals, schools, garbage, collectors, trains — everything must stop.”

Aurelien Breeden and Tom Nouvian contributed reporting.

Aurelien Breeden and Tom Nouvian contributed reporting.

PHOTOS: Members of La France Insoumise, a left-wing party, outside Parliament in Paris on Thursday. (PHOTOGRAPH BY YOAN VALAT/EPA, VIA SHUTTERSTOCK); “It’s a total failure for Emmanuel Macron,” said Marine Le Pen. (PHOTOGRAPH BY THOMAS PADILLA/ASSOCIATED PRESS) This article appeared in print on page A8.

**Load-Date:** March 16, 2023

**End of Document**



[***‘Will-o’-the-Wisp’ Review: A Prince Throws Off His Privilege***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:689R-X9F1-JBG3-62T7-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

May 25, 2023 Thursday 17:14 EST

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**Section:** MOVIES

**Length:** 623 words

**Byline:** Amy Nicholson

**Highlight:** Or, at least, he kinda-sorta tries to rebel in this romantic, futuristic fable from the Portuguese director João Pedro Rodrigues.

**Body**

Or, at least, he kinda-sorta tries to rebel in this romantic, futuristic fable from the Portuguese director João Pedro Rodrigues.

“Will-o’-the-Wisp,” an off-balance provocation from the Portuguese titillater João Pedro Rodrigues, is a prank in fancy dress, a plastic boutonniere that squirts battery acid. The joke is on everyone, particularly the powerful and those holding out hope that the powerful will save the planet.

Portugal booted its monarchy in 1910, but in this alternate timeline, the royals still reign. When the do-gooder prince, Alfredo (Mauro Costa), shocks his family by becoming a firefighter, Rodrigues drops him into an eroticized firehouse for a beefcake feast, concocting a calendar shoot to bend the fighters into, um, suggestive poses. Later, the director assembles a slide show of genitalia which the waify blond prince and his ***working-class*** Black lover, Afonso (André Cabral), liken to various climates. (Petrified forest, barren grassland — you won’t have to strain your imagination to see the resemblance.)

The movie, co-written by Rodrigues, João Rui Guerra da Mata and Paulo Lopes Graça, opens with Alfredo on his deathbed in 2069 — the film’s most subtle sexual reference. Then it flashes back to the prince’s youth, where he’s escorted through ancient pines by the king (Miguel Loureiro). Some viewers might recognize the woods as the Leiria Pine Forest whose timber and sap built the ships that built the Portuguese empire. The Leiria was [*decimated by wildfires in 2017*](https://www.theatlantic.com/photo/2017/06/photos-of-the-deadly-wildfires-in-portugal/530814/), and the interstitial titles — “Slash and Burn,” “Charred,” and so on — make it clear that a blaze is coming for everyone. Smoke wafts through the palace while the conservative queen (Margarida Vila-Nova) putters around anxiously snuffing candles.

[Video: [*Watch on YouTube.*](http://youtube.com/embed/yhxLSXpMUhI)]

The symbolism is blunt, and the film’s style, striking and severe. Scenes are staged as precisely as painted tableaus, with handsome shadows and gratuitous whippets. At one point, the prince stands at the dinner table and delivers Greta Thunberg’s U.N. Climate Action Summit address straight to the camera — “The eyes of all future generations are upon you” — as though to convince the audience he kinda-sorta tried to get his parents to do something. Unmoved, his mother instead fusses over a more politically correct title for the family’s 18th-century oil portrait, a mocking depiction of eight Black and Indigenous dwarfs who were collected by Queen Maria I of Portugal (and of Brazil, where she was called Maria the Mad).

We already know that the prince won’t grow up to fix much. (Ingeniously, the cinematographer Rui Poças and the sound editor Nuno Carvalho evoke a desolate, airship-patrolled future using only a shadow and a loudspeaker.) But he keeps that portrait, which inspires reveries of his affair with Afonso. Their fleeting moments of joy make up the bulk of the running time. Rodrigues’s mind is on social upheaval, but his heart is with Afonso’s lavishly lit abdomen and the parts just below.

Rodrigues blows past good taste with an explicit tête-à-tête in the scorched forest where his brave leading men pant racial slurs into each other’s nether regions. It’s a rough watch, but Rodrigues balances this shocker with a scene of shocking loveliness: a dance number where the pair’s slight stiffness makes their burst of emotional expression feel tender and sincere.

Will-o’-the-Wisp

Not rated. In Portuguese, with subtitles. Running time: 1 hour 7 minutes. In theaters.

Will-o’-the-Wisp Not rated. In Portuguese, with subtitles. Running time: 1 hour 7 minutes. In theaters.

PHOTO: Mauro Costa, left, and André Cabral in “Will-o’-the-Wisp,” directed by João Pedro Rodrigues. (PHOTOGRAPH BY STRAND RELEASING) This article appeared in print on page C6.

**Load-Date:** May 25, 2023

**End of Document**



[***Restaurant Dishes Worth Savoring***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69VS-BBK1-JBG3-633B-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

December 13, 2023 Wednesday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section D; Column 0; Dining In, Dining Out / Style Desk; Pg. 11

**Length:** 1808 words

**Byline:** By The New York Times

**Body**

Each year as we travel the country to scout out candidates for our many best-restaurant lists -- whether the big national listing in the early fall or the new ''best of'' city lists we've begun rolling out -- our reporters and editors eat hundreds of meals in dozens of states. Inevitably we come across that one dish that we almost wish we'd ordered two of, and wish we could find closer to home.

Some are high-concept -- a Dungeness crab doughnut, for instance -- while others are just perfect examples of beloved familiars like brisket tacos or fried chicken. What they have in common, though, is that months later they still jump to mind when we're asked, ''What were your favorite dishes of this year?''

And if we're back in Denver, Seattle, Burlington, Vt., or Grand Rapids, Mich., you can be sure we'll seek them out -- and you should, too. BRIAN GALLAGHER

Fried Chicken at Tavern on State

New Haven, Conn.

I will always order the fried chicken at a promising new restaurant like this one. Its fried chicken thighs with green tomato relish and radish salad was the best of many dishes I loved this year in the growing ''tavern'' category -- a much-needed bridge between pub grub and tweezer food. JULIA MOSKIN

Thai Red Curry Yellowtail at the Katherine

Fort Lauderdale, Fla.

The Katherine is what happened when Timon Balloo realized that a neighborhood bistro near his home in Broward County, comfortably removed from the pressures of Miami, was exactly the kind of restaurant he needed at this stage of his life. The restaurant opened last year and is named after Mr. Balloo's wife and business partner, Marissa Katherine. This curry seafood dish nods to Ms. Balloo's Thai-Colombian heritage and is a delicious example of the kitchen's worldly South Florida sensibility. BRETT ANDERSON

Brisket Taco at Garcia's

San Antonio

A juicy, crisp-edged slab of brisket, a blanket-soft tortilla, some pico de gallo -- when the basics are executed this well, there's no need for any other adornments. PRIYA KRISHNA

Whole Grilled Dorado at Clandestino

Portland, Ore.

It takes a brave chef to serve a whole fish, skeleton intact, but when done right the payoff is big. At Clandestino, Lauro Romero grills whole dorado until the skin blisters, suffusing the tender white flesh with a smoky charred flavor that's brightened with a pile of fresh herbs and pickled red onions. Earthy beans and warm tortillas round out this brilliantly executed -- and rarely found -- dish. MELISSA CLARK

Mulhwe Noodles at Bansang

San Francisco

In a chilled pool of ruby-tinged, fermented chile broth, strands of capellini peacefully rest beneath slices of seasonal fish and beautiful tangles of pickles of shaved mu (radish) and cucumber. Distinct at first, everything gets mixed together, synchronizing in a bite that's deeply invigorating and bright any time of the year. ELEANORE PARK

Tostada Raspada at Cenaduria Elvira

Oakland, Calif.

Air snapping in half sounds like an imagined achievement of atmospheric physics, but it occurs when biting into this impossibly thin, crackling tostada raspada. The owner, Elvira Varela, gets the corn directly from Zapotlanejo, Jalisco in Mexico, transforming the bounty into foot-long toboggans slathered with flavorful beans and topped with a shower of cabbage and a smattering of queso fresco. The dish doubles as the best home-cooked meal of the year as well, given that Ms. Varela delivers all of this culinary sorcery directly from her home patio. ELEANORE PARK

Chicken-Fried Steak at Reba's Place

Atoka, Okla.

The chicken-fried steak at the country singer Reba McEntire's restaurant is brilliant in its unfanciness. It has an appropriately high ratio of heavily seasoned crust to meat, a slightly sweet gravy to balance and, unlike many versions of the dish, you can actually taste the flavor of the steak. PRIYA KRISHNA

Free-Range Bison With Wine-Poached Pear and Demi-Glace at Cochineal

Marfa, Texas

First-time visitors invariably note the improbability of finding a restaurant like Cochineal, with its prix-fixe menu and specialty cocktails, floating in the vast expanse of West Texas flatlands that surrounds the remote (if artsy) town of Marfa. Yet the restaurant manages to convey a sense of place that doesn't feel contrived. Large credit for that goes to the forthright, proudly regional cooking of the chef and co-owner Alexandra Gates, who last spring served a filet of free-range bison, rich in mineral flavor, that justified my daylong drive. BRETT ANDERSON

White Prawns With Hawaiian Finger Limes and Coriander at Ethel's Fancy

Palo Alto, Calif.

Simply grilled and sparingly adorned with coriander flowers, this pared-back but elegant prawn dish hews to fashion's reminder to ''look in the mirror and take one thing off.'' It achieves much more accessorized with less. ELEANORE PARK

Halibut Chraimeh at Honey Road

Burlington, Vt.

Cara Tobin, Honey Road's chef and co-owner, honed her voice and technique cooking at Oleana, in Cambridge, Mass., a modern pioneer in its celebration of eastern Mediterranean and North African flavors and dishes. Halibut chraimeh, a special that ran this fall, is a Tunisian stew that the chef de cuisine Elliot Sion modified to include ingredients, like beets and walnuts, found in the Jewish American dishes he grew up with. BRETT ANDERSON

Dungeness Crab Doughnut at Boat Bar

Seattle

A crab doughnut might sound like stunt food at first. When you think about it, though, it makes some sense: the oceanic wash of sweet crab meat married with crème fraîche and mayonnaise, the pliant chew of the brioche-style doughnut and a zesty grating of Parmesan and fresh horseradish over the top. When you taste it, though, it makes perfect sense. It's not always on the menu, but if it is, get it. BRIAN GALLAGHER

Bacalhau a Gomes de Sa at Portugalia Marketplace

Fall River, Mass.

Portugalia has always been known for bacalhau. That's been true since it opened in a three-car garage behind a tenement house in the 1980s, through to its current incarnation, where the codfish counter is across a handsome grocery store from the wine department. So it logically follows that one of the few dishes you'll always find at the prepared food counter is this classic bacalhau stew, a rustic, salty favorite in this Portuguese stronghold on the New England coast. BRETT ANDERSON

Littlenecks and Chouriço at Matunuck Oyster Bar

South Kingstown, R.I.

''Local'' translates to ''right over there'' at this bright waterside perch, which farms its own oysters just a short swim away in Potter Pond. But nothing on the menu sums up the location as smartly as its snappy garlic-and-white-wine sauté of sausage and Rhode Island clams, a tribute to the state's sizable population of Portuguese Americans -- and of mollusks. PATRICK FARRELL

Stuffed Cabbage at Prosperity Social Club

Cleveland

This barroom's roots run to the 1930s, when immigrants from Eastern Europe were an established presence in the city's Tremont neighborhood. The ***working-class*** legacy is still evident in Prosperity's gritty décor, gruff hospitality and signature stuffed cabbage rolls, draped in paprika-stained sour cream-sauerkraut sauce. BRETT ANDERSON

Hanger Steak at A Restaurant

Newport Beach, Calif.

Though it's tempting to think of the hanger steak as the Toyota Camry of cuts -- ubiquitous, reliable and broadly uninspiring -- the one I had at this 98-year-old Orange County spot was surprisingly perfect. Hefty char on a buttery but strongly beefy steak unfussily served. The atmosphere, a dimly lit, voluminously boothed room amid the sun-washed surroundings, only added to the experience. BRIAN GALLAGHER

Spicy Pork Adobo at Kilig

Seattle

The sibling restaurant to Musang (which is on our 25 Best Restaurants in Seattle list), Kilig is only two months old. But it has already found its modern-Filipino comfort zone. This dish -- a perfect balance of unctuously fatty pork, vinegar tang and a warm wisp of spice -- was a standout on a rainy afternoon. BRIAN GALLAGHER

Hearth Bread at Brutø

Denver

Fresh-baked bread service is fairly common these days, but the version here is something special. Made from Colorado grain milled nearby, the personal-size boules are popped into an oak-fired oven for a mere minute and a half before being handed across the counter to you, piping hot, dotted with char and served with rotating pairings like housemade achiote butter or mole blanco dipping sauce. BRIAN GALLAGHER

Golden Prawn Toast at Yangban

Los Angeles

The ''golden'' could refer to a few things here: the double dips in butter the local sourdough toast takes, the rich aioli-like sauce or the cured egg yolks grated over the top to finish. Or even the feeling you'll have when you taste how it all wraps beautifully around the sweet deep-sea prawns that Yangban gets from just one family on Kauai. Going back to just shrimp toast will be a challenge. BRIAN GALLAGHER

Hire Katsu Curry at KCM

Grand Rapids, Mich.

Perhaps you live in a part of the country where katsu curry is abundant, and thus does not turn heads. Grand Rapids is not such a place, which is part of the reason my visit to KCM was so memorable. Larger reasons were the crisp perfection of the fried pork and the chef-owner Jason Kim's convivial, prideful hospitality. BRETT ANDERSON

'BBQ' Whole Shrimp at Burdell

Oakland, Calif.

A take on New Orleans barbecue shrimp, these head-on creatures bathe in a sauce ramped up with stock made from the shrimp shells, Vietnamese dried shrimp and fish sauce. It's all brought back topside with a bit of the house-fermented hot sauce. You'll wish there was twice as much on the plate. BRIAN GALLAGHER

Rosette Cookie with Fresh Farmer's Cheese and Walla Walla Onion Jam at Atoma

Seattle

Rosette cookies, formed on a mold and fried to a pleasing golden crisp, are common in Scandinavian confectionery, which makes them perfectly at home in the Pacific Northwest. But as an appetizer? Well, since this version hides a creamy cheese and allium sweetness hidden inside, absolutely. BRIAN GALLAGHER

Chicken Long Rice Croquettes at Mud Hen Water

Honolulu

Bite into one of these craggy golden orbs and you get a hot gulp of gingery, soul-reviving chicken noodle soup. The ''long rice'' is the noodles: skinny, slippery, translucent bean-thread vermicelli. LIGAYA MISHAN

Rocky Road Ice Cream With Macadamia Nut Dragées at Fête

Honolulu

The chocolate, produced locally, is extra dark. The crunch comes from buttery macadamia nuts, dipped and sealed in more chocolate. And the marshmallows, homemade, achieve the perfect texture between cling and surrender. LIGAYA MISHAN

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[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/12/dining/best-restaurant-dishes.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/12/dining/best-restaurant-dishes.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS (PHOTOGRAPHS BY MARISSA KATHERINE BALLOO (THE KATHERINE)

ERIC TRA (BOAT BAR)

TIM CHEUNG (BANSANG)

ALEXANDRA GATES (COCHINEAL)

KCM

SEAN MARRS (FÊTE)

KYLER MARTIN (ATOMA)

JEFF FIERBERG (BRUTO)

HEIDI ROLF (PROSPERITY SOCIAL CLUB)

STAN LEE (YANGBAN)) This article appeared in print on page D11.

**Load-Date:** December 13, 2023

**End of Document**



[***22 of the Funniest Novels Since ‘Catch-22’***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BJC-VVX1-JBG3-64YD-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

March 14, 2024 Thursday 16:24 EST

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**Section:** BOOKS

**Length:** 4380 words

**Byline:** Dwight Garner, Alexandra Jacobs, Jennifer Szalai and Cari Vander Yacht Dwight Garner has been a book critic for The Times since 2008, and before that was an editor at the Book Review for a decade. Alexandra Jacobs is a Times book critic and occasional features writer. She joined The Times in 2010. Jennifer Szalai is the nonfiction book critic for The Times.

**Highlight:** Because we could all use a laugh.

**Body**

When it comes to fiction, humor is serious business. If tragedy appeals to the emotions, wit appeals to the mind. “You have to know where the funny is,” the writer Sheila Heti says, “and if you know where the funny is, you know everything.” Humor is a bulwark against complacency and conformity, mediocrity and predictability.

With all this in mind, we’ve put together a list of 22 of the funniest novels written in English since Joseph Heller’s “Catch-22” (1961). That book presented a voice that was fresh, liberated, angry and also funny — about something American novels hadn’t been funny about before: war. Set during World War II and featuring Capt. John Yossarian, a B-25 bombardier, the novel presaged, in its black humor, its outraged intelligence, its blend of tragedy and farce, and its awareness of the corrupt values that got us into Vietnam, not just Bob Dylan but the counterculture writ large.

Heller gave writers permission to be irreverent about the most serious stuff — the stuff of life and death. The Czech novelist Milan Kundera, who went into exile in France after satirizing his country’s Communist regime, told Philip Roth: “I could always recognize a person who was not a Stalinist, a person whom I needn’t fear, by the way he smiled. A sense of humor was a trustworthy sign of recognition. Ever since, I have been terrified by a world that is losing its sense of humor.”

It’s in the spirit of warding off that dire scenario that we offer this list: a resolutely idiosyncratic assemblage of novels — 22 in all, get it? — culled from the past six decades by three very different Times book critics.

Here, you will not find books stuffed with jokes. For the most part, our picks will not induce knee slapping. (“Any man who will not resist a pun will not lie up-pun me,” the great Eve Babitz wrote.) The humor these authors embrace traverses the gamut, from sardonic to screwball, mordant to madcap, droll to deranged. Writing in Heller’s shadow, but in an idiom all their own, these novelists apply his satirical tool kit — along with their own screwdrivers and shivs — to whole other categories of human experience, from race and gender to dating, aging, office cubicles and book publishing itself. The critic Albert Murray understood that wit is power, and that knowing where the funny is takes us closer to the nub of things. Best of all, it’s available to anyone. As Murray wrote, “It is always open season on the truth.”

‘[*The Wig*](https://www.harpercollins.com/products/the-collected-novels-of-charles-wright-charles-wright),’ by Charles Wright (1966)

Charles Wright is not a name on many people’s radar. Indeed, he is often confused with the Tennessee-born [*poet of the same name*](https://www.harpercollins.com/products/the-collected-novels-of-charles-wright-charles-wright). But his potent novels deserve a resurgence. Wright wrote three between 1963 and 1973: “The Messenger,” “The Wig” and “Absolutely Nothing to Get Excited About.” Each is about a young and sensitive Black veteran of the Korean War who may or may not wish to become a writer and is trying to find a foothold in New York City. All are worth reading, but the prize is “The Wig.” Wright’s hero senses he needs a gimmick to succeed in the white world, and he decides, with the help of a jar of hair relaxer, to create a luminous mane that comes to be known as “the wig.” His hair is so resplendent, and later so vividly red, that he wonders: “Would Time magazine review this phenomenon under Medicine, Milestones, The Nation, Art, Show Business or U.S. Business?” The hair takes his narrator only so far. But Wright’s analysis of racial politics in America is an electric pleasure. —DG

READ IF YOU LIKE: Chris Rock’s documentary “[*Good Hair,*](https://www.harpercollins.com/products/the-collected-novels-of-charles-wright-charles-wright)” struggling writers, [*Bob Kaufman’s poetry*](https://www.harpercollins.com/products/the-collected-novels-of-charles-wright-charles-wright), the [*films of Charles Burnett*](https://www.harpercollins.com/products/the-collected-novels-of-charles-wright-charles-wright), restaurant mascots, Eddie Murphy’s “S.N.L.” skit “[*White Like Me*](https://www.harpercollins.com/products/the-collected-novels-of-charles-wright-charles-wright).”

‘[*Portnoy’s Complaint*](https://www.harpercollins.com/products/the-collected-novels-of-charles-wright-charles-wright),’ by Philip Roth (1969)

Upon its publication in 1969, Roth’s novel caused 100,000 Jewish mothers to plotz. The book is one long, vivid monologue from a lust-ridden young New Jersey man named Alexander Portnoy, as delivered to his psychoanalyst, Dr. Spielvogel. Alexander has mother issues. Mrs. Portnoy worries about everything, including the health of his two primary orifices. (“Alex, I don’t want you to flush the toilet,” she cries. “I want to see what you’ve done in there.”) This novel made headlines for its graphic scenes of self-pleasuring; Alexander makes use of a cored-out apple, an empty milk bottle and (infamously) a piece of liver bound for his family’s dinner table. Beneath the antic comedy is a sophisticated coming-of-age novel that digs deeply not only into sex but into issues of assimilation and social class. It was the firecracker that augured a great career, and it still delivers a bang. —DG

READ IF YOU LIKE: “[*Shiva Baby*](https://www.harpercollins.com/products/the-collected-novels-of-charles-wright-charles-wright),” Lil Dicky, psychotherapy, “[*Curb Your Enthusiasm*](https://www.harpercollins.com/products/the-collected-novels-of-charles-wright-charles-wright),” the [*fiction of Joshua Cohen*](https://www.harpercollins.com/products/the-collected-novels-of-charles-wright-charles-wright), liver cutlets, mom tattoos.

‘[*Oreo*](https://www.harpercollins.com/products/the-collected-novels-of-charles-wright-charles-wright),’ by Fran Ross (1974)

Ross’s “Oreo,” her first and only novel, was published in 1974 and sank with barely a trace. Frustrated, Ross abandoned fiction to write for Richard Pryor. It’s time for the culture to catch up to “Oreo.” It’s about a young woman, half-Black, half-Jewish, on a quest to find her absent father, and the sexy humor flies freely from the first pages. Ross delights in language, mixing Yiddish with Black vernacular and turning words like “friedan” (as in Betty) and “kuklux” into verbs. In an introduction to a 2015 reissue, the novelist Danzy Senna got at why this book continues to resonate: “‘Oreo’ resists the unwritten conventions that still exist for novels written by Black women today. There’s nothing redemptively uplifting about her work. The title doesn’t refer to the Bible or the blues. The work does not refer to slavery. The character is never violated, sexually or otherwise.” Ross’s book is also among the great, joyful American food novels. One woman cooks so well that people are driven, quite literally, out of their minds. —DG

READ IF YOU LIKE: [*Pam Grier*](https://www.harpercollins.com/products/the-collected-novels-of-charles-wright-charles-wright) movies, Zabar’s, [*Edna Lewis’s cookbooks*](https://www.harpercollins.com/products/the-collected-novels-of-charles-wright-charles-wright), Richard Pryor.

‘[*Tales of the City*](https://www.harpercollins.com/products/the-collected-novels-of-charles-wright-charles-wright),’ by Armistead Maupin (1978)

Maupin’s series of novels about San Francisco life begins in 1978 with “Tales of the City.” You can dip into these warm, accessible, heavily peopled and sweet-and-sour novels almost anywhere, but for the purposes of this list we’re going to stick with the first three, which have been collected under the title “28 Barbary Lane.” The address is that of a large house, presided over by a pot-growing, free-spirited landlady, and occupied by diverse residents, gay, straight and otherwise. Has any other American writer loved his city so much and so well? San Francisco, under Maupin’s gaze, becomes the setting for an elaborate comedy of manners, and the early novels were among the first mainstream works to put queer and straight characters on equal footing. Maupin’s men and women came here to find themselves, and to find others like them. That they so often succeed makes these novels glow in your hands. “This city,” one character says, “loosens people up.” Maupin’s novels are shaggy in spirit but shrewd in their observations. His prose brightens existence, and clarifies the things that matter. —DG

READ IF YOU LIKE: Sourdough bread, reruns of “Friends” and “Will &amp; Grace,” David Sedaris, the documentary “[*The Times of Harvey Milk*](https://www.harpercollins.com/products/the-collected-novels-of-charles-wright-charles-wright).”

‘[*Mrs. Caliban*](https://www.harpercollins.com/products/the-collected-novels-of-charles-wright-charles-wright),’ by Rachel Ingalls (1982)

Dorothy, a lonely housewife, falls in love with Larry, a giant sea creature who is open-minded and curious, eager to learn what he can about her and her world. Unlike Dorothy’s inattentive, philandering husband, Larry can tell she’s a marvel. Watching her closely as she clears up after breakfast, he asks if the “dress” she’s wearing — a nightgown and a bathrobe — is “a garment of celebration.” The premise might be over the top, but the comedy is gentle: a (literal!) fish-out-of-water tale tempered by suburban sadness. Before meeting Larry, Dorothy lost a son; she also had a miscarriage. She imagines having a baby with her merman beau. A half-monster? Maybe. But also: “Born on American soil to an American mother — such a child could become president.” —JS

READ IF YOU LIKE: The novels of [*Richard Yates*](https://www.harpercollins.com/products/the-collected-novels-of-charles-wright-charles-wright), [*Daryl Hannah in “Splash*](https://www.harpercollins.com/products/the-collected-novels-of-charles-wright-charles-wright),” herpetology, Guillermo del Toro’s film “[*The Shape of Water*](https://www.harpercollins.com/products/the-collected-novels-of-charles-wright-charles-wright).”

‘[*The Secret Diary of Adrian Mole, Aged 13¾*](https://www.harpercollins.com/products/the-collected-novels-of-charles-wright-charles-wright),’ by Sue Townsend (1982)

You can write from the point of view of an adolescent boy very earnestly and sincerely, as Judy Blume does in “Then Again, Maybe I Won’t” — or you can hover over the young fella with a wink, as Townsend does in this book that started a national franchise (with Mole eventually aging to “the prostrate years” of 39¼). Adrian is an only child in Thatcher-era England with ***working-class*** parents who are not getting along: His father drinks; his mother is discovering feminism. He has pimples, wet dreams, a paper route, an elderly friend and a huge crush on a classmate named Pandora. Convinced he is an intellectual, with an impressive reading list, he submits poems to the BBC. He maybe uses the word “dead” a wee bit much, but his naïve observations of complicated adult affairs in brief journal entries are pure life. —AJ

READ IF YOU LIKE: [*Mike Leigh movies*](https://www.harpercollins.com/products/the-collected-novels-of-charles-wright-charles-wright), “Diary of a Wimpy Kid,” “[*Fawlty Towers*](https://www.harpercollins.com/products/the-collected-novels-of-charles-wright-charles-wright).”

‘[*Heartburn*](https://www.harpercollins.com/products/the-collected-novels-of-charles-wright-charles-wright),’ by Nora Ephron (1983)

Lemonade. You won’t find a recipe for it in Ephron’s novel (though there are excellent ones for sorrel soup and Lillian Hellman’s pot roast), but it’s what she made of her lemon of a marriage to the Watergate reporter Carl Bernstein with this short but perfectly tart roman à clef that set tongues flapping and booksellers’ cash registers a-chinging. Ephron had been a successful journalist herself; her only novel — at under 200 pages, really more of a novella — was a sort of palate cleanser before she made her name in Hollywood. And she brought her full show-business instincts to the character of Rachel Samstat (was that a play on [*samizdat*](https://www.harpercollins.com/products/the-collected-novels-of-charles-wright-charles-wright)?): a pregnant cookbook writer who attends group therapy, shops at Bloomingdale’s and flies the Eastern shuttle (R.I.P.). With the rat-a-tat pace of 1940s screwball comedies and one-liners flying like fake fur, “Heartburn” is the quintessence of getting the last laugh. —AJ

READ IF YOU LIKE: Shiv and Tom’s marriage in “[*Succession*](https://www.harpercollins.com/products/the-collected-novels-of-charles-wright-charles-wright),” Stanley Tucci’s memoir “[*Taste*](https://www.harpercollins.com/products/the-collected-novels-of-charles-wright-charles-wright),” [*Laurie Colwin.*](https://www.harpercollins.com/products/the-collected-novels-of-charles-wright-charles-wright)

‘[*Money: A Suicide Note*](https://www.harpercollins.com/products/the-collected-novels-of-charles-wright-charles-wright),’ by Martin Amis (1984)

“Money” represents Amis, son of funny dad Kingsley, at the peak of his early Mick Jaggery powers, drawing from his experience working on the screenplay for the Stanley Donen sci-fi bomb “Saturn 3.” The novel — “novels … they’re all long, aren’t they. I mean they’re all so long” is one of many arch lines — burrows into the debauched transcontinental life of one John Self, an ad man with base appetites and offensive thoughts who drives a Fiasco sports car and is making his first feature film, or so he thinks. Supporting characters include Lorne Guyland (get it?), an actor based on Kirk Douglas; Selina Street, Self’s unfaithful girlfriend; New York City in all its rich filth … and Martin Amis. “Some people will do anything to get their names in print,” the narrator notes dryly. As a messy, bitter, split-open capsule of ’80s celebrity and consumption, “Money” is priceless. —AJ

READ IF YOU LIKE: “Othello,” Dudley Moore in “[*Arthur,*](https://www.harpercollins.com/products/the-collected-novels-of-charles-wright-charles-wright)” the [*Patrick Melrose novels*](https://www.harpercollins.com/products/the-collected-novels-of-charles-wright-charles-wright), authorial intrusion.

‘[*The Mezzanine*](https://www.harpercollins.com/products/the-collected-novels-of-charles-wright-charles-wright),’ by Nicholson Baker (1988)

Baker is our master of the minute. The stream of consciousness in “The Mezzanine,” his first novel, is really more of a rivulet: the thoughts of an ordinary young man named Howie during a lunch hour spent contemplating the crazy variety of shampoo at a CVS (with once-glorious brands like Prell and Alberto V05 “now in sorry vassalage on the bottom shelf of Aisle 1B”); buying new shoelaces; eating lunch that includes popcorn and a carton of milk; sitting in the sun reading Aurelius’ “Meditations”; and taking a short escalator ride back to work. Digressive, deeply footnoted, listy and lyrical, this novel is a perfect postcard from a time before smartphones hijacked the imagination and “15-year cycles of journalistic excitement about one issue or another” shrank to maybe 15 months, if not minutes. It’s proof, in just under 150 pages, that the funniest things in life — peculiar and ha-ha — are those we wouldn’t dare say out loud. —AJ

READ IF YOU LIKE: “[*Seinfeld*](https://www.harpercollins.com/products/the-collected-novels-of-charles-wright-charles-wright),” Target runs, Maurice Ravel, paper drinking straws, scene-stealing footnotes, Samuel Beckett.

‘[*A Far Cry From Kensington*](https://www.harpercollins.com/products/the-collected-novels-of-charles-wright-charles-wright),’ by Muriel Spark (1988)

Leave it to Spark to keep a profusion of plots delightfully contained with her spare, wry style. Told from the point of view of one Mrs. Hawkins, who spends her sleepless nights looking back on her life as a young war widow and book editor in 1950s London, this slip of a novel includes, among other things, anonymous threats, a fraudulent book publisher, the pseudoscience of radionics, the metaphysics of evil, a love story and an endorsement of cats. Mrs. Hawkins is brisk, smart and plain-spoken; she gets herself into a load of trouble when she insists that a well-connected hack writer named Hector Bartlett is, as she (repeatedly and unapologetically) puts it, a “pisseur de copie.” The epithet is this book’s reliable refrain, always good for a laugh, but Spark’s sly wit is what shimmers throughout. —JS

READ IF YOU LIKE: Mysteries, nimble adverbs, [*Barbara Pym*](https://www.harpercollins.com/products/the-collected-novels-of-charles-wright-charles-wright), unreliable women, extreme candor.

‘[*American Psycho*](https://www.harpercollins.com/products/the-collected-novels-of-charles-wright-charles-wright),’ by Bret Easton Ellis (1991)

“American Psycho,” Ellis’s novel about Patrick Bateman, a young Wall Street serial killer with an education from Exeter and Harvard, set off a moral panic when it was published in 1991. Feminist groups [*proposed boycotts*](https://www.harpercollins.com/products/the-collected-novels-of-charles-wright-charles-wright); Ellis received death threats; his book tour was scuttled; a review in this newspaper was titled “[*Snuff This Book!*](https://www.harpercollins.com/products/the-collected-novels-of-charles-wright-charles-wright)” But over time — thanks in no small part to the director Mary Harron’s 2000 [*film adaptation*](https://www.harpercollins.com/products/the-collected-novels-of-charles-wright-charles-wright) — the deadpan humor and acid satire in Ellis’s novel became more apparent. Bateman, an ardent fan of Donald J. Trump, is a brazen sendup of a blank and soulless Wall Street generation. The skewering of New York City’s restaurant scene in the 1980s (eagle carpaccio, anyone?) is just one of this novel’s dark and uncommon delights. Like Tony Soprano and Walter White from “Breaking Bad,” Bateman has become a grinning all-American antihero. Who in recent literary fiction has created a more indelible villain? His blood-flecked smile contains American multitudes. —DG

READ IF YOU LIKE: “[*Bodies Bodies Bodies*](https://www.harpercollins.com/products/the-collected-novels-of-charles-wright-charles-wright),” mud soup and charcoal arugula, “[*A Clockwork Orange*](https://www.harpercollins.com/products/the-collected-novels-of-charles-wright-charles-wright),” very nice business cards, Huey Lewis and the News, “[*Stan*](https://www.harpercollins.com/products/the-collected-novels-of-charles-wright-charles-wright)” by Eminem, tarps.

‘[*Bridget Jones’s Diary*](https://www.harpercollins.com/products/the-collected-novels-of-charles-wright-charles-wright),’ by Helen Fielding (1996)

Fielding’s what-the-hell sophomore novel — few remember her first, “Cause Celeb” — is a fizz-making time capsule of office flirtation before #MeToo (where else were pre-apps working people supposed to meet people?); weight anxiety before [*Ozempic*](https://www.harpercollins.com/products/the-collected-novels-of-charles-wright-charles-wright) (feminism hasn’t conquered that either); and [*Cool Britannia*](https://www.harpercollins.com/products/the-collected-novels-of-charles-wright-charles-wright) overtaking a long reign of conservatism. And lest anyone dismiss the book as repackaged fish wrap (it started as a column in The Independent newspaper) or worse (shudder, “chick lit”), let me remind you that its classic love plot is adroitly borrowed from Jane Austen’s “Pride and Prejudice,” with a male hero named Darcy, other characters resembling Mr. Wickham and Mrs. Bennet, and keen observation of English manners and mores. Intertextuality, baby. Fielding gets the inner dialogue of a 30-something female Londoner raised on women’s magazines, potato crisps and telly exactly right. Reveling in life’s pleasures and acknowledging its anxieties, replete with relatable humiliations, this novel was the original bullet journal — one that actually exploded onto the best-seller list. With good reason. —AJ

READ IF YOU LIKE: “[*Fleabag*](https://www.harpercollins.com/products/the-collected-novels-of-charles-wright-charles-wright),” “[*I Hate Suzie*](https://www.harpercollins.com/products/the-collected-novels-of-charles-wright-charles-wright),” chocolate, mini-breaks.

‘[*The Quick and the Dead*](https://www.harpercollins.com/products/the-collected-novels-of-charles-wright-charles-wright),’ by Joy Williams (2000)

“All God’s critters got a place in the choir,” to quote the Bill Staines folk song, of which this thunderous novel, set in the desert Southwest, is like a minor-key version. There is taxidermy galore; a grim nursing home where ground greyhound meat might be on the menu; a trio of motherless teenage girls — one of whom really, really dislikes cats; cactuses that take bullets. Mortality, in its messiness and surprise, splatters almost every page. A dead wife’s ghost rears up to taunt her widower for lusting after his male gardener, and nobody says boo. Indignant about ecological injustice, unblinking toward ravages to the American West and quite violent, this book will make you cry until you laugh. —AJ

READ IF YOU LIKE: Noël Coward’s “Blithe Spirit,” “[*Eating Animals*](https://www.harpercollins.com/products/the-collected-novels-of-charles-wright-charles-wright)” by Jonathan Safran Foer, “[*Blazing Saddles*](https://www.harpercollins.com/products/the-collected-novels-of-charles-wright-charles-wright),” Sam Shepard.

‘[*Then We Came to the End*](https://www.harpercollins.com/products/the-collected-novels-of-charles-wright-charles-wright),’ by Joshua Ferris (2007)

At least before the pandemic, many people spent more time at work than with their families. Like the television series “The Office,” whose American version came out around the same time as Ferris’s novel, “Then We Came to the End” explores the idea that one’s colleagues form — certainly not a family, everyone knows [*not to buy that idea*](https://www.harpercollins.com/products/the-collected-novels-of-charles-wright-charles-wright)! — some kind of misshapen collective, with interesting dynamics. The book, which takes its title from the first line of Don DeLillo’s first novel, “[*Americana*](https://www.harpercollins.com/products/the-collected-novels-of-charles-wright-charles-wright),” and relies inventively on the first-person plural, is set at an ad agency in Chicago during the dot-com bust. The specter of layoffs looms over the employees, who are anxiously competing to succeed at an impossible-seeming pro bono campaign: making people with breast cancer laugh. From Aeron chairs to emails, free food and tedious meetings, Ferris invokes the most mundane accouterments of white-collar culture for satire so dry it crackles. —AJ

READ IF YOU LIKE: “[*Office Space*](https://www.harpercollins.com/products/the-collected-novels-of-charles-wright-charles-wright),” “[*Severance*](https://www.harpercollins.com/products/the-collected-novels-of-charles-wright-charles-wright),” [*quiet-quitting TikToks*](https://www.harpercollins.com/products/the-collected-novels-of-charles-wright-charles-wright), “[*Bartleby the Scrivener*](https://www.harpercollins.com/products/the-collected-novels-of-charles-wright-charles-wright).”

‘[*The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*](https://www.harpercollins.com/products/the-collected-novels-of-charles-wright-charles-wright),’ by Junot Díaz (2007)

This book is so terribly dark, and yet light and laugh-inducing. It concerns the titular Oscar Wao, an overweight and nerdy young man — “I’m a Morlock,” he whispers, regarding himself in the mirror after a Dungeons &amp; Dragons campaign — who desperately wants to lose his virginity. It’s also nothing less than the history of the Dominican Republic, specifically under the brutal rule of Rafael Trujillo, a.k.a. El Jefe, “the Dictatingest Dictator Who Ever Dictatored.” The ultimate joke here is the “fukú,” the name for a curse of the New World, which can explain any misfortune or tragedy (and there is tragedy aplenty in these pages). Told in freewheeling, profane Spanglish by Yunior, Oscar’s rueful roommate from Rutgers, and laced with footnotes, the novel argues for writing as the thing that unjinxes, jolting and reordering old defeatist beliefs. —AJ

READ IF YOU LIKE: “[*Jojo Rabbit*](https://www.harpercollins.com/products/the-collected-novels-of-charles-wright-charles-wright),” fast food, J.R.R. Tolkien, “[*Akira*](https://www.harpercollins.com/products/the-collected-novels-of-charles-wright-charles-wright),” golden-age comic books, the [*Latin American Boom*](https://www.harpercollins.com/products/the-collected-novels-of-charles-wright-charles-wright).

‘[*I Am Not Sidney Poitier*](https://www.harpercollins.com/products/the-collected-novels-of-charles-wright-charles-wright),’ by Percival Everett (2009)

Everett is in the news this year because of the success of the film “[*American Fiction*](https://www.harpercollins.com/products/the-collected-novels-of-charles-wright-charles-wright),” based on his darkly comic 2001 novel, “[*Erasure*](https://www.harpercollins.com/products/the-collected-novels-of-charles-wright-charles-wright).” That book is well worth attending to, as are many in this prolific writer’s oeuvre. But his flat-out funniest novel is “I Am Not Sidney Poitier,” from 2009. It’s about a young man, an orphan, whose name is Not Sidney Poitier. He resembles the actor, and he seems to tumble through Poitier’s entire filmography, sometimes in dream form. The effect is wild, extravagant and hysterical. One detail among many: Young Not Sidney lives for several years with Ted Turner, the CNN mogul, whose dialogue is pure bloviating inanity. He walks around asking questions like, “Can you get fat in a weightless environment?” As Not Sidney moves through the American South, contending with racist cops, Klan gatherings and a stint on a prison chain gang, the humor crackles and delivers visceral punches. —DG

READ IF YOU LIKE: [*Turner Classic Movies*](https://www.harpercollins.com/products/the-collected-novels-of-charles-wright-charles-wright), media jokes, metafictional sentences like “Silence fell on the table like a bad simile,” Spike Lee films, critiques of trickle-down economics.

‘[*Lightning Rods*](https://www.harpercollins.com/products/the-collected-novels-of-charles-wright-charles-wright),’ by Helen DeWitt (2011)

Did DeWitt really go there? Oh yes, she did. Joe, her sad sack of a hero, lands on a business plan to help corporate America boost productivity and reduce sexual harassment in one fell swoop: Women employed as “lightning rods” will supply office workers with anonymous, consensual sex on demand. A specially designed wall facilitates this “innovation.” The book’s language is upbeat and can-do, while the bawdy market it depicts is utterly depraved. But DeWitt refuses to hang back, pushing her satire as far as it will go. Productivity does go up; sexual harassment does go down. Some of the lightning rods parlay the money they make into fabulous law careers. Joe has found the back door to the American dream: Make it sleazy, but also briskly efficient. —JS

READ IF YOU LIKE: Entrepreneurship, “[*Secretary*](https://www.harpercollins.com/products/the-collected-novels-of-charles-wright-charles-wright),” bathroom architecture, WFH.

‘[*Pym*](https://www.harpercollins.com/products/the-collected-novels-of-charles-wright-charles-wright),’ by Mat Johnson (2011)

Chris Jaynes — a Black professor who has been sacked from his teaching job for refusing to serve on the campus diversity committee — learns that the mythical island in “The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket,” Edgar Allan Poe’s only novel, might in fact be real. So Jaynes puts together an all-Black expedition to the South Pole, hoping to find the Black islanders from Poe’s book. What they find is Poe’s white protagonist, Arthur Pym, very much alive, his 200-year-old body and his 200-year-old racism spectacularly well preserved. They also find enormous, grunting white beings whom Pym calls “perfection incarnate.” These creatures enslave Jaynes and his crew, who must plot an escape. Riffing on an old-fashioned adventure tale, Johnson spins a satirical fantasy all his own. —JS

READ IF YOU LIKE: Antiquarian manuscripts, down parkas, MF Doom’s “[*Take Me to Your Leader*](https://www.harpercollins.com/products/the-collected-novels-of-charles-wright-charles-wright),” Little Debbie snack cakes, the Abominable Snowman.

‘[*The Sellout*](https://www.harpercollins.com/products/the-collected-novels-of-charles-wright-charles-wright),’ by Paul Beatty (2015)

Beatty’s “The Sellout” might be this critic’s favorite novel published this century. It’s certainly the funniest. It’s about a young Black man, born on the outskirts of Los Angeles, who becomes a seller of artisanal watermelon and weed. (One strain is called Anglophobia.) From this cannabis seed of a plot, Beatty takes aim at the American experiment. Real blood is spilled: The narrator’s father is shot dead by police officers, basically for driving while Black. After a series of increasingly outrageous events, the narrator revives some of history’s most shameful racial injustices and ends up defending himself in front of the Supreme Court. “After a long pause,” Beatty writes, “I finally faced the bench and said, ‘Your Honor, I plead human.’” Beatty’s prose is ardent: He will put you in mind of the most esteemed Black comics of the past half-century (and of another author on this list, Charles Wright), but the humor bubbles up organically from his own literary sensibility. “Bugs Bunny,” Beatty points out, “wasn’t nothing but Br’er Rabbit with a better agent.” —DG

READ IF YOU LIKE: Craft cannabis, Donald Glover, Los Angeles, the films “[*Get Out*](https://www.harpercollins.com/products/the-collected-novels-of-charles-wright-charles-wright)” and “[*American Fiction*](https://www.harpercollins.com/products/the-collected-novels-of-charles-wright-charles-wright).”

‘[*Private Citizens*](https://www.harpercollins.com/products/the-collected-novels-of-charles-wright-charles-wright),’ by Tony Tulathimutte (2016)

Scathing, upsetting and generous all at once, this novel, about millennial friends in pre-2008-crash San Francisco, thrums with Tulathimutte’s sly intelligence and unerring comic timing. Do-gooder Cory, cynical Linda, porn-addicted Will and passive Henrik start out like sitting ducks: self-regarding, irritating, easy to lampoon. Linda can’t get past the “two-week mark” of a relationship before she starts feeling repulsed; Cory’s bookshelf includes a copy of “Atlas Shrugged,” “which she’d read just to hate it better.” The book then takes a turn, getting simultaneously darker — much darker — and lighter. The characters become weirder and friendlier. The warm flashes make the satire cut deeper: Tulathimutte loves these imperfect young humans while seeing them for who they are. —JS

READ IF YOU LIKE: Exhibitionism, eavesdropping, David Foster Wallace, “[*The Big Chill*](https://www.harpercollins.com/products/the-collected-novels-of-charles-wright-charles-wright).”

‘[*My Year of Rest and Relaxation*](https://www.harpercollins.com/products/the-collected-novels-of-charles-wright-charles-wright),’ by Ottessa Moshfegh (2018)

Moshfegh writes with a misanthropic aplomb that spills over into acid comedy. “My Year of Rest and Relaxation,” set in the year or so before 9/11, is about a young woman who becomes joyfully addicted to antidepressants and other meds, and to the sleep that results. Like Ivan Goncharov’s Oblomov, she finds it hard to get out of bed. A practiced lotus-eater, she finds a drug that will help her realize her ambition to sleep nearly all the time. One problem: She begins to sleepwalk. (Once, she wakens to find that she has gone out and had her pubic hair waxed.) Moshfegh tugs at the political ramifications of her story; the impulse to sleep through a troubled period of history is not uncommon. Vastly more uncommon are the probity and wit she extracts from this dream of a story. —DG

READ IF YOU LIKE: “[*Chaise Longue*](https://www.harpercollins.com/products/the-collected-novels-of-charles-wright-charles-wright)” by Wet Leg, Trazodone, Fran Lebowitz, clean sheets, Aubrey Plaza.

‘[*Lake of Urine: A Love Story*](https://www.harpercollins.com/products/the-collected-novels-of-charles-wright-charles-wright),’ by Guillermo Stitch (2020)

Fans of offbeat writers such as Flann O’Brien, Stella Gibbons and J.P. Donleavy, and admirers of the off-color puns in “Finnegans Wake,” here is a book for you. Stitch’s “Lake of Urine” is a strange, warty, high-flying satire about love, lust and demented varieties of female empowerment. More specifically, it’s about Urine and Noranbole Wakeling, sisters around whom young men lurk. Urine is sensitive and lovely — and of gladiatorial disposition. Woe to men who aim to woo her. One arrives for a date to find that she has erected a huge wicker structure on a hilltop spelling out his name alongside an obscenity. Then she sets it, and his effigy, alight. We learn about “the time she garroted Timothy Spencer’s pony because he had been sitting on it when he had glanced at the hem of her frock.” This novel appears to be set in the distant past, yet characters have USB ports. Urine winds up running an international conglomerate with an exorcist on the board of directors. I’m not sure I’ve ever read a book quite like this. Every character who wanders through it is, to use Primo Levi’s words, “as disheveled and bristly as a cat returning from a rooftop jamboree.” —DG

READ IF YOU LIKE: Mud, Emma Stone in “[*Poor Things*](https://www.harpercollins.com/products/the-collected-novels-of-charles-wright-charles-wright),” anecdotes about pickles, Monty Python, the droll music of [*David Berman*](https://www.harpercollins.com/products/the-collected-novels-of-charles-wright-charles-wright).

Special thanks to Heritage Auctions.

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[***In Michigan, Biden and Trump Offer a Preview of 2024; News Analysis***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:698J-S191-DXY4-X0WH-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Body**

The candidates’ dueling styles were on clear display as the two men tried to woo voters affected by the United Automobile Workers strike.

It’s going to be a long road to next November. And the first steps started this week.

President Biden and former President Donald J. Trump traveled to Michigan, one day after the other, to speak directly to ***working-class*** voters in what amounted to a preview of a likely 2024 campaign.

Their dueling styles were on clear display as the two men tried to woo voters affected by the [*United Automobile Workers strike*](https://www.nytimes.com/article/uaw-strike-explained-ford-stellantis-gm.html?name=styln-uaw-strike&amp;region=TOP_BANNER&amp;block=storyline_menu_recirc&amp;action=click&amp;pgtype=Article&amp;variant=undefined). Mr. Biden has campaigned on a message of bolstering the middle class, protecting democratic norms and countering China. Mr. Trump, a criminal defendant several times over, has focused on vindicating himself, channeling conservative grievances and promoting America-first policies.

Their differences are not just ideological and tactical but stylistic. Mr. Trump prefers a boisterous event that lets him take center stage, and Mr. Biden, so far, has opted for small fund-raisers where he can burnish his Scranton Joe persona.

Voters have signaled that they would prefer a different set of options in 2024, but for now, the most likely choice is between the current and former president, who have sharply diverging visions for the future of the United States.

[*Raucous rallies*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/10/12/us/politics/trump-maga-rally-play.html), like the one he held on Wednesday, allow Mr. Trump to test his messaging and give him political oxygen to power through the next news cycle. On Wednesday, as seven other Republican presidential candidates [*gathered in California for a primary debate*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2023/09/27/us/republican-debate-presidential/the-candidates-contend-again-with-an-absent-front-runner-heres-the-latest?smid=url-share), Mr. Trump bragged about being ahead of the field — at one point calling his rivals “job candidates” for a second Trump administration — and brought his usual bluster to a crowd of several hundred at a nonunion manufacturing facility.

Guests circulated inside the facility, called Drake Enterprises, some wearing T-shirts emblazoned with Mr. Trump’s mug shot and a telling caption: “NEVER SURRENDER.”

In [*an hourlong speech*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/27/us/politics/trump-autoworkers-detroit.html), Mr. Trump castigated the Biden administration’s clean-energy agenda, which includes a push for a transition to electric vehicles that has aggravated union workers who share his populist views on the economy.

“A vote for Crooked Joe means the future of the auto industry will be based in China,” Mr. Trump told the crowd, warning that a transition to electric vehicles amounted to a “transition to hell.” He offered tepid support for the striking autoworkers, telling them that electric vehicles would undermine any success with a new contract: “It doesn’t make a damn bit of difference what you get because in two years you’re all going to be out of business.”

Mr. Trump repeatedly overinflated the evening’s crowd size, at one point falsely claiming that there were 9,000 people waiting outside the venue. But in Michigan, he did what Mr. Biden has not done yet: He pleaded for endorsements and votes.

“Your leadership should endorse me,” Mr. Trump said, “and I will not say a bad thing about them again and they will have done their job.”

Never a big fan of a rally, Mr. Biden, who has for decades presented himself as a champion of the middle class, has so far limited most of his campaign appearances to fund-raisers or receptions with supporters. At those events, he opts to shake hands in rope lines and share stories of his decades in politics. He also warns his supporters of the grave risk he feels Mr. Trump continues to pose to the country.

On Tuesday, before traveling to California for campaign events and a meeting with technology advisers, Mr. Biden became the first sitting president to join a picket line, [*visiting workers outside a General Motors facility*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/26/us/politics/biden-uaw-strike-picket-michigan.html) in Belleville, Mich. — a sign of how important it was for him to court a powerful political bloc whose ranks are no longer full of reliably Democratic voters.

“The middle class built this country,” Mr. Biden told striking workers on Tuesday. “And unions built the middle class. That’s a fact.”

In his short appearance with workers — Mr. Trump and several of supporters pointed out that the visit was only about 12 minutes — Mr. Biden spoke briefly and turned a bullhorn over to Shawn Fain, the U.A.W. president.

Unlike Mr. Trump, the president did not take the chance to link his visit to Michigan to securing union backing. When asked if he hoped to receive the support of the U.A.W., which endorsed him in 2020 but has refrained so far out of complaints about his clean-energy agenda, Mr. Biden would only say, “I’m not worried about that.”

Before Mr. Trump’s visit on Wednesday, the Biden campaign released an ad targeting the former president’s economic track record, accusing Mr. Trump of passing “tax breaks for his rich friends while automakers shuttered their plants and Michigan lost manufacturing jobs.”

Age and energy have become prevailing concerns among voters about Mr. Biden, who spent this week crisscrossing the country. On Thursday, Mr. Biden, who is 80, delivered what was widely seen as a rebuttal to Mr. Trump’s appearance and the Republican primary debate. ​[*In a speech in Tempe, Ariz.*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/28/us/politics/biden-mccain-library.html), the president emphasized the importance of American institutions and the Constitution, and branded Mr. Trump’s “Make America Great Again” movement a radical threat.

Mr. Trump, who is 77, relied on a teleprompter on Wednesday evening — as does Mr. Biden when he delivers prepared remarks. He could not resist the occasional aside, including an extended complaint about the paint job on Air Force One — “so inelegant,” said Mr. Trump, who [*tried to change the exterior of the plane*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/06/14/us/politics/trump-air-force-one-paint-job.html) when he was president. When he departed, he took his time navigating a set of stairs that led to the stage.

In recent appearances, Mr. Biden has spoken comparatively softly, and has tried to make light of concerns about his age. “I’ve never been more optimistic about our country’s future in the 800 years I’ve served,” he said at a campaign event this month.

But at a reception in California on Wednesday, Mr. Biden had sharp words for his predecessor.

“We’re running because our most important freedoms — the right to choose, the right to vote, the right to be who you are, to love who you love — has been attacked and shredded,” the president told supporters. “Donald Trump and the MAGA Republicans are determined to destroy American democracy because they want to break down institutional structures.”

PHOTOS: Clockwise from above: Autoworkers on strike in Wayne, Mich.; President Biden joined a picket line outside a G.M. facility in Belleville; former President Donald J. Trump at a rally in Clinton Township. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY BRITTANY GREESON FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES; PETE MAROVICH FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES; DOUG MILLS/THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A23.

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[***What Just Happened at West Virginia University Should Worry All of Us***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:690N-GNW1-DXY4-X45N-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

August 22, 2023 Tuesday

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; Editorial Desk; Pg. 22; GUEST ESSAY

**Length:** 978 words

**Byline:** By Leif Weatherby

**Body**

In proposing last week to eliminate 169 faculty positions and cut more than 30 degree programs from its flagship university, West Virginia, the state with the fourth-highest poverty rate in the country, is engaging in a kind of educational gerrymandering. If you're a West Virginian with plans to attend West Virginia University, be prepared to find yourself cut out of much of the best education that the school has traditionally offered, and many of the most basic parts of the education offered by comparable universities.

The planned cuts include the school's program of world languages and literatures, along with graduate programs in mathematics and other degrees across the arts and pre-professional programs. The university is deciding, in effect, that certain citizens don't get access to a liberal arts education.

Sadly, this is not just a local story. Politicians and state officials, often with the help of management consultants, are making liberal arts education scarce in some of the poorest states in the Union. This trend, typically led by Republican-controlled legislatures and often masquerading as budgetary necessity, threatens to have dire long-term effects on our already polarized and divided nation.

Administrators at West Virginia University devised the plan to restructure the school with the help of a consulting company called rpk Group, which also works with the Universities of Missouri, Kansas and Virginia, among other schools. The stated purpose of the proposal is to address an expected decline in student enrollment at the school that will create a projected $45 million budget deficit.

But the projected deficit is the result of overly aggressive planning more than it is a financial liability created by the humanities. E. Gordon Gee, the president of West Virginia University, once promised that the school would have 40,000 students by 2020, but the figure is still well under 30,000 across three campuses and is projected to drop. Mr. Gee is now covering up his own failures at the expense of his state's citizens, instead of putting his efforts toward recruiting and obtaining donor money to fund a broad education for West Virginians.

What's more, cutting humanities programs -- which make up a sizable minority of the majors slated to be cut, alongside pre-professional and technical programs -- is not necessarily the best way to save money. There is substantial evidence that humanities departments, unlike a majority of college athletics programs, often break even (and some may even subsidize the sciences). In defense of its proposed cuts, West Virginia University has cited declining interest in some of its humanities programs, but the absolute number of students enrolled is not the only measure of a department's value.

The finances aren't the point, anyway. The humanities are under threat more broadly across the nation because of the perceived left-wing ideology of the liberal arts. Book bans, attempts to undermine diversity efforts and remodeled school curriculums that teach that slavery was about ''skill'' development are part of a larger coordinated assault on the supposed ''cultural Marxism'' of the humanities. (That absurd idea rests in part on an antisemitic fantasy in which left-leaning philosophers like Theodor Adorno and Herbert Marcuse somehow took control of American culture after World War II.) To resist this assault, we must provide broad access to a true liberal arts education.

The campaign to overturn the liberal arts is politically motivated, through and through. The Democratic Party has lost the ***working class***, while the Republican Party has made electoral gains among the least educated. With the help of consultants, Republicans seek to gut the (nonprofit or public) university in the name of a ''profit'' it doesn't even intend to deliver. The point instead is to divide the electorate, and higher education is the tool.

I grew up in rural upstate New York. I was lucky: My parents put a liberal arts education above all other goals. But I know what it looks like when people are told they can't have nice things, and it's ugly. Taking liberal arts education away from the least privileged -- implying that they are future laborers and nothing else -- helps ensure that they develop a resentment of ''elites.'' That's an animus whose political consequences should be uncomfortably familiar by now.

The resentment fostered by cuts like those at West Virginia University won't be aimed at the true culprits. The long-term effect will be bitterness toward those who have access to the liberal arts education that remains on offer in many blue states and at elite universities -- what the scholar Lisa Corrigan calls a ''two-tier educational system.'' This outcome is likely to fortify many Republican voting strongholds.

Democratic politicians need to fight back in these culture wars, defending the humanities (rather than disparaging them) and loudly dissenting from the view that education is just job training. College presidents like Mr. Gee should promote and recruit rather than cut and run. An unholy alliance of far-right ideology and mercenary venture capitalists has politicized the classroom. We must reject their vision of America and insist that a liberal arts education accessible to more than just the elite is one of the great foundations of a democracy.

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**Graphic**

PHOTOS (PHOTOGRAPHS BY KLYAKSUN AND PHOTOQUEST/GETTY IMAGES) This article appeared in print on page A22.

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[***23 of the Best American Dishes of 2023***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69VJ-RC81-JBG3-62H8-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Section:** DINING

**Length:** 1830 words

**Byline:** The New York Times

**Highlight:** As we scouted restaurants around the country, these were some of our favorites this year.

**Body**

Each year as we travel the country to scout out candidates for our many best-restaurant lists — whether the [*big national listing*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/dining/best-restaurants-america.html) in the early fall or the new “best of” [*city lists*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/dining/best-restaurants-america.html) [*we’ve*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/dining/best-restaurants-america.html) begun [*rolling out*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/dining/best-restaurants-america.html) — our reporters and editors eat hundreds of meals in dozens of states. Inevitably we come across that one dish that we almost wish we’d ordered two of, and wish we could find closer to home.

Some are high-concept — a Dungeness crab doughnut, for instance — while others are just perfect examples of beloved familiars like brisket tacos or fried chicken. What they have in common, though, is that months later they still jump to mind when we&#39;re asked, “What were your favorite dishes of this year?”

And if we’re back in Denver, Seattle, Burlington, Vt., or Grand Rapids, Mich., you can be sure we’ll seek them out — and you should, too. BRIAN GALLAGHER

Fried Chicken at [*Tavern on State*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/dining/best-restaurants-america.html)

New Haven, Conn.

I will always order the fried chicken at a promising new restaurant like this one. Its fried chicken thighs with green tomato relish and radish salad was the best of many dishes I loved this year in the growing “tavern” category — a much-needed bridge between pub grub and tweezer food. JULIA MOSKIN

Thai Red Curry Yellowtail at [*the Katherine*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/dining/best-restaurants-america.html)

Fort Lauderdale, Fla.

The Katherine is what happened when Timon Balloo realized that a neighborhood bistro near his home in Broward County, comfortably removed from the pressures of Miami, was exactly the kind of restaurant he needed at this stage of his life. The restaurant opened last year and is named after Mr. Balloo’s wife and business partner, Marissa Katherine. This curry seafood dish nods to Ms. Balloo’s Thai-Colombian heritage and is a delicious example of the kitchen’s worldly South Florida sensibility. BRETT ANDERSON

Brisket Taco at [*Garcia’s*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/dining/best-restaurants-america.html)

San Antonio

A juicy, crisp-edged slab of brisket, a blanket-soft tortilla, some pico de gallo — when the basics are executed this well, there’s no need for any other adornments. PRIYA KRISHNA

Whole Grilled Dorado at [*Clandestino*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/dining/best-restaurants-america.html)

Portland, Ore.

It takes a brave chef to serve a whole fish, skeleton intact, but when done right the payoff is big. At Clandestino, Lauro Romero grills whole dorado until the skin blisters, suffusing the tender white flesh with a smoky charred flavor that’s brightened with a pile of fresh herbs and pickled red onions. Earthy beans and warm tortillas round out this brilliantly executed — and rarely found — dish. MELISSA CLARK

Mulhwe Noodles at [*Bansang*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/dining/best-restaurants-america.html)

San Francisco

In a chilled pool of ruby-tinged, fermented chile broth, strands of capellini peacefully rest beneath slices of seasonal fish and beautiful tangles of pickles of shaved mu (radish) and cucumber. Distinct at first, everything gets mixed together, synchronizing in a bite that’s deeply invigorating and bright any time of the year. ELEANORE PARK

Tostada Raspada at [*Cenaduria Elvira*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/dining/best-restaurants-america.html)

Oakland, Calif.

Air snapping in half sounds like an imagined achievement of atmospheric physics, but it occurs when biting into this impossibly thin, crackling tostada raspada. The owner, Elvira Varela, gets the corn directly from Zapotlanejo, Jalisco in Mexico, transforming the bounty into foot-long toboggans slathered with flavorful beans and topped with a shower of cabbage and a smattering of queso fresco. The dish doubles as the best home-cooked meal of the year as well, given that Ms. Varela delivers all of this culinary sorcery directly from her home patio. ELEANORE PARK

Chicken-Fried Steak at [*Reba’s Place*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/dining/best-restaurants-america.html)

Atoka, Okla.

The chicken-fried steak at [*the country singer Reba McEntire’s restaurant*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/dining/best-restaurants-america.html) is brilliant in its unfanciness. It has an appropriately high ratio of heavily seasoned crust to meat, a slightly sweet gravy to balance and, unlike many versions of the dish, you can actually taste the flavor of the steak. PRIYA KRISHNA

Free-Range Bison With Wine-Poached Pear and Demi-Glace at [*Cochineal*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/dining/best-restaurants-america.html)

Marfa, Texas

First-time visitors invariably note the improbability of finding a restaurant like Cochineal, with its prix-fixe menu and specialty cocktails, floating in the vast expanse of West Texas flatlands that surrounds the remote (if artsy) town of Marfa. Yet the restaurant manages to convey a sense of place that doesn’t feel contrived. Large credit for that goes to the forthright, proudly regional cooking of the chef and co-owner Alexandra Gates, who last spring served a filet of free-range bison, rich in mineral flavor, that justified my daylong drive. BRETT ANDERSON

White Prawns With Hawaiian Finger Limes and Coriander at [*Ethel’s Fancy*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/dining/best-restaurants-america.html)

Palo Alto, Calif.

Simply grilled and sparingly adorned with coriander flowers, this pared-back but elegant prawn dish hews to fashion’s reminder to “look in the mirror and take one thing off.” It achieves much more accessorized with less. ELEANORE PARK

Halibut Chraimeh at [*Honey Road*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/dining/best-restaurants-america.html)

Burlington, Vt.

Cara Tobin, Honey Road’s chef and co-owner, honed her voice and technique cooking at Oleana, in Cambridge, Mass., a modern pioneer in its celebration of eastern Mediterranean and North African flavors and dishes. Halibut chraimeh, a special that ran this fall, is a Tunisian stew that the chef de cuisine Elliot Sion modified to include ingredients, like beets and walnuts, found in the Jewish American dishes he grew up with. BRETT ANDERSON

Dungeness Crab Doughnut at [*Boat Bar*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/dining/best-restaurants-america.html)

Seattle

A crab doughnut might sound like stunt food at first. When you think about it, though, it makes some sense: the oceanic wash of sweet crab meat married with crème fraîche and mayonnaise, the pliant chew of the brioche-style doughnut and a zesty grating of Parmesan and fresh horseradish over the top. When you taste it, though, it makes perfect sense. It’s not always on the menu, but if it is, get it. BRIAN GALLAGHER

Bacalhau a Gomes de Sa at [*Portugalia Marketplace*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/dining/best-restaurants-america.html)

Fall River, Mass.

Portugalia has always been known for bacalhau. That’s been true since it opened in a three-car garage behind a tenement house in the 1980s, through to its current incarnation, where the codfish counter is across a handsome grocery store from the wine department. So it logically follows that one of the few dishes you’ll always find at the prepared food counter is this classic bacalhau casserole, a rustic, salty favorite in this Portuguese stronghold on the New England coast. BRETT ANDERSON

Littlenecks and Chouriço at [*Matunuck Oyster Bar*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/dining/best-restaurants-america.html)

South Kingstown, R.I.

“Local” translates to “right over there” at this bright waterside perch, which farms its own oysters just a short swim away in Potter Pond. But nothing on the menu sums up the location as smartly as its snappy garlic-and-white-wine sauté of sausage and Rhode Island clams, a tribute to the state’s sizable population of Portuguese Americans — and of mollusks. PATRICK FARRELL

Stuffed Cabbage at [*Prosperity Social Club*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/dining/best-restaurants-america.html)

Cleveland

This barroom’s roots run to the 1930s, when immigrants from Eastern Europe were an established presence in the city’s Tremont neighborhood. The ***working-class*** legacy is still evident in Prosperity’s gritty décor, gruff hospitality and signature stuffed cabbage rolls, draped in paprika-stained sour cream-sauerkraut sauce. BRETT ANDERSON

Hanger Steak at [*A Restaurant*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/dining/best-restaurants-america.html)

Newport Beach, Calif.

Though it’s tempting to think of the hanger steak as the Toyota Camry of cuts — ubiquitous, reliable and broadly uninspiring — the one I had at this 98-year-old Orange County spot was surprisingly perfect. Hefty char on a buttery but strongly beefy steak unfussily served. The atmosphere, a dimly lit, voluminously boothed room amid the sun-washed surroundings, only added to the experience. BRIAN GALLAGHER

Spicy Pork Adobo at [*Kilig*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/dining/best-restaurants-america.html)

Seattle

The sibling restaurant to Musang (which is on [*our 25 Best Restaurants in Seattle list*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/dining/best-restaurants-america.html)), Kilig is only two months old. But it has already found its modern-Filipino comfort zone. This dish — a perfect balance of unctuously fatty pork, vinegar tang and a warm wisp of spice — was a standout on a rainy afternoon. BRIAN GALLAGHER

Hearth Bread at [*Brutø*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/dining/best-restaurants-america.html)

Denver

Fresh-baked bread service is fairly common these days, but the version here is something special. Made from Colorado grain milled nearby, the personal-size boules are popped into an oak-fired oven for a mere minute and a half before being handed across the counter to you, piping hot, dotted with char and served with rotating pairings like housemade achiote butter or mole blanco dipping sauce. BRIAN GALLAGHER

Golden Prawn Toast at [*Yangban*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/dining/best-restaurants-america.html)

Los Angeles

The “golden” could refer to a few things here: the double dips in butter the local sourdough toast takes, the rich aioli-like sauce or the cured egg yolks grated over the top to finish. Or even the feeling you’ll have when you taste how it all wraps beautifully around the sweet deep-sea prawns that Yangban gets from just one family on Kauai. Going back to just shrimp toast will be a challenge. BRIAN GALLAGHER

Hire Katsu Curry at [*KCM*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/dining/best-restaurants-america.html)

Grand Rapids, Mich.

Perhaps you live in a part of the country where katsu curry is abundant, and thus does not turn heads. Grand Rapids is not such a place, which is part of the reason my visit to KCM was so memorable. Larger reasons were the crisp perfection of the fried pork and the chef-owner Jason Kim’s convivial, prideful hospitality. BRETT ANDERSON

‘BBQ’ Whole Shrimp at [*Burdell*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/dining/best-restaurants-america.html)

Oakland, Calif.

A take on New Orleans barbecue shrimp, these head-on creatures bathe in a sauce ramped up with stock made from the shrimp shells, Vietnamese dried shrimp and fish sauce. It’s all brought back topside with a bit of the house-fermented hot sauce. You’ll wish there was twice as much on the plate. BRIAN GALLAGHER

Rosette Cookie with Fresh Farmer’s Cheese and Walla Walla Onion Jam at [*Atoma*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/dining/best-restaurants-america.html)

Seattle

Rosette cookies, formed on a mold and fried to a pleasing golden crisp, are common in Scandinavian confectionery, which makes them perfectly at home in the Pacific Northwest. But as an appetizer? Well, since this version hides a creamy cheese and allium sweetness inside, absolutely. BRIAN GALLAGHER

Chicken Long Rice Croquettes at [*Mud Hen Water*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/dining/best-restaurants-america.html)

Honolulu

Bite into one of these craggy golden orbs and you get a hot gulp of gingery, soul-reviving chicken noodle soup. The “long rice” is the noodles: skinny, slippery, translucent bean-thread vermicelli. LIGAYA MISHAN

Rocky Road Ice Cream With Macadamia Nut Dragées at [*Fête*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/dining/best-restaurants-america.html)

Honolulu

The chocolate, produced locally, is extra dark. The crunch comes from buttery macadamia nuts, dipped and sealed in more chocolate. And the marshmallows, homemade, achieve the perfect texture between cling and surrender. LIGAYA MISHAN

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[***The Bush-Obama Blueprint That Gives Biden Hope for '24***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69N7-3HD1-DXY4-X0FC-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** By Adam Nagourney

**Body**

President Biden isn't the first incumbent to face grim polling a year out from Election Day.

Well before Election Day in 2004, President George W. Bush was warned by strategists that he would face a tough campaign battle because of voter distress over the war in Iraq and over the economy -- two issues he had once hoped to ride to a second term.

Mr. Bush's aides moved quickly to retool the campaign. They turned attention away from the president and his record and set out to portray his likely Democratic opponent, Senator John Kerry of Massachusetts, a Vietnam War veteran, as a flip-flopper, unreliable on national security and unfit to lead a nation still reeling from the terror attacks of Sept. 11.

''We saw a weakness we knew we could exploit to our advantage in what was going to be a close election,'' said Karl Rove, Mr. Bush's longtime senior political adviser.

Eight years later, aides to another sitting president, Barack Obama, reviewing public and private polls, concluded that concern among voters about the lingering effects of the Great Recession and the direction of the nation could derail his hopes for a second term.

Taking a lesson from Mr. Bush, Mr. Obama recast his campaign away from his first-term record and set out to discredit his opponent, Mitt Romney, the former governor of Massachusetts, as a wealthy businessman unsympathetic to ***working-class*** Americans.

President Biden is hardly the first president during this era of division and polarization to be confronted with polling data suggesting his re-election was at risk. But the re-election campaigns rolled out by Mr. Bush and Mr. Obama, who both returned to second terms in the White House, stand today as reminders that polls this early are not predictions of what will happen on Election Day. In the hands of a nimble candidate, they can even be a road map for turning around a struggling campaign.

Mr. Bush and Mr. Obama were different candidates facing different obstacles: a quagmire of a war for Mr. Bush, a domestic economy shaken by the global financial crisis of 2008 for Mr. Obama. But both moved to transform their re-election campaigns from a referendum on the incumbent into a contrast with an opponent they defined, with slashing television advertisements, months before either Mr. Romney or Mr. Kerry were nominated at their party conventions.

By contrast, a modern-day Republican president who lost a bid for a second term, George H.W. Bush in 1992, failed to heed polls showing voters distressed about the economy and ready for a change after 12 years of Republicans in the White House.

The elder Mr. Bush, his aides said in recent interviews, was lulled by the accolades for leading the coalition that repelled Saddam Hussein and Iraq out of Kuwait, and contempt for his opponent, a young Democratic governor who had avoided the draft and had a history of extramarital liaisons.

''Biden has a very high degree of difficulty but I think the race is winnable,'' said David Plouffe, who was a senior adviser to Mr. Obama's re-election campaign. ''Listen, I have sympathy for an incumbent president or governor who says, 'people need to know more about my accomplishments.' That is true, but at the end of the day this is a comparative exercise. That's the one thing we learned.''

The Biden White House has dismissed polls -- including a New York Times/Siena College poll released last week -- as meaningless this far before Election Day. The president's advisers pointed to Democratic gains in this month's elections as evidence that the party and its standard-bearer are in fine shape.

Yet, after months of trying to run on his economic record with little sign of success, Mr. Biden has begun turning his attention more to Donald J. Trump, the Republican former president and his likely opponent, particularly his policies on immigration and abortion rights. That includes an advertisement that shows Mr. Trump plodding through a golf course as the announcer said that Mr. Trump pushed through tax cuts ''for his rich friends'' while U.S. automakers shut down plants.

''We are absolutely looking at ways that we can help drive the conversation around Trump and MAGA as much as we can,'' said Kevin Munoz, the Biden campaign spokesman. But, Mr. Munoz added, ''We are in a different position than Obama and Bush. We had very strong midterms. We have had very strong special elections. Our theory of the case was proved again last Tuesday.''

Upending the race dynamics might prove more daunting for Mr. Biden than for his predecessors. Mr. Obama and George W. Bush were able to discredit Mr. Romney and Mr. Kerry because voters, at this early stage of the general election campaign, did not know much about them.

But there is not much the Biden campaign can tell voters about Mr. Trump that they don't already know. (Or for that matter, not much Mr. Biden can tell voters about Mr. Biden that they don't already know.) And Mr. Trump has, so far at least, not paid a political cost for the kind of statements -- such as when he described his critics as ''vermin'' -- that might have previously derailed a more conventional candidate. Being indicted on 91 criminal counts in four cases has, so far, only solidified his support.

When Mr. Bush's campaign began planning for his re-election, they confronted polling numbers that -- while not as unnerving for the president as some that have come out in recent weeks about Mr. Biden -- were cause for concern. A poll by the Pew Research Group found that 46 percent of respondents said Mr. Bush's economic policies had made the economy worse and 39 percent said American troops should be brought back from Iraq as soon as possible; up from 32 percent the month before.

''We decided early on that we wanted to make the election about national security even though the economy was the No. 1 issue,'' said Matthew Dowd, the chief strategist for Mr. Bush's 2004 campaign. ''We were at a disadvantage to Dems on the economy. And as part of that strategy, we desired to define Kerry negatively on national security early on, and as a weak flip-flopping leader so we could position Bush as a strong leader and strong on national security.''

Before long, the Bush campaign was on the air with advertisements assailing Mr. Kerry for pledging to roll back the Patriot Act, giving the federal government expanded powers to go after terrorists. The Patriot Act was passed shortly after the Sept. 11 attacks with overwhelming support in Congress -- including Mr. Kerry.

''John Kerry. Playing politics with national security,'' an announcer said.

Eight years later, as Mr. Obama mounted his re-election campaign, many Americans were telling pollsters that the country was heading in the wrong direction and that they were worse off financially than they had been before Mr. Obama took office. For instance, a Washington Post/ABC News poll found three-quarters of Americans saying the country was heading in the wrong direction.

Mr. Obama's advisers studied the re-election campaigns of other embattled sitting presidents. ''We knew that most re-elect campaigns were a referendum,'' said Joel Benenson, who was the pollster for Mr. Obama's team. ''We also knew we had this massive economic crisis which absolutely was not all of Obama's making. But we also knew you are the incumbent president, and you can't blame it on your predecessor. We couldn't convince them that the economy was getting better.''

But Mr. Romney, he said, ''was not fully formed with voters,'' which was an opportunity to spotlight his wealth and portray him as someone whose policies would favor the rich.

By contrast, George H.W. Bush, aides said, disregarded the warnings, confident the near 90 percent voter approval rating he registered after the war in Kuwait made his re-election all but certain. ''The adulation from the war somehow muted the normal political instincts of a lot of people around the president,'' said Ron Kaufman, who was a senior adviser to that campaign.

Mr. Rove said Mr. Biden was in worse shape today than the elder Mr. Bush had been in 1992. ''Bush seemed bereft of ideas for the future, but people saw him as an admirable human being,'' Mr. Rove said. ''The problem for Biden is that people have concluded he's not up to the job -- too old and lacking the necessary stamina and mental acuity.''

In recent polls conducted in five battleground states by The New York Times and Siena College, 71 percent of respondents said Mr. Biden was ''too old'' to be an effective president.

Mr. Plouffe said the Biden campaign should embrace the lesson the Obama campaign learned studying the losing campaign of the elder Mr. Bush. ''The Bush people tried to convince people that the economy was better than they thought it was,'' he said. ''One thing I've learned is you can't tell people what they think about the economy. They'll tell you what they think about the economy.''

''I'd start every speech saying, 'America is faced with a choice, we are both old white men,''' Mr. Plouffe said. '''But that's where the similarities end.'''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/16/us/politics/biden-trump-election-presidents-polling.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/16/us/politics/biden-trump-election-presidents-polling.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Just like President Biden, former Presidents George W. Bush and Barack Obama confronted polling numbers that were worrying. Each transformed his campaign to address the obstacles. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY HAIYUN JIANG FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

DOUG MILLS/THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A14.

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**End of Document**



[***Actors’ Strike Leaves Celebrity Podcasts in Grey Zone***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68RX-SJ31-JBG3-62T3-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

July 21, 2023 Friday 18:13 EST

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**Section:** ARTS

**Length:** 855 words

**Byline:** Reggie Ugwu

**Highlight:** Rewatch podcasts and podcasts affiliated with Hollywood studios were at the center of a week of confusion over union policies. “Nobody really knows,” said Sophia Bush of “One Tree Hill.”

**Body**

Rewatch podcasts and podcasts affiliated with Hollywood studios were at the center of a week of confusion over union policies. “Nobody really knows,” said Sophia Bush of “One Tree Hill.”

Actors who host podcasts were divided on how or whether to continue their programs this week, as the 8-day-old [*Hollywood actors’ strike*](https://www.nytimes.com/article/actors-strike-why.html?) reverberated through an adjacent industry that didn’t exist during the union’s last work stoppage 43 years ago.

The official targets of the strike are film and television productions associated with the Alliance of Motion Picture and Television Producers, a group that includes all of the major Hollywood studios and streamers like Netflix, Amazon and Apple. But messaging from the actors’ union, SAG-AFTRA, barring promotion of past or future work for the studios has left some members unsure of whether their podcasts are in violation of union policy.

The actors hosting podcasts that recap the TV shows “[*It’s Always Sunny in Philadelphia*](https://thealwayssunnypod.com/),” “[*One Tree Hill*](https://www.iheart.com/podcast/1119-drama-queens-83532602/)” and “[*Bones*](https://boneheads-with-emily-deschanel-and-carla-gallo.simplecast.com/),” for example, canceled or did special episodes this week.

But similar podcasts — including ones about “[*Will &amp; Grace*](https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/just-jack-will-with-sean-hayes-and-eric-mccormack/id1691210037),” “[*Gilmore Girls*](https://www.iheart.com/podcast/1119-i-am-all-in-with-scott-pa-81509112/),” “[*New Girl*](https://www.iheart.com/podcast/1119-welcome-to-our-show-91519104/)” and “[*Beverly Hills, 90210*](https://www.iheart.com/podcast/1119-9021omg-72174382/)” — continued as scheduled. An episode of “[*Office Ladies*](https://officeladies.com/),” a podcast about “The Office,” was published two days behind schedule as the hosts, Jenna Fischer and Angela Kinsey, debated how to proceed, according to a person close to the show.

In an episode of the “One Tree Hill” rewatch podcast “Drama Queens” that aired on Monday, the actors Sophia Bush, Hilarie Burton Morgan and Bethany Joy Lenz expressed uncertainty about whether their show could continue in its usual format and answered listener questions instead.

“Because our show currently is still streaming — even though we filmed it 20 years ago — is doing a rewatch pod considered promotion?” Burton Morgan asked, noting that she and the others awaited “a clear answer” from the union. Bush said later that “nobody really knows” what the guidelines allow.

The actresses Emily Deschanel and Carla Gallo, whose “Bones” rewatch podcast, “Boneheads,” was scheduled to debut this week, said in a statement on Wednesday that the show would be postponed.

“We’re waiting for additional guidance from the guild and will keep everyone updated with the new launch date as soon as we have it,” the statement read.

Pamela Greenwalt, a spokeswoman for SAG-AFTRA, said in a phone call on Friday that although the actors’ union considers rewatch podcasts promotional, actors under contract to produce such shows will not be considered in breach for continuing them.

Complicating matters further is the fact that many Hollywood studios and streamers also have podcast arms. Amazon, for example, owns or distributes several actor-led podcasts through its subsidiaries Audible and Wondery, including “[*Smartless*](https://www.smartless.com/),” hosted by Jason Bateman, Will Arnett and Sean Hayes; “[*Life Is Short With Justin Long,*](https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/life-is-short-with-justin-long/id1459899327)” hosted by Justin Long; and “[*Baby, This Is Keke Palmer*](https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/baby-this-is-keke-palmer/id1668446854),” hosted by Keke Palmer. All of those shows released new episodes this week.

While neither Audible nor Wondery is directly affiliated with the film and TV alliance, their connection to Amazon may put the actors they work with in an uncomfortable position. Representatives for Bateman, Arnett, Hayes, Long and Palmer didn’t respond to requests for comment. Greenwalt, of SAG-AFTRA, said podcasts produced by members of the film and TV alliance are not necessarily in violation and that actors with questions should consult with the union.

If the strike keeps actors from film and television sets for months, as some on both sides fear, podcasts could become a significant source of work. The vast majority of SAG-AFTRA’s 160,000 members are ***working-class*** performers, many of whom say the economics of streaming film and television have [*made it harder than ever to make a living*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/07/13/business/media/sag-aftra-writers-strike.html).

Some kinds of podcasts, such as those that have no affiliation with — and that do not feature discussions of work produced by — the A.M.P.T.P., are not in dispute. The actress and writer Natasha Leggero, who hosts the relationship podcast “[*The Endless Honeymoon*](https://www.endlesshoneymoonpod.com/)” with her husband, the comedian Moshe Kasher, said their show was moving ahead. “People still need advice and have dirty secrets to air even when actors and writers are on strike,” Leggero said.

Actors are free to appear as guests on celebrity interview podcasts as long as they don’t “promote struck work” while doing so, according to union guidelines. But, in practice, asking a performer not to talk about their work may prove awkward for everyone involved.

On a recent episode of the comedy podcast “[*Lovett or Leave It*](https://crooked.com/podcast-series/lovett-or-leave-it/),” the host, Jon Lovett, greeted his guest, the actor Jared Goldstein, by saying, “I like the thing that you’re in.” Goldstein, who appears in the most recent season of “Black Mirror,” replied, “Oh, thank you for liking the thing that I’m in, which for legal reasons cannot be discussed at this time.”

PHOTO: Sophia Bush, left, and Hilarie Burton Morgan in a scene from “One Tree Hill.” The actors are now hosts of “Drama Queens,” a rewatch podcast about the show. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Fred Norris/CW FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** July 21, 2023

**End of Document**



[***Reliable Narrators***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68W8-V2N1-JBG3-638X-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

August 6, 2023 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section BR; Column 0; Book Review Desk; Pg. 8; AUDIOBOOKS

**Length:** 895 words

**Byline:** By Sebastian Modak

**Body**

Three recent audiobooks feature authors narrating their own personal stories, directly into your ear.

In all the audiobooks I've listened to at this point, I've decided that a narration generally falls into one of three categories. There's the star-power option, when someone like Benedict Cumberbatch is brought in to lend weight to a production. Whole casts of voice actors might be hired to take on individual voices in nonfiction collections, like ''The 1619 Project,'' or expansive fiction like George Saunders's ''Lincoln in the Bardo'' (which includes a staggering 166 narrators). But when it comes to an autobiography, or a personal essay collection, there really is only one best option: Hand the microphone to the author. True, not every voice is cut out to hold an audience for 10 hours, but even when untrained cadences run flat, a self-narrated memoir carries an emotional authenticity that is impossible to replicate. Here are three new memoirs skillfully narrated by their authors, only one of whom happens to be an actor.

Within the first hour or so of WHAT THE DEAD KNOW: Learning About Life as a New York City Death Investigator (Simon & Schuster Audio, 9 hours, 47 minutes), the author and narrator Barbara Butcher makes clear that there's no escaping the parallels between her real life and the crime dramas that have fascinated audiences for generations. Her biography feels lifted from a noir film: Before becoming ''only the second female death investigator in Manhattan'' (''the first had quit after little more than a month''), she had been ''a disgraced alcoholic,'' she says, ''living in a shabby little studio, working off the books in a button store off Madison Avenue. It was all I felt I deserved.''

Early in the audiobook, Butcher chronicles her career path and her journey to sobriety in unflinching detail, while her voice remains deliberate and measured, occasionally slipping into what sounds like a half-smirk when cracking a joke about the morbid appropriateness of her name. She has a way with words, telling stories that are at turns hilarious, thought-provoking and, as might be expected, disturbing: ''Once you know the smell of death, you can pick it out in a flower shop.'' This is a story of trauma, yes, but it's also a glimpse into the dark side of a city that most never see up close. Butcher is called to the scene in Bowery flophouses, Upper West Side apartments that double as art museums and in the rubble of the World Trade Center, where the guiding principle is always the same: ''Dead men do tell tales. You just have to listen.''

The journalist Monica Potts did a good amount of listening of her own while researching THE FORGOTTEN GIRLS: A Memoir of Friendship and Lost Promise in Rural America (Random House Audio, 7 hours, 40 minutes), which she reads with barely restrained heartbreak. In 2015 she returned to her hometown of Clinton, Ark., on a quest to better understand why the life expectancy of white, ***working-class*** women in the region has been steadily declining for so long -- and how she managed to escape the forces that are dragging so many others down.

Potts investigates what economists have termed ''deaths of despair'' -- those caused by substance abuse and suicide -- with nuance and context, examining her own upbringing and that of her childhood best friend, Darci, who became caught in a cycle of addiction and homelessness as Potts found stability and success far from home. To help Potts trace ''the fault lines that led from there to here,'' Darci sat for hourslong interviews and granted Potts access to her diary. As deeply reported as this audiobook is -- providing an important sociological survey of an often-neglected demographic in the United States -- there are also moments when, understandably, it sounds as if Potts is about to cry. The end result is a story as moving as it is educational.

In the author's note to PAGEBOY: A Memoir (Macmillan Audio, 8 hours, 23 minutes), the actor Elliot Page makes the stakes of his forthcoming story explicit: ''At last, I can sit with myself, in this body, present,'' he says. ''This previously unimaginable contentment wouldn't have arrived without the health care I've received.'' There are very few moments of levity as he recalls starring in ''Juno'' (2007) and the breakout success that followed, coming out as gay in 2014 and as transgender in 2020. This is an often distressing story of someone striving to exist on his own terms -- and being sidelined by the relentless pressures of society over and over again.

Listening to Page's memoir in his invariably understated, almost deadpan delivery can be disorienting. One minute, there are childhood recollections of days spent lost in his own imagination, where ''a bunk bed was a kingdom, I was a boy''; and the next we hear the internal monologues of a mind consumed by an eating disorder, a first date as an openly trans person and repeated encounters with the vitriol of hateful strangers. The order in which these reflections appear might seem arbitrary at first, but the longer you listen the less chronology matters to the overall portrait that emerges: of a lifelong fighter who still, thanks to stubborn prejudices and reactionary policy decisions, has much to fight for.Sebastian Modak is a writer and photographer. He was The Times's 52 Places Traveler in 2019. @sebmodak

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/07/28/books/review/pageboy-elliot-page-what-the-dead-know-barbara-butcher-the-forgotten-girls-monica-potts.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/07/28/books/review/pageboy-elliot-page-what-the-dead-know-barbara-butcher-the-forgotten-girls-monica-potts.html)

**Graphic**

This article appeared in print on page BR8.

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**End of Document**



[***Early Chapters***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6938-1381-JBG3-61GP-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

September 3, 2023 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section BR; Column 0; Book Review Desk; Pg. 9; FICTION

**Length:** 1032 words

**Byline:** By Hamilton Cain

**Body**

In her new novel, ''The Rachel Incident,'' Caroline O'Donoghue examines the bond between two young booksellers in Ireland.

THE RACHEL INCIDENT, by Caroline O'Donoghue

The turn of the century saw L.G.B.T.Q. characters stride boldly into popular culture, shedding caricatures and claiming spaces long denied them. No television series embodied that shift more than ''Will & Grace,'' NBC's ratings juggernaut that chronicled the complex friendship of Will Truman, a gay lawyer, and Grace Adler, a straight interior decorator.

Although it was set in Manhattan, and many of its jokes are now dated, the show resonated across the country and overseas, becoming an inflection point for millennial writers such as Caroline O'Donoghue. In her exuberant, bitingly satirical ''The Rachel Incident,'' O'Donoghue nods at ''Will & Grace'' while probing the bonds between an Irish student and a young gay man involved in a surreptitious romance with a closeted professor.

Rachel Murray is a happily married, pregnant journalist based in present-day London, where she's written extensively about the legalization of abortion in her native Republic of Ireland. While filing a piece for The Hibernian Post, she discovers that Fred Byrne, her long-ago Victorian literature instructor at University College Cork, is now in a coma. The memory of Byrne conjures a pivotal year in Rachel's past, and she feels the urge to text her closest friend, James Devlin, now an accomplished screenwriter living in New York. Once upon a time, James was involved with Byrne.

Most of the novel unfolds in 2010, as the Irish economy crumbles amid a global recession. Almost six feet tall, on the cusp of graduation with no clear career path, Rachel is keenly aware of her beige ''middle-middle-class'' upbringing. She has benefited from a rung halfway up the social ladder, but doesn't click with others above or below her. Dazzled by Byrne, indifferent to her parents' struggles, Rachel aspires vaguely to a life of the mind. She takes a job at a bookstore, where she immediately befriends her colleague James. There's a touch of the devil in him, but what she really surrenders to is his ***working-class*** charm. The pair move into a flat on Shandon Street, where they binge episodes of ''Absolutely Fabulous'' and Cher movies. Theirs is a platonic relationship, a ''rare orchid,'' as Rachel calls it, one that requires careful cultivation.

''Over the course of just a month, I would be colonized by James on a molecular level,'' Rachel notes, ''and my personality would mold around his whenever there was space to do so.'' Born in England, James had immigrated to Cork as a child: ''His English accent was mostly gone, but he still peppered his speech with words like 'minge.' He called college 'uni,' which I liked because 'Rachel's off to uni' made me feel clean and jolly hockey sticks about my education.'' She adores him because he adores her, reveling in his attention.

The great world spins; tides rise and fall; aimless 20-somethings flirt with danger. Rachel and James burn through their earnings on parties and in pubs, hanging out among a like-minded crowd, a ''Gaynaissance'' of Cork-based Wills and Graces. (O'Donoghue includes a running gag about the series.) Rachel's crush on Dr. Byrne leads to a sham book launch where she intends to seduce him; instead, he and James hook up in the stockroom after hours, embarking on a fraught liaison. The trio come to an understanding and maintain a cone of silence, deceiving Deenie Harrington, Byrne's glamorous wife and editor, and Carey, Rachel's roguish boyfriend, whose on-again-off-again presence (''harder to pin down than egg whites'') only stokes her desire. She rhapsodizes about his abs.

This might sound like a raunchier version of a sitcom -- ''Will & Grace'' with a soupçon of ''Sex and the City'' -- but O'Donoghue has something more sophisticated in mind, hidden beneath the shagging and banter. ''The Rachel Incident'' recalls the fiction of both Sally Rooney and Anne Tyler as the author interrogates the dynamics of power, from academia to publishing houses to bedrooms.

In the vein of characters from ''Normal People'' or Tyler's Baltimore novels, Rachel is astute and funny as hell: ''Dr. Byrne posed for shots, holding the book in different positions,'' she observes at the launch. ''The photographer filled the same role as a clown might at a child's birthday party. There was a sense that, without him, it was just a bunch of adults who knew each other and were willing to participate in the role play that one of them was famous for a day. It seemed a revolutionary act of kindness, like the Make-a-Wish Foundation but for well-liked men nearing 40.''

O'Donoghue also keeps an eye on a handful of subplots. Ireland's economy craters; the Murrays scrape to pay bills. Rachel gets another job at a call center, but pines for a true profession. Confident in her status as one-half of an alpha couple, Deenie offers Rachel an internship, enlisting her mentee's assistance with an anthology of her famous father's poetry.

Present-day Rachel opines that ''it is vanishingly rare for a person working in the arts to admit that a blood connection secured their place within it.'' After a harrowing dinner at the Harrington-Byrnes' Edwardian flat, Rachel realizes that she prefers the warmth of James and Carey to the chilly poses of the affluent: ''I hated her, then. Hated her friends, her daughter-of-a-poet beauty, her fake money worries. I hated him. Hated his cowardice, the way he pretended to love James, the way he was a tourist in our lives.''

Byrne, of course, is no accidental tourist, and his machinations topple like dominoes. Can Rachel reinvent herself? O'Donoghue steers us toward reckonings large and small, her hand steady on the tiller. All the incidents in ''The Rachel Incident'' add up to a gratifying, accomplished novel.

Hamilton Cain is a book critic and the author of ''This Boy's Faith: Notes From a Southern Baptist Upbringing.''

THE RACHEL INCIDENT | By Caroline O'Donoghue | 304 pp. | Alfred A. Knopf | $28Hamilton Cain is a book critic and the author of ''This Boy's Faith: Notes from a Southern Baptist Upbringing.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/27/books/review/the-rachel-incident-caroline-odonoghue.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/27/books/review/the-rachel-incident-caroline-odonoghue.html)

**Graphic**

This article appeared in print on page BR9.

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**End of Document**



[***Levi Strauss Heir to Challenge Mayor London Breed of San Francisco***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6985-YTS1-DXY4-X03J-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

September 26, 2023 Tuesday 16:37 EST

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**Section:** US

**Length:** 1092 words

**Byline:** Heather Knight

**Highlight:** Daniel Lurie, 46, said he would run for mayor next year, at a time when many voters in the city are in a sour mood.

**Body**

Daniel Lurie, 46, said he would run for mayor next year, at a time when many voters in the city are in a sour mood.

Daniel Lurie, an heir to the Levi Strauss clothing fortune, announced on Tuesday that he would run against Mayor London Breed of San Francisco next year, at a time when the city is struggling to overcome a number of crises in its downtown core.

Mr. Lurie, 46, planned to launch his campaign Tuesday at a community center in the city’s Potrero Hill neighborhood, a longtime ***working-class*** area now dotted with multimillion-dollar homes and upscale shops. His entrance in the race signals that Ms. Breed may be vulnerable in her bid for re-election and may have lost the support of some moderate allies.

Mr. Lurie said in an interview that he intended to campaign on solving the city’s quality-of-life problems, and that he blames Ms. Breed for doing too little to tackle them.

Mr. Lurie is the founder of Tipping Point Community, an anti-poverty nonprofit. He said that he decided to run for mayor when he was walking his 9-year-old son and 12-year-old daughter to school, and they saw a man stumbling down the street, naked and screaming.

Noting that nobody did anything about the situation, himself included, he said he was troubled that city leaders and residents had apparently grown numb to such scenes.

“Our kids have come to a place where they’re inured,” he said. “It’s almost like they accept it, which is not OK.”

Though many San Francisco neighborhoods [*came through the pandemic*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/25/us/san-francisco-reputation.html) relatively unscathed, the [*city&#39;s downtown has suffered*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/12/17/business/economy/california-san-francisco-empty-downtown.html). Offices have been left vacant while employees work remotely at home. Retailers have struggled, while homeless encampments, fentanyl overdoses and property crimes have endured as serious problems.

Mr. Lurie said Ms. Breed had accomplished little, even though voters approved higher taxes to finance homeless services and low-income housing. He said that as mayor, he would add more psychiatric beds to the city’s hospitals, expand the shelter system and pay homeless people to clean the sidewalks.

He also said he would place more police officers on the streets and compel more people who are severely mentally ill into treatment, even if they refuse care. San Francisco is one of seven counties in California that will begin a court program this fall with the authority to force people with severe mental illness to be hospitalized if they refuse treatment.

Maggie Muir, a spokeswoman for Ms. Breed’s campaign, said Mr. Lurie’s platform did not depart from what the mayor was already trying to do. The only difference, she said, was that Mr. Lurie lacked government experience.

“Mayor Breed is working every day to make San Francisco safer and cleaner,” Ms. Muir said. “Why should we trust a beginner to accomplish these things faster?”

Ms. Breed, 49, and Mr. Lurie are both San Francisco natives and Democrats, but have very different backgrounds. Ms. Breed, the first Black woman to lead the city, was raised by her grandmother in public housing near City Hall, and now rents an apartment in the Lower Haight, a lively neighborhood popular among young tenants for its restaurants, nightclubs and colorful Victorian homes.

Few San Francisco residents have family ties — or riches — that extend as far back in the city as Mr. Lurie’s do. When he was a young child, his mother married Peter Haas, a great grand-nephew of Levi Strauss, the German immigrant who opened a dry goods shop in San Francisco in 1853, when the city was bustling with new arrivals seeking gold in the Sierra Nevada foothills. Mr. Strauss found his own fortune by making durable denim pants for miners, and his company is still synonymous with bluejeans today.

Mr. Lurie’s mother, Mimi Haas, is a billionaire. His father, Rabbi Brian Lurie, was the executive director of the Jewish Community Federation of San Francisco. Daniel Lurie is living in Potrero Hill temporarily while his house in Pacific Heights, the wealthy residential area where he grew up, is being renovated.

Defeating an incumbent mayor in San Francisco is rarer than a fog-free day in summer; it last happened 28 years ago, when Willie Brown beat Frank Jordan, a former police chief. Unlike Mr. Lurie, Mr. Brown entered that race with extraordinary name recognition, having served as speaker of the California State Assembly for nearly 15 years.

Even so, Mayor Breed appears vulnerable as the November 2024 election approaches. While [*San Francisco residents fiercely defend their city*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/25/us/san-francisco-reputation.html) against critics, few are sticking up for her. In poll after poll, city residents have said [*the city is on the wrong track*](https://sfchamber.com/2023-citybeat-poll-results/) and that Breed is mishandling the city’s recovery from the pandemic. Her [*approval ratings*](https://www.probolskyresearch.com/2023/05/20/san-francisco-voters-unhappy-with-direction-of-the-city-and-mayor-breed/) hover at about 33 percent.

Mr. Lurie joins a mayoral field that so far has just one other challenger: Ahsha Safaí, a San Francisco supervisor and a Democrat, who has centered his campaign on addressing retail theft and expanding the number of police officers. San Francisco will hold one nonpartisan contest for mayor next year, [*using a system*](https://sf.gov/ranked-choice-voting) that allows voters to rank their preferred candidates in order. If no candidate wins a majority of first-choice votes, the ranked order would determine the winner and avoid a runoff.

San Francisco voters have been in a foul mood. In 2022, they recalled Chesa Boudin, the district attorney, and three members of the school board. Local political consultants said that Ms. Breed was at risk, but that Mr. Lurie will have to overcome progressive voters’ skepticism toward a wealthy candidate, as well as a lack of experience.

“He hasn’t gained traction with even the business community as a strong leader who actually has the know-how and spine to shake things up,” said Jim Stearns, a San Francisco political consultant who has worked on past San Francisco campaigns but is not involved in the mayoral race.

Mr. Lurie said that he wants to use his privilege to help the city — and that he would ensure that his administration is as ethnically diverse as the city itself.

Asked to name the mayor he most admires, Mr. Lurie pointed to Mr. Brown of San Francisco and to Michael Bloomberg of New York City, both known for their pro-business, moderate politics.

“Whatever you think of them, they got stuff done,” Mr. Lurie said. “I am bullish on San Francisco, and I’m looking forward to helping put this city back on the right track.”

PHOTO: In 2024, Daniel Lurie is looking to unseat Mayor London Breed, whose approval ratings currently hover at about 33 percent. (PHOTOGRAPH BY GANI PIÑERO) This article appeared in print on page A12.

**Load-Date:** September 27, 2023

**End of Document**



[***What Just Happened at West Virginia University Should Worry All of Us; Guest Essay***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6908-CK61-JBG3-60V1-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

August 20, 2023 Sunday 23:23 EST

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 988 words

**Byline:** Leif Weatherby

**Highlight:** Republicans are making the liberal arts scarce in the poorest states.

**Body**

In [*proposing*](https://www.highereddive.com/news/west-virginia-university-looks-to-cut-nearly-3-dozen-academic-programs-inc/690709/) last week to eliminate 169 faculty positions and cut more than 30 degree programs from its flagship university, West Virginia, the state with the fourth-highest poverty rate in the country, is engaging in a kind of educational gerrymandering. If you’re a West Virginian with plans to attend West Virginia University, be prepared to find yourself cut out of much of the best education that the school has traditionally offered, and many of the most basic parts of the education offered by comparable universities.

The planned cuts include the school’s program of world languages and literatures, along with graduate programs in mathematics and other degrees across the arts and pre-professional programs. The university is deciding, in effect, that certain citizens don’t get access to a liberal arts education.

Sadly, this is not just a local story. Politicians and state officials, often with the help of management consultants, are making liberal arts education scarce in some of the poorest states in the Union. This trend, [*typically led*](https://newrepublic.com/article/135972/republican-war-public-universities) by Republican-controlled legislatures and often masquerading as budgetary necessity, threatens to have dire long-term effects on our already polarized and divided nation.

Administrators at West Virginia University devised the plan to restructure the school with the help of a consulting company called rpk Group, which also works with the Universities of Missouri, Kansas and Virginia, among other schools. The stated purpose of the proposal is to address an expected decline in student enrollment at the school that will create a projected $45 million budget deficit.

But the projected deficit is the result of overly aggressive planning more than it is a financial liability created by the humanities. E. Gordon Gee, the president of West Virginia University, once promised that the school would have 40,000 students by 2020, but the figure is still well under 30,000 across three campuses and is projected to drop. Mr. Gee is now covering up his own failures at the expense of his state’s citizens, instead of putting his efforts toward recruiting and obtaining donor money to fund a broad education for West Virginians.

What’s more, cutting humanities programs — which make up a sizable minority of the majors slated to be cut, alongside pre-professional and technical programs — is not necessarily the best way to save money. There is substantial evidence that humanities departments, unlike a majority of [*college athletics programs*](https://www.bestcolleges.com/news/analysis/2020/11/20/do-college-sports-make-money/), often [*break even*](https://profession.mla.org/the-humanities-as-service-departments-facing-the-budget-logic/) (and some may even subsidize the sciences). In defense of its proposed cuts, West Virginia University has cited declining interest in some of its humanities programs, but the absolute number of students enrolled is not the only measure of a department’s value.

The finances aren’t the point, anyway. The humanities are under threat more broadly across the nation because of the perceived left-wing ideology of the liberal arts. Book bans, attempts to undermine diversity efforts and remodeled school curriculums that teach that [*slavery was about “skill” development*](https://www.bostonglobe.com/2023/08/07/opinion/florida-board-education-slavery-nazism/) are part of a larger coordinated assault on the supposed “cultural Marxism” of the humanities. (That absurd idea rests in part on [*an antisemitic fantasy*](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/11/13/opinion/cultural-marxism-anti-semitism.html) in which left-leaning philosophers like Theodor Adorno and Herbert Marcuse somehow took control of American culture after World War II.) To resist this assault, we must provide broad access to a true liberal arts education.

The campaign to overturn the liberal arts is politically motivated, through and through. The Democratic Party has lost the ***working class***, while the Republican Party has [*made electoral gains among the least educated*](https://urldefense.proofpoint.com/v2/url?u=https-3A__www.politico.com_interactives_2022_midterm-2Delection-2Dhouse-2Ddistricts-2Dby-2Deducation_&amp;d=DwMFaQ&amp;c=slrrB7dE8n7gBJbeO0g-IQ&amp;r=bMQrB1JqPGH3QuzFgKxGwWv8_wlytMz_q_xKdjxXCE0&amp;m=ITdhM5_74tDvnxmfKk-oyC2pXgNpV2YnGNbvSuGp3BpNJ6L0ScVDdbG5D7-C8mKD&amp;s=2QtMVmMUmOB0w6K32SLvOlP0uH5TB2mey_58i-Jz2Io&amp;e=). With the help of consultants, Republicans seek to gut the (nonprofit or public) university in the name of a “profit” it doesn’t even intend to deliver. The point instead is to divide the electorate, and higher education is the tool.

I grew up in rural upstate New York. I was lucky: My parents put a liberal arts education above all other goals. But I know what it looks like when people are told they can’t have nice things, and it’s ugly. Taking liberal arts education away from the least privileged — implying that they are future laborers and nothing else — helps ensure that they develop a resentment of “elites.” That’s an animus whose political consequences should be uncomfortably familiar by now.

The resentment fostered by cuts like those at West Virginia University won’t be aimed at the true culprits. The long-term effect will be bitterness toward those who have access to the liberal arts education that remains on offer in many blue states and at elite universities — what the scholar Lisa Corrigan calls a “[*two-tier educational system*](https://urldefense.proofpoint.com/v2/url?u=https-3A__twitter.com_DrLisaCorrigan_status_1690371658362613761-3Fs-3D20&amp;d=DwMFaQ&amp;c=slrrB7dE8n7gBJbeO0g-IQ&amp;r=bMQrB1JqPGH3QuzFgKxGwWv8_wlytMz_q_xKdjxXCE0&amp;m=ITdhM5_74tDvnxmfKk-oyC2pXgNpV2YnGNbvSuGp3BpNJ6L0ScVDdbG5D7-C8mKD&amp;s=gJYYMfcIDlSdpI82k768mIkv73cdc14iQJzV0-UNF3s&amp;e=).” This outcome is likely to fortify many Republican voting strongholds.

Democratic politicians need to fight back in these culture wars, defending the humanities ([*rather than disparaging them*](https://hyperallergic.com/106217/obama-loves-art-history-but-thinks-its-economically-useless/)) and loudly dissenting from the view that education is just job training. College presidents like Mr. Gee should promote and recruit rather than cut and run. An unholy alliance of far-right ideology and mercenary venture capitalists has politicized the classroom. We must reject their vision of America and insist that a liberal arts education accessible to more than just the elite is one of the great foundations of a democracy.

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PHOTOS (PHOTOGRAPHS BY KLYAKSUN AND PHOTOQUEST/GETTY IMAGES) This article appeared in print on page A22.

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[***The Bush-Obama Blueprint That Gives Biden Hope for ’24***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69N1-GKP1-DXY4-X4HD-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Highlight:** President Biden isn’t the first incumbent to face grim polling a year out from Election Day.

**Body**

President Biden isn’t the first incumbent to face grim polling a year out from Election Day.

Well before Election Day in 2004, President George W. Bush was warned by strategists that he would face a tough campaign battle because of voter distress over the war in Iraq and over the economy — two issues he had once hoped to ride to a second term.

Mr. Bush’s aides moved quickly to retool the campaign. They turned attention away from the president and his record and set out to portray his likely Democratic opponent, Senator John Kerry of Massachusetts, a Vietnam War veteran, as a flip-flopper, unreliable on national security and unfit to lead a nation still reeling from the terror attacks of Sept. 11.

“We saw a weakness we knew we could exploit to our advantage in what was going to be a close election,” said Karl Rove, Mr. Bush’s longtime senior political adviser.

Eight years later, aides to another sitting president, Barack Obama, reviewing public and private polls, concluded that concern among voters about the lingering effects of the Great Recession and the direction of the nation could derail his hopes for a second term.

Taking a lesson from Mr. Bush, Mr. Obama recast his campaign away from his first-term record and set out to discredit his opponent, Mitt Romney, the former governor of Massachusetts, as a wealthy businessman unsympathetic to ***working-class*** Americans.

President Biden is hardly the first president during this era of division and polarization to be confronted with polling data suggesting his re-election was at risk. But the re-election campaigns rolled out by Mr. Bush and Mr. Obama, who both returned to second terms in the White House, stand today as reminders that polls this early are not predictions of what will happen on Election Day. In the hands of a nimble candidate, they can even be a road map for turning around a struggling campaign.

Mr. Bush and Mr. Obama were different candidates facing different obstacles: a quagmire of a war for Mr. Bush, a domestic economy shaken by the global financial crisis of 2008 for Mr. Obama. But both moved to transform their re-election campaigns from a referendum on the incumbent into a contrast with an opponent they defined, with slashing television advertisements, months before either Mr. Romney or Mr. Kerry were nominated at their party conventions.

By contrast, a modern-day Republican president who lost a bid for a second term, George H.W. Bush in 1992, failed to heed polls showing voters distressed about the economy and ready for a change after 12 years of Republicans in the White House.

The elder Mr. Bush, his aides said in recent interviews, was lulled by the accolades for leading the coalition that repelled Saddam Hussein and Iraq out of Kuwait, and contempt for his opponent, a young Democratic governor who had avoided the draft and had a history of extramarital liaisons.

“Biden has a very high degree of difficulty but I think the race is winnable,” said David Plouffe, who was a senior adviser to Mr. Obama’s re-election campaign. “Listen, I have sympathy for an incumbent president or governor who says, ‘people need to know more about my accomplishments.’ That is true, but at the end of the day this is a comparative exercise. That’s the one thing we learned.”

The Biden White House has dismissed polls — including [*a New York Times/Siena College poll released last week*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/05/us/politics/biden-trump-2024-poll.html) — as meaningless this far before Election Day. The president’s advisers pointed to Democratic gains in this month’s elections as evidence that the party and its standard-bearer are in fine shape.

Yet, after months of trying to run on his economic record with little sign of success, Mr. Biden has begun turning his attention more to Donald J. Trump, the Republican former president and his likely opponent, particularly his policies on immigration and abortion rights. That includes an advertisement that shows Mr. Trump plodding through a golf course as the announcer said that Mr. Trump pushed through tax cuts “for his rich friends” while U.S. automakers shut down plants.

“We are absolutely looking at ways that we can help drive the conversation around Trump and MAGA as much as we can,” said Kevin Munoz, the Biden campaign spokesman. But, Mr. Munoz added, “We are in a different position than Obama and Bush. We had very strong midterms. We have had very strong special elections. Our theory of the case was proved again last Tuesday.”

Upending the race dynamics might prove more daunting for Mr. Biden than for his predecessors. Mr. Obama and George W. Bush were able to discredit Mr. Romney and Mr. Kerry because voters, at this early stage of the general election campaign, did not know much about them.

But there is not much the Biden campaign can tell voters about Mr. Trump that they don’t already know. (Or for that matter, not much Mr. Biden can tell voters about Mr. Biden that they don’t already know.) And Mr. Trump has, so far at least, not paid a political cost for the kind of statements — such as when he [*described his critics as “vermin”*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/13/us/politics/trump-vermin-rhetoric-fascists.html) — that might have previously derailed a more conventional candidate. Being indicted on 91 criminal counts in four cases has, so far, only solidified his support.

When Mr. Bush’s campaign began planning for his re-election, they confronted polling numbers that — while not as unnerving for the president as [*some that have come out in recent weeks*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/05/us/politics/biden-trump-2024-poll.html) about Mr. Biden — were cause for concern. A poll [*by the Pew Research Group*](https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/2003/10/21/presidents-criticism-of-media-resonates-but-iraq-unease-grows/) found that 46 percent of respondents said Mr. Bush’s economic policies had made the economy worse and 39 percent said American troops should be brought back from Iraq as soon as possible; up from 32 percent the month before.

“We decided early on that we wanted to make the election about national security even though the economy was the No. 1 issue,” said Matthew Dowd, the chief strategist for Mr. Bush’s 2004 campaign. “We were at a disadvantage to Dems on the economy. And as part of that strategy, we desired to define Kerry negatively on national security early on, and as a weak flip-flopping leader so we could position Bush as a strong leader and strong on national security.”

Before long, the Bush campaign was on the air with [*advertisements*](https://www.nytimes.com/2004/05/26/us/the-ad-campaign-bush-spot-portrays-kerry-as-flip-flopper.html) assailing Mr. Kerry for pledging to roll back the Patriot Act, giving the federal government expanded powers to go after terrorists. The Patriot Act was passed shortly after the Sept. 11 attacks with overwhelming support in Congress — including Mr. Kerry.

“John Kerry. Playing politics with national security,” an announcer said.

Eight years later, as Mr. Obama mounted his re-election campaign, many [*Americans were telling pollsters*](https://abcnews.go.com/Politics/economic-concerns-hurt-bidens-approval-democrats-peril-ahead/story?id=83128327) that the country was heading in the wrong direction and that they were worse off financially than they had been before Mr. Obama took office. For instance, a [*Washington Post/ABC News poll*](https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/a-year-from-election-day-2012-a-dark-mood-awaits-obama-and-his-gop-rival/2011/11/04/gIQAaPa0qM_story.html) found three-quarters of Americans saying the country was heading in the wrong direction.

Mr. Obama’s advisers studied the re-election campaigns of other embattled sitting presidents. “We knew that most re-elect campaigns were a referendum,” said Joel Benenson, who was the pollster for Mr. Obama’s team. “We also knew we had this massive economic crisis which absolutely was not all of Obama’s making. But we also knew you are the incumbent president, and you can’t blame it on your predecessor. We couldn’t convince them that the economy was getting better.”

But Mr. Romney, he said, “was not fully formed with voters,” which was an opportunity to spotlight his wealth and portray him as someone whose policies would favor the rich.

By contrast, George H.W. Bush, aides said, disregarded the warnings, confident [*the near 90 percent voter approval*](https://www.nytimes.com/1991/05/22/us/history-suggests-bush-s-popularity-will-ebb.html) rating he registered after the war in Kuwait made his re-election all but certain. “The adulation from the war somehow muted the normal political instincts of a lot of people around the president,” said Ron Kaufman, who was a senior adviser to that campaign.

Mr. Rove said Mr. Biden was in worse shape today than the elder Mr. Bush had been in 1992. “Bush seemed bereft of ideas for the future, but people saw him as an admirable human being,” Mr. Rove said. “The problem for Biden is that people have concluded he’s not up to the job — too old and lacking the necessary stamina and mental acuity.”

In recent polls conducted in five battleground states by The New York Times and Siena College, 71 percent of respondents said Mr. Biden was “too old” to be an effective president.

Mr. Plouffe said the Biden campaign should embrace the lesson the Obama campaign learned studying the losing campaign of the elder Mr. Bush. “The Bush people tried to convince people that the economy was better than they thought it was,” he said. “One thing I’ve learned is you can’t tell people what they think about the economy. They’ll tell you what they think about the economy.”

“I’d start every speech saying, ‘America is faced with a choice, we are both old white men,’” Mr. Plouffe said. “‘But that’s where the similarities end.’”

PHOTOS: Just like President Biden, former Presidents George W. Bush and Barack Obama confronted polling numbers that were worrying. Each transformed his campaign to address the obstacles. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY HAIYUN JIANG FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES; DOUG MILLS/THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A14.

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[***How to Win and Hustle Friends***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BKW-96G1-DXY4-X005-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** By Joseph Bernstein

**Body**

Sometimes, you meet someone in New York who gives you a good feeling and a bad feeling at the same time. Maybe you're introduced at a bar, through a friend of a friend. This person is charming and full of ideas, ideas that resonate with you. He seems to know everyone you know, and some other people you follow only on social media. You like him, even though you wonder whether he's for real. He has a story about the city and his place in it, a story in which he may invite you to play a role. This is tempting. You get the sense that he has a momentum unlike other people's, toward a destination that could be glamorous -- or maybe catastrophic.

One such person is Ashwin Deshmukh, the 38-year-old managing partner of Superiority Burger, one of the most acclaimed restaurants in New York.

Since reopening last April, the high-low vegetarian diner in the East Village has garnered a three-star review from The New York Times, a James Beard Award nomination, and the title, bestowed by GQ magazine, of ''Buzziest Restaurant in America.'' That it took over the space once occupied by the venerable Odessa Restaurant, saving the neighborhood from yet another Duane Reade or Capital One, has made it only more beloved.

But June Kwan, the owner of the East Village Sichuan restaurant Spicy Moon, does not love Superiority Burger -- or at least, the people behind the restaurant. In February, she sued them twice. The first suit asserts that since 2021, when Ms. Kwan invested a quarter of a million dollars in Superiority Burger through Mr. Deshmukh, the business has gone dark, refusing to send her proof of her equity, and eventually ignoring her altogether. The second suit alleges that in 2022, Ms. Kwan lent $200,000 to Mr. Deshmukh, and that he hasn't repaid a penny.

Text messages attached to the suits capture the breakdown of Mr. Deshmukh's relationship with Ms. Kwan, a Taiwanese immigrant who started her business in middle age. Ahead of Ms. Kwan's initial investment, Mr. Deshmukh wrote to her that ''I am so confident in this and our friendship that I am happy to personally guarantee your investment on a five-year basis.''

In October 2022, after a month of asking Mr. Deshmukh to repay the loan in increasingly desperate terms, Ms. Kwan wrote: ''I have supported you with my full heart, but now you don't pay me back the money and don't update what happened to sb when I'm a shareholder. I don't sleep well because of this.''

Later that month, she wrote again: ''Ash, give me some answer please. Where in the world are you?'' And again, a few days later: ''Where are you? Ash... where are you?''

Had Ms. Kwan gone looking for him, the businessman and promoter was likely to be found somewhere in a small rectangle of Manhattan where he had spent the previous decade dragging himself ever closer to the heart of downtown clout. This rectangle was formed in the northeast, at Avenue A and St. Marks Place, by Superiority Burger; in the southwest, at Mercer Street and Prince Street, by Fanelli Cafe, above which he has lived; in the southeast, at Broome Street and Allen Street, by Williamsburg Pizza, which he has told many people, including reporters at The Washington Post, that he owns; and finally, in the northwest, at Lafayette Street and East 4th Street by Jean's, a popular nightclub and restaurant where he is a partner. Here, dressed in a tuxedo and sporting bleach blond hair, he posed for an Instagram photo, his hand resting on the hood of a teal Mercedes, at about the same time June Kwan was begging him for her money.

Ms. Kwan's suits were filed on Feb. 1 and 2. On March 8, Mr. Deshmukh agreed to be served, less than an hour after receiving a fact-checking inquiry from The Times. Five days later, Ms. Kwan agreed to drop the suits after the parties settled.

Sheryl Heefner, Superiority Burger's general manager, wrote in a statement that ''Ashwin has been critical to the development of Superiority Burger,'' adding, ''he is also my friend who I love working alongside.''

Mr. Deshmukh is not famous, but he is widely known among downtown tech investors, restaurateurs, bar owners, journalists, fashionistas, podcasters, D.J.s and influencers. If you work in New York in the culture industry -- in media, fashion, art, music, publishing -- it is a distinct possibility that you have gone to a party at Jean's sponsored by a cool brand or a brand trying to be cool, or else eaten a slice of one of the pizzas he sent to a birthday party or an opening or a corporate event. And if not, the Instagram algorithm may have shown you one of these things. You are probably aware of the world of Ashwin Deshmukh, even if you don't know it.

Most people who meet Mr. Deshmukh say he is intelligent, informed, funny, kind and slightly elusive, in a quirky way. But among the many New Yorkers who know Mr. Deshmukh only a bit, there is a subgroup of people who know him a bit more. These people, who are numerous, embarrassed and still finding one another, will say that Ashwin Deshmukh is a thief.

In response to a detailed list of questions, Mr. Deshmukh responded with an email through a representative at Jean's disputing many aspects of this story without providing further detail.

Ben Carlos Thypin met Mr. Deshmukh in 2012, through a mutual friend. Mr. Thypin is a real estate broker and political player, who co-founded Open New York, a prominent pro-housing group. But at the time, he was an unproven heir to a steel-turned-real estate fortune, eager to make a name for himself. His first impression of Mr. Deshmukh, he said, was that he ''seemed like a smart and knowledgeable guy.''

As the men became friends over occasional drinks and more frequent texts, Mr. Thypin came to appreciate Mr. Deshmukh's well-articulated ideas about trends in technology and investing. True, Mr. Deshmukh said he ran a hedge fund on behalf of high-net-worth individuals from outside the United States, which Mr. Thypin found hard to square with Mr. Deshmukh's slovenly dress, casual manner and the fact that he wouldn't let anyone see his apartment. But everyone in New York had a story, Mr. Thypin reasoned. Besides, Mr. Deshmukh was quoted in a 2010 piece in The New York Observer as working for a hedge fund.

In 2014, Mr. Thypin said, Mr. Deshmukh approached him with an opportunity: to buy a stake in a promising software start-up through a specialized business he had created to bundle small investments. Mr. Thypin said he had sent $5,000 to Mr. Deshmukh and then forgotten about it. For him, $5,000 wasn't much money -- which was maybe why he didn't do more due diligence on Mr. Deshmukh.

In 2016, Mr. Thypin got a Google alert that the software company had been bought. He called Mr. Deshmukh to celebrate. But according to Mr. Thypin, Mr. Deshmukh didn't call or text him back, and didn't respond to his emails. Only then did Mr. Thypin search for the LLC he had wired the money to, and found that it had never been registered in New York. He then tried to look for the hedge fund Mr. Deshmukh said he worked for, but couldn't find any evidence it existed.

Mr. Thypin's first reaction to losing the money was shame. He was a rich guy who had gotten taken for a ride by a charismatic hustler -- a New York cliché. Later, he said, he resigned himself to the fact that if Mr. Deshmukh was ''that hard up he would steal from his friend, he must be in dire straits.'' Mr. Thypin decided to move on.

But he kept hearing stories about other people who had been tricked in the exact same way. There was Rich Abreu, who said he had invested $12,500 in two businesses through Mr. Deshmukh. He, too, had stopped hearing from him. There was Kenny Chen, who in 2014 had given Mr. Deshmukh more than $100,000 to invest in the media start-up On Ramp. The company's then-chief executive, Harry Poloner, told The Times he had to break the news to Mr. Chen that Mr. Deshmukh had never invested any money. And there was Jonathan Kule, who said he gave Mr. Deshmukh $10,000 to invest in a luxury subscription box business, after which Mr. Deshmukh stopped responding to him.

Not all these men were sophisticated tech investors: Mr. Abreu, for example, owned a Midtown streetwear showroom. Nor were they all in a position to wave away thousands of dollars -- Mr. Kule had just bought a house, and didn't have much cash on hand.

Mr. Kule also felt personally wounded. He had thought Mr. Deshmukh was slightly odd -- he told Mr. Kule that he worked on behalf of a family office in Paris, but he sometimes smelled like he hadn't showered in days. But they had become tight, and had made plans to make further investments together.

''The scary thing is that all the while, I considered you to be a close friend and confidant whom we shared deep and personal stories with regarding our personal lives,'' Mr. Kule wrote in an email that he shared with The Times.

In 2017, Mr. Chen sued Mr. Deshmukh, but Mr. Deshmukh didn't respond to demand letters. Eventually, a process server tracked down Mr. Deshmukh in the Williamsburg Pizza on Broome Street, where she handed him the complaint and snapped his photograph. (According to Mr. Chen's lawyer, Arthur Soong, Mr. Chen dropped the suit after he reached a settlement with Mr. Deshmukh.)

Mr. Kule filed a suit, too, but dropped it after Mr. Deshmukh's father agreed to pay him $11,500. In an email that Mr. Kule shared with The Times, Mr. Deshmukh's father writes: ''Ashwin has asked me to give you the money he owes you. I appreciate you reaching out to settle the matter. On the other hand you probably can understand my reluctance and difficulty in paying off his obligation.'' (His father did not respond to requests for comment about his son's legal troubles.)

And Mr. Thypin, who had gotten over his shame in the face of what he felt was a ''white collar crime spree,'' joined Mr. Abreu in suing Mr. Deshmukh in New York civil court in 2018.

That summer, Mr. Thypin was scrolling through Instagram when he noticed that a friend had started a new bar on the Bowery called Short Stories, and that Mr. Deshmukh was one of his partners. Alarmed, he called his friend, who confirmed that Mr. Deshmukh was managing promotion for the bar. (This friend and another partner of the bar asked not to be named because of the potential financial implications of being associated with Mr. Deshmukh, but they corroborated the account that Mr. Thypin gave The Times and provided more details.)

Mr. Thypin's friend first encountered Mr. Deshmukh at a tech investment meet-up at the East Village bar Scratcher, where he presented himself as a hedge fund manager working on behalf of a family office in India. The two started to go to parties together, where the partner was impressed that Mr. Deshmukh seemed to know everyone downtown. When he opened Short Stories, he brought Mr. Deshmukh in as a junior partner, but he kept him off the company's bank accounts.

Shortly after this friend talked to Mr. Thypin, Mr. Deshmukh reached out to the lawyer representing Mr. Thypin and Mr. Abreu to settle their suit, citing his wish to prevent ''contact from your clients to my family or business associates or interference with my existing contacts.'' The parties signed a settlement in August 2018 for $17,500. But Mr. Deshmukh never paid, and the court ruled in January 2019 that he had defaulted. By this point, the pair thought the settlement with Mr. Chen had left Mr. Deshmukh broke. They dropped it.

Then, a few years later, Mr. Thypin was at a party on the Lower East Side when he overheard some people talking about a bar on the Bowery getting ripped off. He asked them if it was Short Stories, and they said yes. He called his friend, the partner at the bar, who said it was true, and that Mr. Deshmukh was responsible.

The partners told The Times that for several years Mr. Deshmukh had worked diligently as a promoter. He had gotten Diplo to come to the bar, and Kaia Gerber, and ASAP Rocky, along with a parade of the internet's semifamous, all of whom he captured on social media. The bar was a success, they said, in part because of how well Mr. Deshmukh had marketed it. He built up trust. In 2021, they gave Mr. Deshmukh access to one of the company's bank accounts so he could handle business expenses.

Shortly after, they checked on the account and discovered that more than $100,000 was missing. They tried to track down Mr. Deshmukh, who was suddenly hard to reach. Eventually, after threatening to contact his family, the partners confronted Mr. Deshmukh in person. They said that Mr. Deshmukh agreed to pay back some of the money, as well as give up his equity in the bar. When the partners informed Mr. Deshmukh they were taking away his Short Stories email account, he began to cry. (Around the same time, Mr. Deshmukh listed himself as the co-owner of Short Stories on a city liquor license application for Superiority Burger.)

Meanwhile, the demise of another business relationship was playing out 10 blocks away at Williamsburg Pizza, whose pies Mr. Deshmukh often handed out at Short Stories. According to Aaron McCann, the chain's owner, Mr. Deshmukh invested a small amount of money in the Broome Street location of the six-shop chain in 2014, and offered to run the company's social media accounts.

For years, Mr. Deshmukh spearheaded efforts to send pizzas to brands and micro-celebrities; encouraged influencers and prominent friends who bought the pizzas to tag the shop; and featured others on Williamsburg Pizza's Instagram page, all in an effort to make it the coolest pizza in the city. Here was Rupi Kaur, the Canadian poet, posing with a Williamsburg Pizza, her name piped on top in creamy ricotta. There was the Vogue writer Zachary Weiss at Temple Bar, holding a pizza that read ''Aries Daddy.'' The D.J. Michael Bibi celebrated a New York show with a pizza. Eva Chen, Instagram's director of fashion partnerships, celebrated her son's birthday with a pizza. The cult skin care maven and influencer Marta Mae Freedman posted a pizza, as did the viral street interviewer Isaac Hindin-Miller, and the beauty and baking influencer Dana Hasson. At Mr. Deshmukh's club, Jean's, The New York Times reporter Joe Coscarelli and The New Yorker writer Carrie Battan posed with one of the pizzas they bought for guests at their wedding party. In 2022, after New York magazine heralded Williamsburg Pizza in its ''Reasons to Love New York'' issue, Mr. Deshmukh tweeted a knowing reference to how effective his efforts had been.

Mr. McCann said he was thrilled with Mr. Deshmukh's work and the attention it brought to his business. But then something strange started to happen. The owner said he was approached, repeatedly, by people he didn't know who said they had invested in the shop through Mr. Deshmukh and hadn't received any money.

''When we learned the extent of Ashwin's dishonest practices, we terminated the relationship with him,'' Mr. McCann said.

One confused investor was Brady Donnelly, who had gone to New York University with Mr. Deshmukh and founded a creative agency called Hungry in 2014. Soon after, Mr. Donnelly hired Mr. Deshmukh as a contractor to do business development. Mr. Deshmukh had pitched him in 2013 on an investment of several thousand dollars in Williamsburg Pizza.

''It's one of the great mysteries of my life,'' said Mr. Donnelly, of the fate of his money. ''A couple of years passed and I never got a single financial report, no money back. I'm not even sure if the paper I signed was real paperwork.''

Eventually, Mr. Donnelly confronted Mr. Deshmukh about the money, and Mr. Deshmukh showed up with a cashier's check and no explanation. But after Mr. Deshmukh stopped working for him, Mr. Donnelly said he learned that Mr. Deshmukh had been touting himself as a co-founder of Hungry to drum up business for himself -- at which point Mr. Donnelly sent Mr. Deshmukh a cease and desist letter.

One business Mr. Deshmukh attracted was Oatly, the cult oat milk brand, which contracted Mr. Deshmukh in 2019 to redesign its website. Without Mr. Donnelly's knowledge, he claimed in his pitch that Mr. Donnelly would lead production and editorial strategy.

That Mr. Deshmukh got in the room in the first place, with no real experience, was somewhat astounding -- Oatly was already generating $200 million in revenue by 2019. He was there largely because he was friends with an Oatly employee, who did not want to be named because she did not want to be publicly associated with possible fraud. But her story was confirmed by an Oatly spokesman, Brendan P. Lewis. According to the employee, she met Mr. Deshmukh in 2017, when she wandered into the Broome Street pizzeria and the two began chatting. They became close friends, and he was effusive in his praise for her.

''I love you a lot,'' he wrote in a text message from early 2019 that she shared with The Times. ''You have the energy and light that helps everyone around you. Your capacity to care and take care is astounding. I cannot wait to see how you impact the world in a way that everyone will know and talk about you. Your spirit cannot be replicated. You remain, my favorite.''

In the summer of 2019, the Oatly employee told Mr. Deshmukh -- whom she believed to be the co-founder of Hungry -- about the website redesign, and encouraged him to put himself forward. Mr. Deshmukh showed up at the Oatly office with an ambitious proposal that wowed the company's creative director. Oatly awarded Mr. Deshmukh the contract, for $266,333, over a handful of established national agencies. In August, he traveled to Malmo, Sweden, for a victory lap at the company's headquarters, where he met with Oatly's then-chief executive, Toni Petersson.

The good feelings didn't last. Mr. Deshmukh hired a few people for the project, including an old colleague from Hungry named Mark Lewis, who is unrelated to the Oatly spokesman. But Mr. Deshmukh went dark for days at a time, and Mr. Lewis began receiving emails from Oatly asking why they hadn't produced anything. He felt awkward -- Mr. Deshmukh wasn't responding to the messages, and Mr. Lewis didn't know where he was. Not to mention, Mr. Deshmukh still hadn't fully compensated him for the trip to Malmo, which Mr. Lewis had paid for out of pocket.

''Everyone was very uncomfortable,'' Mr. Lewis said.

Then, at a meeting with an increasingly concerned Oatly team later that fall, Mr. Deshmukh brought nothing to present except screenshots from his original, months-old pitch. Concerned, Mr. Lewis said he tracked down some of the flashy names Mr. Deshmukh had told Oatly would be involved in the project and asked them if they had ever heard from him. None had. He remembered realizing two things: Mr. Deshmukh was cheating Oatly, and he had no loyalty to him. He told Oatly.

According to Brendan P. Lewis, the Oatly spokesman, the company managed to claw back some of the money from Mr. Deshmukh and cancel the contract. But the Oatly employee who led Mr. Deshmukh into the company was devastated. How could he put her in such a terrible position? She said she made plans with him several times so she could confront him, but he kept canceling at the last minute. She had a feeling she would never see him again.

But she did, once. Six months later, early in the pandemic, she was biking downtown, when she saw Mr. Deshmukh outside Short Stories. She said he pulled down his face mask and mouthed, ''I'm sorry.''

As the people who had given Mr. Deshmukh money found one another, largely thanks to Mr. Thypin, they marveled at the scope and interconnectedness of his hustles, as well as the sheer democratic quality of the deception: He played close friends and new acquaintances, the very rich and the middle class, large corporations and local bars.

They were left with an enormous number of questions, but one above all: What kind of person would do all of this? Almost all of them described Mr. Deshmukh as intelligent, charismatic, capable and hardworking. Surely this was a man who could have found success in any domain.

Mr. Deshmukh, the son of a cardiologist, arrived at N.Y.U. in the fall of 2003 from Sayre, Pa., a 5,000-person town on the New York border. One of his first friends in college was Roberto A. Felipe, a New Yorker who had grown up ***working class*** in Corona, Queens. Mr. Felipe said that Mr. Deshmukh had confided in him about his hangups with his weight and how to meet women. In retrospect, Mr. Felipe wasn't sure if these confessions were genuine or part of Mr. Deshmukh's manipulation.

''He relies on sympathy from people by disclosing things,'' Mr. Felipe said.

By the time Mr. Deshmukh was a senior, he had cultivated a campus mystique. In 2007, he was featured as part of a package in the N.Y.U. student newspaper on ''NYU's 14 most influential students.'' The writer introduces Mr. Deshmukh by stating, dramatically, that he had agreed to participate in the profile only at the last second.

''I've only heard a fraction of his history. But from what I've heard, it's fascinating. Unfortunately, a fraction is really all that Deshmukh offers to anyone,'' the article reads. ''Most of what I offer here is second-hand, but that's part of Deshmukh's appeal. Though charismatic and personable, he never tells you the whole story -- and therein lies his success.''

The profile goes on to note that while he was an undergrad, Mr. Deshmukh had ''dabbled in New York real estate, steel industries and trading,'' and that he had been hired by a hedge fund before graduation. Beneath the article's text, Mr. Deshmukh appears in a dark suit jacket, with his arms crossed over his chest.

After college, Mr. Felipe and Mr. Deshmukh exchanged Facebook messages in which, Mr. Felipe said, Mr. Deshmukh told him that he was back and forth between Paris and New York, managing a hedge fund. Later, Mr. Deshmukh told him that he had moved home to Pennsylvania to take care of some health issues. But he would drive into the city once in a while and crash at Mr. Felipe's apartment. Sometimes they talked about investment strategies, and Mr. Felipe started to introduce Mr. Deshmukh to his network: Mr. Thypin and Rich Abreu, the streetwear showroom owner with whom Mr. Felipe grew up in Corona.

When Mr. Felipe brought Mr. Deshmukh to the West 39th Street showroom, Mr. Abreu sized up Mr. Deshmukh, who was eager to nerd out about Supreme, as a ''fanboy.''

''He was kind of a poseur type of guy: hedge fund but trying to dress streetwear,'' Mr. Abreu said. ''He didn't seem very authentic to me.''

Whether Mr. Deshmukh ever worked for a hedge fund is unclear. Mr. Deshmukh told people that he worked on behalf of a family office in, variously, Paris, Switzerland and India, but he never offered specifics. People who knew him wondered whether he was too embarrassed to admit that he was living off a trust fund -- not an uncommon phenomenon among young New Yorkers. But the fact that Mr. Deshmukh needed his father to pay off Mr. Kule suggests he may not have had any money of his own at all.

From 2016 to 2018, Mr. Deshmukh sublet a room to an N.Y.U. student named Marié Nobematsu-Le Gassic in an East Village apartment he rented. Upon moving in, she was surprised by the condition of the apartment, where Mr. Deshmukh would sometimes sleep. There were French fries stuck to the floor, she remembered, and paper advertisements for strippers littered throughout the unit. The wireless internet went out for months at a time, and Mr. Deshmukh asked her not to use air conditioning in the summer, because, she remembered him saying, he was down to his last dime. One day a process server came to the door, but she had no idea where Mr. Deshmukh was: She was unsure of where he stayed when he wasn't there.

(Ms. Nobematsu-Le Gassic obtained a court order this year to force Mr. Deshmukh to pay her $7,250 for a security deposit he never returned -- a somewhat more prosaic New York scenario. ''I screwed you over,'' Mr. Deshmukh wrote in a text to her that she shared with The Times, about the outstanding money.)

When Mr. Deshmukh was in the apartment, Ms. Nobematsu-Le Gassic said, he was often trying to figure out how to do viral brand collaborations with Williamsburg Pizza and Short Stories, or talking about his attempts to get attractive women to come to Williamsburg Pizza to take photos for Instagram. He spoke frequently about Caroline Calloway, the millennial influencer who became famous in the 2010s for lying extravagantly and then writing about it. (In a text message, Ms. Calloway confirmed that she was friendly with Mr. Deshmukh, whom she understood to have comped her 28th birthday party at Short Stories in 2018, a gesture she found ''kind and generous.'')

''He wants to be seen and be important in New York,'' Ms. Nobematsu-Le Gassic said. ''But I didn't know if he had any money.''

Mr. Thypin, who has spent a lot of time thinking about Mr. Deshmukh, believes Mr. Deshmukh is a chameleon, driven by insecurity, who has changed colors again and again in pursuit of status. At first he worked for a hedge fund, or at least he said he did. Then, in the early 2010s, he became a venture capitalist. Then he became a creative director -- the ultimate cool-guy millennial pursuit -- or tried to. And finally, as cultural energy in New York shifted back to the city's downtown, he reinvented himself as a nightlife impresario, a scene-maker.

Along the way he has transformed his appearance from an eager, full-faced tech bro in a Supreme cap to an unsmiling club baron with downtown stubble, posing for Instagram in Isaia, Stone Island and Balenciaga.

A popular theory among the aggrieved is that Mr. Deshmukh's manipulations are all leverage plays, similar to the efforts of Adam Sandler's character in ''Uncut Gems'' -- every dollar he takes goes toward his next move, with no safety net.

The lawsuits by June Kwan have been settled, but Superiority Burger was also sued in January by its builder, Bellwood, for nonpayment. Mr. Deshmukh is named as a defendant in the suit, which claims that he entered a $342,603 promissory note with the builder in November 2022 and failed to fulfill it. The suit asks for a mechanic's lien foreclosure, which could, at least in theory, force a sale of the building whose storefront Superiority Burger rents.

But for the time being, Mr. Deshmukh is somebody in New York. His co-partner in the club and restaurant Jean's is Max Chodorow, the son of Jeffrey Chodorow, the restaurateur.

In an email response to a question about Mr. Deshmukh's legal troubles and history of misrepresenting himself to get money, Mr. Chodorow wrote, ''His previous business projects prior to Jean's are a story many entrepreneurs trying to own and operate a business in NYC may be familiar with.'' He added, ''Ash brings years of marketing talent which balances out my unique history of operations in the restaurant industry.''

Now, the people who feel used by Mr. Deshmukh watch his social media with a mix of horror, astonishment and something else, something closer to the mix of envy and judgment we all feel when we spend too long on Instagram.

In October, the oil heiress and socialite Ivy Getty threw a Halloween party at Jean's; Anya Taylor-Joy showed up, as did Prince Achileas-Andreas of Greece and Denmark, dressed as a racecar driver. In November, Jean's hosted a party celebrating a collaboration between Paco Rabanne and H&M; Emily Ratajkowski and Chloë Sevigny crowded in a booth. In February, the men's wear designer Willy Chavarria celebrated his fashion week show with a party at Jean's. Julia Fox and Amanda Lepore were there.

Mr. Deshmukh spent much of the night in a back booth, getting up to fetch a bottle of Don Julio from the bar, and to take a video of the crowd. At one point, he posed for a photo with a lifestyle journalist and the creative director of Hugo Boss. He was looking off, away from the camera, as if his thoughts were somewhere else.

Callie Holtermann and Manasa Gudavalli contributed reporting.Callie Holtermann and Manasa Gudavalli contributed reporting.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/14/style/superiority-burger-ashwin-deshmukh.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/14/style/superiority-burger-ashwin-deshmukh.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Ashwin Deshmukh, downtown last month, has often been sued for owed funds. (PHOTOGRAPH BY DAVID X PRUTTING/BFA.COM, VIA SHUTTERSTOCK) (D1)

Far left, Ashwin Deshmukh in 2022 at Jean's, a nightclub where he is a partner. Above, the East Village restaurant Superiority Burger, at which Mr. Deshmukh is managing partner. Left, the bar Short Stories, where he handled promotion. Below, Jean's. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY MATTEO PRANDONI/BFA.COM, VIA SHUTTERSTOCK

KARSTEN MORAN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

JEENAH MOON FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

MADISON VOELKEL/BFA.COM, VIA SHUTTERSTOCK) (D4-D5) This article appeared in print on page D1, D4, D5.

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[***U.A.W. Gains May Have Set New Bar for Unions***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69HT-CY81-JBG3-61Y6-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** By Noam Scheiber

**Body**

Experts said the union's new contracts could set precedents that give labor advantages when bargaining contracts and organizing workers.

Laying out a tentative contract agreement to end a six-week wave of walkouts at Ford Motor, the United Automobile Workers president made an unusual pitch to other labor unions.

''We invite unions around the country to align your contract expirations with our own,'' the U.A.W. leader, Shawn Fain, said Sunday night.

''If we're going to truly take on the billionaire class and rebuild the economy so that it starts to work for the benefit of the many and not the few,'' Mr. Fain added, ''then it's important that we not only strike, but that we strike together.''

While it remains to be seen whether other unions follow the U.A.W.'s lead, Mr. Fain's invitation highlights the sweeping ambition of the union's strategy during the recent strike, the first to target all three Detroit automakers simultaneously.

Beyond seeking the largest wage and benefit increases in decades -- and a reversal of the concessions the union made during the companies' downturn, such as lower wage tiers for newer workers -- Mr. Fain repeatedly spoke of fighting for ''the entire ***working class***.''

Labor experts said the proposals that union negotiators agreed to with Ford, General Motors and Stellantis, the parent of Jeep, Ram and Chrysler, had produced gains that could in fact reverberate well beyond the workers that the union represented.

''It is a historic and transformative victory by the U.A.W.,'' said Nelson Lichtenstein, a labor historian at the University of California, Santa Barbara.

Dr. Lichtenstein said that winning substantial gains through a strike in a critical industry demonstrated the benefits of work stoppages after decades in which workers had been taught to regard strikes warily.

''Fain says: 'Hey, strikes work, solidarity works; we're more unified now than before the strike,''' he added. ''I think that's a powerful argument unions can take elsewhere.''

Even before the strike ended, unions at other companies appeared to be doing just that.

In an interview in late September, David Pryzbylski, a lawyer who represents employers, said union officials in two separate contract negotiations had invoked the U.A.W. when discussing the possibility of a strike. ''Outside the U.A.W., it's putting wind in their sails,'' Mr. Pryzbylski said. ''They may be blustering, but I am seeing it already trickle down.''

A recent report by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce raised concerns that an emboldened labor movement was increasing strike activity and ''causing collateral damage to a host of local businesses and communities'' by harming the economic ecosystem that depended on automakers and other employers.

The element of strategy that the U.A.W. brought to its strike may also prove instructive to other workers and unions. Rather than ask all employees to strike at once, the union started small, with one key plant at each of the Big Three, then ramped up as it sought to bring additional pressure. The U.A.W. refrained from expanding the strike when it felt a company was bargaining productively, and it expanded to a highly valuable plant when it felt a company was dragging its feet -- in both cases, to create an incentive for the companies to engage with the union.

The approach may not translate perfectly to other industries, such as retail and hospitality, that are harder to disrupt with the loss of a small number of locations. But Peter Olney, a former organizing director with the International Longshore and Warehouse Union, said the strategy was more widely applicable than it might appear at first glance.

He cited the possibility of organizing and striking at coffee bean roasting plants and distribution centers for a company like Starbucks, where workers at hundreds of retail stores in the United States have organized over the past few years. ''They have 9,000 locations, there's a lot of redundancy and replication,'' Mr. Olney said, referring to company-owned stores in the United States. ''But there are some choke points in that system, too.''

And it is difficult for service-sector industries to send operations offshore in response to labor unrest, because proximity to customers is critical. By contrast, the U.A.W. may have to contend with the risk that companies shift production to Mexico as labor costs increase.

''That's where the international solidarity aspect of it comes in -- the need to build up a cross-border network with Mexico,'' Mr. Olney said. Last year, workers at a large G.M. plant in the country voted out a union accused of colluding with management in favor of an independent union.

In some ways, the recent U.A.W. effort builds on the gains made by unions involved in other high-profile standoffs. To resolve a nearly five-month strike with Hollywood writers in September, major studios agreed to a set of restrictions on the use of artificial intelligence. The agreement was a break with employers' typical insistence that management should have control over technology and investment decisions.

The tentative U.A.W. contracts award the union more influence over such decision-making as well -- for example, by allowing workers to strike against the entire company over the threat of a plant shutdown before their contract has expired. The union also successfully pressed Stellantis to reopen an Illinois plant that the company had closed.

Mr. Pryzbylski, the management-side lawyer, said that while such strike provisions and plant reopenings are not unheard of, they are uncommon.

Dr. Lichtenstein said securing these gains in such a high-profile context could prompt employees at other companies to demand a say in decisions that their employers had typically characterized as management prerogatives. ''It restores a kind of social and political character to investment decisions,'' he said. ''It's something the left has wanted for over a century.''

In other cases, the U.A.W. managed to extract concessions at plants where it doesn't yet represent workers -- another unusual win that could be mimicked by fellow unions. Ford agreed that U.A.W. members would be allowed to transfer into battery and electric vehicles plants under construction in Michigan and Tennessee, and that these plants would fall under the union's national contract if the workers unionized there. According to the U.A.W., that would happen without the need to hold a union election at either site.

Madeline Janis, co-executive director of Jobs to Move America, a group that seeks to create good jobs in clean technology industries, called these arrangements a ''huge historic, unprecedented deal'' for helping to ensure that the E.V. transition benefited workers.

U.A.W. officials say that adding new members is critical to the union's survival, and that the Big Three contracts will provide a major boost to these efforts because organizers can point to large concrete benefits of unionizing.

''We're not going to win a contract victory this big in the future if we're not able to start organizing, especially in the E.V. sector,'' said Mike Miller, a U.A.W. regional director in the Western United States. ''It has to involve Tesla, Volkswagen and Hyundai.''

But some experts said the momentum of the recent contracts could help organizing campaigns that were even further afield. ''It's not just personal vehicle manufacturing -- it's the fleets of delivery vans, big electric buses and trains,'' said Erica Smiley, executive director of Jobs With Justice, which helps workers seeking to unionize and bargain collectively.

Ms. Smiley noted that many of these companies, just like electric vehicle manufacturers, had received public subsidies, creating an opportunity for organizers to appeal to politicians for help raising pay and improving benefits so that they more closely resembled what the U.A.W. just won.

''The administration is investing in these industries,'' she added. ''The question is how to use this to raise the floor.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/31/business/economy/uaw-labor.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/31/business/economy/uaw-labor.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: The U.A.W.'s strike was the first to target all three Detroit automakers. It started with one key plant at each location. (B1)

The U.A.W. leader, Shawn Fain, invited unions nationwide to align their contract expirations, highlighting the sweeping ambition of its strategy.

Members and supporters at a U.A.W. rally in September. The tentative contracts in place award the union more influence over company decision-making. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY BRITTANY GREESON FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (B3) This article appeared in print on page B1, B3.

**Load-Date:** November 1, 2023

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[***Gaza War Has Buoyed Egypt’s Leader Ahead of Presidential Vote***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69V5-8SW1-JBG3-655S-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Highlight:** President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi of Egypt grew increasingly unpopular amid a deep economic crisis. But the war in neighboring Gaza has given him a vital role on the international stage.

**Body**

President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi of Egypt grew increasingly unpopular amid a deep economic crisis. But the war in neighboring Gaza has given him a vital role on the international stage.

President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi of Egypt woke up on Oct. 7 remarkably unpopular for someone considered a shoo-in for a third term — guaranteed by his authoritarian grip on the country to dominate elections that begin on Sunday, but [*badly damaged*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/05/world/middleeast/egypt-election-sisi.html) by a slow-motion economic collapse.

The ensuing weeks have eclipsed all of that, with war displacing financial worries as the top item on many Egyptians’ minds, lips and social media feeds. For Western partners and Persian Gulf backers, the crisis has also highlighted Egypt’s vital role as a conduit for [*humanitarian aid*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/31/world/middleeast/egypt-rafah-crossing-gaza-israel.html) to Gaza and a mediator between Israel and Hamas, the armed Palestinian group that led the attack on Israel on Oct. 7 and set off the war.

Mr. el-Sisi, a former general with a knack for outlasting setbacks, appeared to have caught yet another break, one that has allowed him to position himself as a champion of the Palestinian cause at home and an indispensable regional leader abroad.

In Cairo these days, a widespread [*boycott*](https://www.reuters.com/business/retail-consumer/boycott-campaigns-over-gaza-war-hit-western-brands-some-arab-countries-2023-11-22/) of Western companies associated with support for Israel has transformed the simple act of serving a Pepsi into a serious faux pas. Egyptians struggling to cover the basics after nearly two years of record-setting inflation have opened their wallets to help victims of the Gaza war.

And in a country where protests have been banned for years, hundreds of people have braved arrest to march in solidarity with the Palestinians.

The three-day presidential vote that started on Sunday is expected to rubber-stamp Mr. el-Sisi’s hold for another six-year term: None of his three challengers stand a chance of unseating him. Barring a few lonely signs, the face looming over what seemed like every street in Cairo from billboards, banners and posters this weekend was Mr. el-Sisi’s, and none of the 20 eligible voters interviewed around Cairo on Sunday were familiar with the other candidates.

A government news release proclaimed an “unprecedented high turnout” as buses sponsored by pro-Sisi parties dropped voters off at polling stations by the dozens and as companies gave employees time off to vote.

Nevertheless, the president will need to steer carefully, analysts and diplomats said. The economic crisis that had [*punctured*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/13/world/middleeast/egypt-opposition-talks.html) Mr. el-Sisi’s aura of invulnerability is still [*bleeding*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/01/23/world/middleeast/egypt-economy.html) households, companies and the nation’s finances. Gaza or no Gaza, Egypt is expected to devalue its currency, the pound, after the election, promising [*further pain*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/06/world/middleeast/egypt-public-schools-tutoring.html) for its people.

“Most of us are married and have kids, and now the 200 pounds in my hand feels like 20,” said Ahmad Hassan, 43, a security guard from the ***working-class*** neighborhood of Imbaba. Like many others interviewed on Sunday, he said voting would be useless. “I want change,” he said. “And with me or without me, he’ll win anyway.”

With public support for the Palestinians at a high, many Egyptians are alert to any sign that their government may be complicit in the suffering in Gaza, whether by acceding to Israeli restrictions on the aid flowing from Egypt into the territory or [*proposals*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/05/world/middleeast/israel-egypt-gaza.html) to move Gazans into Egypt in exchange for aid — an idea that is widely opposed across the Arab world.

“The government definitely doesn’t want to test the patience of the Egyptian people, not when it comes to Palestine,” said Hesham Sallam, a scholar of Arab politics at Stanford’s Center on Democracy, Development and the Rule of Law.

Like many in Cairo these days, Aya Khalil, 34, a private art teacher, said she no longer buys anything before checking its provenance against online lists of Western brands blacklisted for their support for Israel.

“Me boycotting these brands is just a drop in the ocean, but I’m doing the only thing I can do,” she said.

Like many other Egyptians, she questioned whether the government was doing enough to pump aid into Gaza. Egypt blames Israel for limiting the aid, but calls to end the 16-year-old joint Israeli-Egyptian blockade of Gaza and for Egypt to stop giving Israel any say over Egypt’s border crossing with Gaza have grown in recent weeks.

Yet Egypt cannot afford to alienate Israel, with which it has developed a strong, if hush-hush, [*security partnership*](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/02/03/world/middleeast/israel-airstrikes-sinai-egypt.html) in the Sinai Peninsula, or to agitate Western backers, particularly when it needs all the financial support it can get.

Many Egyptians despair of the dire economic picture and borrow month after month just to pay for the basics. Sugar recently doubled in price in some places, and inflation, already running above 35 percent annually, is expected to worsen if the government devalues the currency.

The currency’s official value has already fallen by half since the crisis began in early 2022. It is worth far less on the black market.

Before Hamas’s attack on Israel, signs of Mr. el-Sisi’s growing unpopularity were unmistakable.

An upstart challenger, Ahmed al-Tantawy, was drawing support around Egypt with criticisms of the president that few others here had dared voice since he began throttling dissent in recent years. Activists and liberals spoke expectantly of Mr. el-Sisi’s eventual downfall. Sensing strength in numbers, many Egyptians no longer bothered to lower their voices before trashing their president.

Abroad, the International Monetary Fund and wealthy gulf benefactors had grown [*impatient*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/04/02/world/middleeast/no-more-blank-checks-saudi-arabia-clamps-down-on-regional-aid.html) waiting for Egypt to make good on its promises of economic reform, and no calculator could figure how the country would avoid defaulting on its $165 billion in foreign debts.

Washington was in an uproar over accusations that Egypt had [*bribed*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/13/us/politics/menendez-egypt-intelligence-government.html) a senior U.S. senator in return for official favors and sensitive information, causing Congress to block an extra $235 million in military aid for the Sisi government.

Within days of Israel’s assault on Gaza in retaliation for the Oct. 7 attacks, however, Mr. el-Sisi’s wobble appeared to have steadied.

“With every war that comes, it’s a good chance for him to make it his excuse for the economic crisis,” said Salah Ali, an engineer from the southern city of Aswan employed to build what is supposed to be the president’s marquee legacy project, a costly [*new capital city*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/08/world/middleeast/egypt-new-administrative-capital.html) that has helped swell Egypt’s debt.

“What do you mean, ‘elections’?” he added, sarcastically, echoing a widespread belief that the outcome is predetermined, despite assertions from a government spokesman, Diaa Rashwan, that the vote shows Egypt to be on an “earnest path toward genuine political pluralism.”

The one Sisi challenger who had generated some momentum, Mr. al-Tantawy, was pushed out of the presidential race after government agents violently [*prevented*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/05/world/middleeast/egypt-election-sisi.html) his supporters from registering enough endorsements to put him on the ballot just before the war erupted, his campaign said, a headline quickly buried by the avalanche of news from Gaza. On trial for what rights group call trumped-up charges, he has said 137 members of his campaign have been detained.

The three other men who did wind up on the ballot are little known. Even the one with some opposition support has refrained from all but the mildest critiques of the president, perhaps fearing the fate of independent-minded candidates in the 2018 election, when all serious challengers to Mr. el-Sisi were arrested.

Analysts say Egypt is dragging its feet over meeting the conditions of the $3 billion I.M.F. [*bailout*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/27/world/middleeast/with-economy-reeling-from-ukraine-war-egypt-secures-3-billion-imf-loan.html) granted last year. But the fund’s director, Kristalina Georgieva, has said that the I.M.F. is “very likely” to bolster the amount of the loan anyway in light of the war.

The European Union, fearing another migration crisis, is likewise accelerating some $10 billion in funding for Egypt.

And liberal activists, Sisi supporters and many people in between have found themselves in a rare moment of unity, condemning Israel’s siege and bombardment of Gaza and rejecting the idea of Gazans’ being forced into Egypt’s Sinai Peninsula, which borders the territory.

Many fear such displacement would mean the Palestinians would lose their own land forever and bring Hamas into a historically and emotionally charged part of Egypt, eventually drawing Egypt into a war with Israel.

Mr. el-Sisi was quick to read the room.

“The aim of the stifling blockade on the strip, of cutting water and power and preventing the entry of aid, [*is to push the Palestinians toward Egypt,”*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/05/world/middleeast/israel-egypt-gaza.html?searchResultPosition=1) Mr. el-Sisi said in a joint news conference with the German chancellor on Oct. 18, one of several times he has made clear that the answer is no.

“We reject the liquidation of the Palestinian cause and the forced displacement in Sinai.”

But Mr. el-Sisi was also strategically harnessing Egyptians’ fury and grief over the war, analysts and diplomats say.

On Oct. 20, groups close to the government organized a day of nationwide pro-Palestinian demonstrations that the government said drew hundreds of thousands of people, a figure that could not be independently verified.

Extensively covered on state media, the [*rallies*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2023/10/20/world/israel-hamas-war-gaza-news/thousands-in-egypt-protest-israeli-attacks-on-gaza-and-call-for-a-palestinian-state) were festooned with banners that included Mr. el-Sisi’s photo next to images of Jerusalem’s Al-Aqsa Mosque — a less-than-subtle attempt to yoke the Palestinian cause to Mr. el-Sisi’s.

“Without Sisi, we’d be doomed,” said Reda Saad, 42, an employee at Egypt’s state-owned gas company who had brought her four children to one rally, when asked how she rated his handling of the crisis.

She said she was “still angry” about Egypt’s economic meltdown but had put that aside in the face of Gaza’s suffering.

“That’s one thing,” she said, “and this is another.”

But dozens of people were arrested in separate marches the same day in which demonstrators chanted anti-Sisi slogans, making clear that government attempts to channel pro-Palestinian passions risk churning up domestic discontents.

“I’m just waiting for him to resign or leave,” said Omar, a government employee in El-Arish, near the Gaza border. He asked to be identified only by his first name to avoid retaliation.

Until then, he said, “We’ll keep living this terrible reality.”

Mourad Hijazy contributed reporting.

Mourad Hijazy contributed reporting.

PHOTO: A campaign poster in Cairo for President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi of Egypt. The country’s three-day presidential vote started on Sunday. (PHOTOGRAPH BY KHALED DESOUKI/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE — GETTY IMAGES) (A8) This article appeared in print on page A1, A8.

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**End of Document**



[***The Israel-Hamas War Will Reshape Western Politics; Ross Douthat***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69HT-S791-DXY4-X13D-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 1510 words

**Byline:** Ross Douthat

**Highlight:** Some ideological trends and tendencies worth watching.

**Body**

It’s been a long time since the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians occupied such a central place in Western political attention and debate — certainly not since the Israeli invasion of Gaza in 2009, arguably not since the second intifada ended in 2005.

In that fairly distant past, the politics of Israel-Palestine broke down into alignments that were familiar and decades-old. On the pro-Israel side in the U.S. were three broad factions: Zionist Democrats, centrist and liberal; neoconservative hawks; and evangelical Christians. As you moved leftward, sympathy for the Palestinians increased, with American progressives and European conventional wisdom finding common ground in their critiques of the Israeli occupation. Finally there was also a rightward form of anti-Israel sentiment, held by Arabist realists and Pat Buchananite populists and European reactionaries — but in the aftermath of 9/11, with neoconservatism ascendant, this felt increasingly marginal.

These broad groupings still exist — evangelicals are still very pro-Israel, the Democratic president is a Zionist liberal, the progressive movement is pro-Palestinian — but in the current crisis you can see a more complex alignment taking shape, with implications that extend beyond the Israeli-Palestinian question alone. Here, very provisionally, are some ideological trends and tendencies worth watching.

The radicalization of progressivism. Nobody who has lived through the last decade’s Great Awokening should be surprised that Western progressivism now has a more radical line on Israel than it did 10 or 15 years ago, especially given Israel’s own rightward shift in that same time. But the extent to which the rhetoric of “[*decolonization*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/13/opinion/hamas-israel-land-acknowledgements.html)” turns out to naturally extend — or, maybe, naturally circle back — from cultural and psychological projects to literal support for armed struggle and tacit apologia for antisemitic terror still feels like an important unveiling, a revelation of radicalization’s implications, a doorway into a future much more violently divided than our own.

The emergence of an “Arab street” inside the West. In the post-9/11 era, we were accustomed to think of popular discontent inside Arab and Muslim countries as an important geopolitical force in its own right. But 2023 may be remembered as the moment when Arab and Muslim discontent began to really matter inside Western countries as well.

The recent protests in European capitals, especially, are less an extension of a radicalized progressivism than a straightforward expression of ethnic and religious solidarity with the Palestinians on the part of Middle Eastern immigrants and their descendants. And the tacit alliance between this diaspora and a secular, feminist, gay-affirming Western progressivism — “Islamo-gauchisme” in the French phrase — raises big questions for both progressives and conservative Muslims about who is using whom and how the Western left and Western Islam might ultimately co-evolve.

The unstable European relationship to Israel. In one sense, the mass movements protesting on Palestine’s behalf in European streets would seem likely to ratify the pre-existing anti-Israel tilt of many European leaders. But if Europe is [*moving rightward overall*](https://www.edwest.co.uk/p/europes-turn-to-the-right), becoming more doubtful about mass immigration, more fearful of Islamicization and terrorism and more protective of its native culture as it slides toward old age — well, then, you could easily imagine European sympathy for the Israeli position increasing, with fear of an Islamist enemy within driving identification with Israel abroad.

And indeed signs of this are visible already: The British writer Aris Roussinos recently [*observed*](https://unherd.com/2023/10/israel-is-no-longer-britains-war/?utm_source=substack&amp;utm_medium=email) that commentary in Britain now seems even a little more sympathetic to Israel than American commentary, while across the Channel, Emmanuel Macron’s attempts to [*rally*](https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/2023/10/31/macron-s-anti-hamas-coalition-in-middle-east-is-a-lonely-one/a9c83f74-77ae-11ee-97dd-7a173b1bd730_story.html) a grand anti-Hamas coalition and his government’s [*ban*](https://www.cnn.com/2023/10/12/europe/france-ban-pro-palestinian-intl) on pro-Palestinian demonstrations belong to a very different landscape from the world of 2005.

The dilemmas of progressive Jews and Zionist Democrats. If the pressures on European elites come from multiple directions, the pressures on American Jews and Zionists inside the Democratic coalition push just one way: toward the right. [*Progressive Jews*](https://www.thefp.com/p/the-great-betrayal) who thought of themselves as pro-peace, pro-Palestinian and anti-Likud are going to have a lot of trouble feeling at home inside a progressive movement that seems conflicted or paralyzed when it’s asked to condemn Hamas. Zionist liberals who are closer to the political center can take comfort that their worldview is still shared by most of the Democratic Party’s politicians, including the Democratic president. But the leftward ratchet in Democratic politics has been a powerful force, and generational turnover means that progressive activists may get a chance to reshape the party in their own image before long. At which point, where might Zionist Democrats go, if not toward actual conservatism?

A reconstituted neoconservatism, a resilient Christian Zionism. One thing that liberal supporters of Israel will find if they move rightward, indeed a thing that some are already helping to create, is a new variation on neoconservatism. This isn’t the George W. Bush-era version, with its world-bestriding confidence in American power and its hawkish grand strategy. Rather, it’s a more inchoate alliance against whatever progressivism is becoming. Many of its members still feel uncomfortable associating with a Trumpist G.O.P., but they’re too intensely alienated from progressivism to belong to the left-of-center coalition any more. This makes it a movement more like 1970s-era neoconservatism — a mugged-by-reality halfway house for intellectuals unhappy with their options but trending clearly to the right.

The other thing that rightward-moving Zionists will find is resilient evangelical support for Israel, which has persisted through all the disillusionments of the last two decades, all the anti-idealism of Trump-era foreign policy. This enduring affinity, embodied for instance in the pro-Israel statements of the new speaker of the House, reflects not just [*dispensationalist*](https://www.nytimes.com/2005/10/16/weekinreview/doomsday-the-latest-word-if-not-the-last.html) expectations of the apocalypse (though those certainly exist) but a widespread, very American-Protestant sense of the links between the American Republic and the Chosen People, the New World and the Hebrew Bible, that go back to the [*foundations*](https://www.pennpress.org/9781512825473/gods-country/) of our country.

It’s also a worldview that many American Jews, secular Jews especially, find peculiar or suspicious. The question is whether that suspicion will diminish if the Democratic Party no longer seems like a safe harbor for their Zionism.

The uncertain attitudes of the alienated right. One thing that’s kept many Jews from moving rightward till now, of course, is a fear of right-wing antisemitism, the kind of xenophobia that Donald Trump’s campaign in 2016 seemed to consciously stir to life. Trump’s actual presidency was pro-Israel, indeed often more pro-Israel than those of his G.O.P. predecessors, but along extremely transactional lines — witness Trump’s own initial reaction to the Hamas attacks, which was to gripe about the various ways that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu had let him down. And an “America First” mentality, along with other forms of right-wing politics quite distinct from both neoconservatism and pro-Israel evangelicalism, clearly matters more to American conservatism today than 15 years ago.

Among my fellow conservative Catholics, for instance, there’s a longstanding anger at George W. Bush for invading Iraq and letting Middle Eastern Christianity be devastated by the ensuing wars and a sense that Israel was that foolhardy project’s accomplice. Among the would-be vitalists and Nietzscheans of the post-Christian right and certain other far-right influencers, there’s plenty of conspiracy theorizing and anti-Semitism. And then the Trump-era Republican coalition writ large includes a lot of nonreligious, disaffected, ***working-class*** Americans, for whom pro-Israel sentiments may come to feel, or feel already, like a luxury belief, a province of the elites whom they disdain.

My guess is that notwithstanding these specters on the right, over the long term you should bet on more rightward movement among American Jews, probably accelerated by the higher birthrates of the already more right-wing Orthodox. But mostly you should bet on unsettlement, on the right and left alike, as people come to terms with what the new debate about Israel and the Palestinians reveals about how much the Western world has changed already and how much more change lies ahead.

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PHOTO: A pro-Palestinian demonstration in Aarhus, Denmark, on Tuesday. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Mikkel Berg Pedersen/Ritzau Scanpix, Agence France-Presse, via Getty Images FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

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**End of Document**



[***It's a Spellbinding Read***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69HK-DRN1-DXY4-X02X-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Byline:** By Franz Lidz

**Body**

In the mid-19th century, a British antiquarian named Sir Thomas Phillipps announced his intention of owning one copy of every book in the world. A professed ''vello-maniac,'' Mr. Phillipps, a quarrelsome baronet, bought manuscripts indiscriminately from booksellers with whom he engaged in ceaseless battle. Soon there was hardly room in his moldering Cotswolds mansion for his second wife, Elizabeth, who eventually moved to a boardinghouse in Torquay, an English ***working-class*** seaside resort. By the time Mr. Phillipps died in 1872, he had amassed an unparalleled collection of 60,000 documents and 50,000 printed books.

His descendants auctioned off his private library bit by bit, and by the late 1970s his collection of 19 ancient funerary scroll fragments -- each a part of what is today collectively known as the Egyptian Book of the Dead -- was acquired by the New York book dealer Hans P. Kraus. Together with his wife, Hanni, Mr. Kraus donated the lot to the J. Paul Getty Museum in Los Angeles in 1983. For the last four decades, the writings, which span a period from around 1450 B.C. to 100 B.C., have been stowed in a vault, fragile and easily damaged by light. On Nov. 1, an exhibition at the Getty will present seven of the most representative pieces to the public for the first time. The show will run until Jan. 29.

Rita Lucarelli, an Egyptologist at the University of California, Berkeley, said, ''I am glad that the Getty finally decided to disclose and exhibit what has been until now an almost forgotten part of its glorious collection of antiquities, but that contains in fact important specimens of one of the most famous ancient Egyptian corpus in the world.''

You only live twice

A standard component in Egyptian elite burials, the Book of the Dead was not a book in the modern sense of the term but a compendium of some 200 ritual spells and prayers, with instructions on how the deceased's spirit should recite them in the hereafter. Sara Cole, the curator of the Getty exhibition, called the incantations a kind of supernatural ''travel insurance'' designed to empower and safeguard the departed on the long, tortuous journey through the afterlife. Unlike today's insurance policies, no two copies were the same.

Despite the book's title, it was life rather than the afterlife that preoccupied ancient Egyptians, who lived for 35 years on average. ''Your happiness weighs more happily than the life to come,'' reads one inscription from the New Kingdom period, which lasted from 1550 B.C. to 1069 B.C.

''The texts are a means to assuage your mortal anxiety and control your destiny,'' said Foy Scalf, an Egyptologist at the University of Chicago and the editor of the exhibition catalog.

Indeed, the original name for the text translates to the ''Book of Coming Forth By Day.'' In 1842 the German scholar Karl Richard Lepsius published a translation of a manuscript and coined the name Book of the Dead (das Todtenbuch), which reflected longstanding fantasies about the nature and character of Egyptian civilization. The numbering system he used to identify the various spells is still used today and figures prominently on the Getty's exhibition panels.

Compiled and refined over millenniums since about 1550 B.C., the Book of the Dead provided a sort of visual map that allowed the newly disembodied soul to navigate the duat, a maze-like netherworld of caverns, hills and burning lakes. Each spell was intended for a specific situation that the dead might encounter along the way. For instance, Spell 33 was used to ward off snakes, which had an unsettling taste for chewing ''the bones of a putrid cat.''

Without the right spells, you could be decapitated (Spell 43), placed onto a slaughter block (Spell 50) or, perhaps most humiliating of all, turned upside down (Spell 51), which would reverse your digestive functions and cause you to consume your own waste (Spells 52 and 53).

In a hellscape primed with booby traps and populated by some of antiquity's most fearful imaginings, magic mattered. Among the spookier illustrations on display at the Getty are depictions of gods (the jackal-headed Anubis; the falcon-headed Horus) and monsters (Ammit the Devourer, a crocodile-headed hybrid of a lion and a hippopotamus).

''The reason that the creatures are terrifying is not to scare souls trying to access these places, but to keep out those who don't belong there,'' Dr. Scalf said. ''Entering in among the gods is a very restricted thing.''

The intended destination was the realm of the gods and the safe haven of eternal paradise, a field of gently waving reeds that resembled an idealized version of the Egypt that the deceased had left behind. The lush landscape had field hands who helped each arrival sow, plow and harvest the grain that supplied sustenance for the gods.

''Not only are the dead worshiping and feeding the gods, but worshiping and feeding their deceased ancestors and even themselves,'' Dr. Scalf said. ''This isn't servitude, this is pious work that shows your piety toward the gods.''

Having attained divinity, the deceased joined the sun god Re as he traversed the sky in a solar boat. At sunset, they crossed in the West and merged with Osiris, god of the netherworld, and assumed regenerative powers. Near dawn, Re would fight the giant serpent Apep, lord of chaos, and emerge victorious in the East to complete an endless cycle of renewal and rebirth.

Scrolling at the Getty

Ownership of the Book of the Dead was largely limited to nobility, priests, courtiers and other patrons who could afford the extravagance. Individuals of high status would commission a scribal workshop to produce a customized selection of spells that mentioned them by name.

Two of the four papyrus scrolls in the Getty show belonged to women named Aset and Ankhesenaset, both of whom were priestesses and ritual ''singers of Amun'' at the god's temple in the Karnak complex of Thebes. The scrolls are tattered scraps, having been removed from tombs during an unregulated age of European colonialism and altered for the art market.

The oldest roll of papyrus in the Getty collection was the property of a woman named Webennesre and includes Spell 149, in which the deceased encounters 14 mounds in the netherworld, each with its own inhabitants. ''Spells were inscribed on nearly every available space in burials,'' Dr. Scalf said. Some were painted on the interior and exterior of sarcophagi, others were imprinted on shrouds, statuettes, amulets and ''magical bricks'' embedded in the walls of tombs.

Another of the exhibition's highlights are three thin linen strips that were inked with spells and then wrapped around mummified bodies as part of the ritual embalming process. ''The bandages brought the sacred texts in direct physical contact with the deceased, enveloping and protecting them,'' Dr. Cole, the show's curator, said. ''That made the relationship of people to the Book of the Dead even more personal.''

Once part of longer textiles applied to the cadavers of two men named Petosiris, the wrappings were torn off during the 19th century and sold in pieces. The bodies themselves may have been pulverized and sold as paint pigment (mummy brown) or medicine (mummia, a powder found on apothecary shelves throughout Europe).

Grateful dead

The show's coup de théâtre is a papyrus rendering of the Hall of Judgment made for Pasherashakhet, a ''doorkeeper'' who served the moon god Khonsu at Karnak. The vignette detail shows an episode from Spell 125, in which the deceased appears before Osiris and a tribunal of gods while his heart -- believed to be the site of the intellect -- is weighed by Anubis, keeper of the kingdom of the dead.

On one side of the scale is the heart; on the other, the feather of the goddess Maat, the embodiment of truth and justice. If Pasherashakhet's heart equals the weight of the feather, he will be admitted into the next world. If the heart is too heavy, meaning his sins outweigh his good deeds, the crouching, open-mouthed Ammit the Devourer will consume and consign him to a second, and lasting, death.

In the accompanying hieroglyphics, Thoth, the ibis-headed god of writing, announces the result: ''His heart is safe upon the scale without fault found.''

Pasherashakhet has passed the test. It is time to join Re and climb aboard the solar boat.

There is a spell for that, too.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/31/science/archaeology-egypt-book-dead.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/31/science/archaeology-egypt-book-dead.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Above, a piece of the Papyrus of Pasherashakhet, dating to about 375 B.C. to 275 B.C., is part of several ancient Egyptian funerary scroll fragments collectively known as the Book of the Dead. (D1)

Top, mummy wrapping of Petosiris, son of Nanesbastet. Middle, a detail from the Papyrus of Ankhesenaset. Above, mummy wrapping of Petosiris, son of Tetosiris. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY THE J. PAUL GETTY MUSEUM) (D5) This article appeared in print on page D1, D5.

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**End of Document**



[***A Place to Play Became a Place to Belong***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:685M-M2R1-DXY4-X0VW-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** By Kurt Streeter and Mason Trinca

**Body**

Kaig Lightner founded the Portland Community Football Club to give local youth an inexpensive chance to play. When he came out as transgender, they gave him a place to belong.

PORTLAND, Ore. -- The soccer coach looked out at two dozen or so of his players and felt nervousness course through him like a rip current. His heart pounded, and his voice felt unsteady.

Kaig Lightner (pronounced ''Cage,'' a phonetic shortening of his initials -- K and J) had been thinking of this moment since the summer of 2013 when he founded the Portland Community Football Club, a program for teaching soccer to mostly first- and second-generation immigrant youth who lived in his city's most distressed neighborhoods.

In the four years since, Coach Kaig had become a friend, an ally and even, to some of his players, a father figure.

How would they react once he told them he had been raised as a girl?

He had always asked his players to be open and honest about their lives. That he had not modeled such deep honesty filled him with remorse.

The election of Donald Trump -- who had promised to appoint conservative judges and whose vice president, Mike Pence, had opposed gay rights and was seen as supporting conversion therapy -- had ignited a sense of foreboding and uncertainty within the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community. Lightner certainly felt it. He worried that the players -- tweens and teens on this afternoon -- would leave his club. Or that their families would cut ties, no matter how good the program had been at mentoring and providing a safe space to grow up in.

Lightner considered all of this, took a deep breath and knew he needed to speak up.

''I haven't totally shared with you something about myself.''

''It's an important thing for me to share with you because we all should be who we are.''

''I am transgender.''

One player chuckled nervously but walked to Lightner for a hug. Most looked straight at their coach in a kind of wonder and awe.

No one left.

Born Katherine Jean Lightner and raised in a comfortable suburb east of Seattle, nothing about Lightner's adolescence was easy. Lightner, who consented to the use of his former name and gender identity throughout this article, recalls a paralyzing fear that began around age 4 that he was a boy stuck in a girl's body. When his family called him Katie, he protested. It sounded too feminine. Kate was better by a shade. He refused ballet lessons. His mother bought him a tailored dress. He wore it once, then vowed to never wear it again.

As the years went on, Kate favored baggy pants, sweats, billowing T-shirts and baseball caps turned backward. A favorite birthday gift was a bright red Michael Jordan baseball jersey.

''The way she presented, she did not look like a typical girl,'' recalled Leslie Ridge, a friend who attended high school with Lightner in the 1990s. ''And because of that, she was made fun of constantly, especially by boys. It was brutal to see how painful that was for her.''

The bullying taunts and sense of unease ignited a terrible internal storm. ''I began to think of myself as a freak,'' recalls Lightner. ''The feeling was that I don't belong here. I don't belong in any space.''

Sports became a refuge.

An excellent softball, basketball and soccer athlete, Lightner found that on fields and courts he could be judged solely based on performance.

''Sports kept me alive.''

After rowing crew at the University of Washington, Lightner moved to Portland after graduation in the early 2000s. There he coached soccer for kids between 8 and 14 on a team that initially looked much the same as the white, affluent ones on which Lightner had grown up playing.

After changing his name to Kaig, Lightner approached a fellow soccer coach he regarded as a trustworthy friend and explained that this was a first step toward becoming a man.

The reaction was laughter.

''It didn't take me long to realize that coaching as an out trans person at that time, in the years around 2005, '06, '07, was just not going to work,'' Lightner said. ''I was not going to be safe.''

Lightner left coaching for a while. He flew to Baltimore for breast removal surgery and began weekly sessions of hormone replacement therapy. His voice deepened. New layers of muscle wrapped around his shoulders. His jaw grew square, and his face sprouted the beginnings of a beard.

Eventually, he took a job as an instructor for after-school programs in the ***working-class*** outskirts of Portland, home to the city's population of immigrants from Africa, Mexico, Central and South America, and Asia.

Lightner quickly saw that the abundant sports opportunities in the city's wealthier communities barely existed for the kids he was now working with. He had always felt like an outsider and now saw that the players he coached -- the children of ***working-class*** immigrants in one of America's whitest cities -- thought of themselves in much the same way. Considering how he could best help, Lightner focused on what had kept him going through all those years of adolescent anguish.

''Soccer had been my main way of finding healing and connection, and I wanted that for these kids, too,'' he said.

After a year of cobbling together seed money, Lightner formed the Portland Community Football Club in 2013 with grant funding and donated equipment from Nike. The club was a rarity because everybody had a place. Nobody got cut. Lightner emphasized developing skilled players more than turning out stars. Families paid $50 to join, but less than that was OK. Not paying a dime was fine, too.

At his first practice, held in a worn corner of a public park, 50 kids showed up. Soon it was 75. Then 100. The club played during the winter, spring, summer and fall.

''Coach Kaig became a constant in our lives,'' says Shema Jacques, one of the program's early stalwarts. Jacques, now a 22-year-old Marine, first picked up the basics of soccer in a Rwandan refugee camp but honed his game at P.C.F.C. ''From the start, I could tell he believed in us. He would be there for us for anything we needed. I had never experienced someone being like that before.''

Lightner was open about being a transgender man to everyone in his life except the players and families of P.C.F.C., and the dissonance ate at him. So on that rain-swept day in 2017, he gathered every player who had shown up for a chat before practice.

''I want you guys to know about me, and I also want you guys to know that I'm still me,'' he said. ''I'm still the same person I was five minutes before you all knew this, right? I'm still the same guy who comes out here, gets you guys to be better soccer players, gets on you when you're not playing hard, loves you no matter what.''

He saw nothing but acceptance as he looked into his players' eyes. One of them was Jacques.

''Suddenly, hearing that, it all made sense,'' Jacques said. ''This is why he knows what it is like for so many of us -- not being accepted, trying hard to fit in. I actually felt more connected to him as he spoke, and I am not alone. He was still the person I looked up to and wanted to be like.''

Six years later, the only thing that has changed about P.C.F.C. is its growth. There are more coaches and a small administrative staff. The roster of registered players has swelled to 165. It is also about more than just soccer now. During the early days of the coronavirus pandemic, Lightner received a grant that allowed P.C.F.C. to provide its families with fresh groceries, rental assistance and help tapping into social services.

''None of the families abandoned Kaig once he spoke his truth,'' says Carolina Morales Hernandez, whose young son and daughter have grown up in the program.

''Sometimes people join, and they will call me and say, 'We heard this and that about Kaig,''' she adds. ''I'm like, 'Oh yeah, it's true, yep. The head of the P.C.F.C. is a transgender person, but that changes nothing. Everybody is welcome here.'''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/05/sports/soccer/portland-youth-soccer-transgender-coach.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/05/sports/soccer/portland-youth-soccer-transgender-coach.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Kaig Lightner offering defensive tips to Bella Martinez. Lightner created the Portland Community Football Club with the mission of teaching soccer to predominantly immigrant children.

Lightner is part administrator, part coach and part chauffeur for the program, which focuses on developing skills over stars and offers a place for everybody regardless of their ability or financial means.

''From the start, I could tell he believed in us,'' a former member of the club said. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY MASON TRINCA FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page B6.

**Load-Date:** May 6, 2023

**End of Document**



[***U.A.W. Strike Gains Could Reverberate Far Beyond Autos; News ANALYSIS***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69HN-09J1-DXY4-X02C-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

October 31, 2023 Tuesday 12:09 EST

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**Section:** BUSINESS; economy

**Length:** 1412 words

**Byline:** Noam Scheiber

**Highlight:** Experts said the union’s new contracts could set precedents that give labor advantages when bargaining contracts and organizing workers.

**Body**

Experts said the union’s new contracts could set precedents that give labor advantages when bargaining contracts and organizing workers.

Laying out a tentative contract agreement to end a six-week wave of walkouts at Ford Motor, the United Automobile Workers president made an unusual pitch to other labor unions.

“We invite unions around the country to align your contract expirations with our own,” the U.A.W. leader, Shawn Fain, [*said Sunday night*](https://twitter.com/UAW/status/1718764187755909181).

“If we’re going to truly take on the billionaire class and rebuild the economy so that it starts to work for the benefit of the many and not the few,” Mr. Fain added, “then it’s important that we not only strike, but that we strike together.”

While it remains to be seen whether other unions follow the U.A.W.’s lead, Mr. Fain’s invitation highlights the sweeping ambition of the union’s strategy during the recent strike, the first to target all three Detroit automakers simultaneously.

Beyond seeking the largest wage and benefit increases in decades — and a reversal of the concessions the union made during the companies’ downturn, such as lower wage tiers for newer workers — Mr. Fain repeatedly spoke of fighting for “the entire ***working class***.”

Labor experts said the proposals that union negotiators agreed to with Ford, General Motors and Stellantis, the parent of Jeep, Ram and Chrysler, had produced gains that could in fact reverberate well beyond the workers that the union represented.

“It is a historic and transformative victory by the U.A.W.,” said Nelson Lichtenstein, a labor historian at the University of California, Santa Barbara.

Dr. Lichtenstein said that winning substantial gains through a strike in a critical industry demonstrated the benefits of work stoppages after decades in which workers had been taught to regard strikes warily.

“Fain says: ‘Hey, strikes work, solidarity works; we’re more unified now than before the strike,’” he added. “I think that’s a powerful argument unions can take elsewhere.”

Even before the strike ended, unions at other companies appeared to be doing just that.

In an interview in late September, David Pryzbylski, a lawyer who represents employers, said union officials in two separate contract negotiations had invoked the U.A.W. when discussing the possibility of a strike. “Outside the U.A.W., it’s putting wind in their sails,” Mr. Pryzbylski said. “They may be blustering, but I am seeing it already trickle down.”

A [*recent report*](https://www.uschamber.com/employment-law/unions/biden-administrations-whole-of-government-approach-to-promoting-labor-unions-hurts-workers-employers-economy) by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce raised concerns that an emboldened labor movement was increasing strike activity and “causing collateral damage to a host of local businesses and communities” by harming the economic ecosystem that depended on automakers and other employers.

The element of strategy that the U.A.W. brought to its strike may also prove instructive to other workers and unions. Rather than ask all employees to strike at once, the union started small, with one key plant at each of the Big Three, then ramped up as it sought to bring additional pressure. The U.A.W. refrained from expanding the strike when it felt a company was bargaining productively, and it expanded to a highly valuable plant when it felt a company was dragging its feet — in both cases, to create an incentive for the companies to engage with the union.

The approach may not translate perfectly to other industries, such as retail and hospitality, that are harder to disrupt with the loss of a small number of locations. But Peter Olney, a former organizing director with the International Longshore and Warehouse Union, said the strategy was more widely applicable than it might appear at first glance.

He cited the possibility of organizing and striking at coffee bean [*roasting plants and distribution centers*](https://www.starbucks.com/careers/find-a-job/manufacturing-and-distribution/) for a company like Starbucks, where workers at hundreds of retail stores in the United States have organized over the past few years. “They have 9,000 locations, there’s a lot of redundancy and replication,” Mr. Olney said, referring to company-owned stores in the United States. “But there are some choke points in that system, too.”

And it is difficult for service-sector industries to send operations offshore in response to labor unrest, because proximity to customers is critical. By contrast, the U.A.W. may have to contend with the risk that companies shift production to Mexico as labor costs increase.

“That’s where the international solidarity aspect of it comes in — the need to build up a cross-border network with Mexico,” Mr. Olney said. Last year, workers at a large G.M. plant in the country [*voted out*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/02/03/business/gm-mexico-union.html) a union [*accused of colluding*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/02/02/world/americas/mexico-labor-general-motors.html) with management in favor of an independent union.

In some ways, the recent U.A.W. effort builds on the gains made by unions involved in other high-profile standoffs. To resolve a nearly five-month strike with Hollywood writers in September, major studios [*agreed*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/08/business/economy/labor-strikes.html) to a set of restrictions on the use of artificial intelligence. The agreement was a break with employers’ typical insistence that management should have control over technology and investment decisions.

The tentative U.A.W. contracts award the union more influence over such decision-making as well — for example, by allowing workers to strike against the entire company over the threat of a plant shutdown before their contract has expired. The union also successfully pressed Stellantis to reopen an Illinois plant that the company had closed.

Mr. Pryzbylski, the management-side lawyer, said that while such strike provisions and plant reopenings are not unheard of, they are uncommon.

Dr. Lichtenstein said securing these gains in such a high-profile context could prompt employees at other companies to demand a say in decisions that their employers had typically characterized as management prerogatives. “It restores a kind of social and political character to investment decisions,” he said. “It’s something the left has wanted for over a century.”

In other cases, the U.A.W. managed to extract concessions at plants where it doesn’t yet represent workers — another unusual win that could be mimicked by fellow unions. Ford agreed that U.A.W. members would be allowed to transfer into battery and electric vehicles plants under construction in Michigan and Tennessee, and that these plants would fall under the union’s national contract if the workers unionized there. According to the U.A.W., that would happen without the need to hold a union election at either site.

Madeline Janis, co-executive director of Jobs to Move America, a group that seeks to create good jobs in clean technology industries, called these arrangements a “huge historic, unprecedented deal” for helping to ensure that the E.V. transition benefited workers.

U.A.W. officials say that adding new members is critical to the union’s survival, and that the Big Three contracts will provide a major boost to these efforts because organizers can point to large concrete benefits of unionizing.

“We’re not going to win a contract victory this big in the future if we’re not able to start organizing, especially in the E.V. sector,” said Mike Miller, a U.A.W. regional director in the Western United States. “It has to involve Tesla, Volkswagen and Hyundai.”

But some experts said the momentum of the recent contracts could help organizing campaigns that were even further afield. “It’s not just personal vehicle manufacturing — it’s the fleets of delivery vans, big electric buses and trains,” said Erica Smiley, executive director of Jobs With Justice, which helps workers seeking to unionize and bargain collectively.

Ms. Smiley noted that many of these companies, just like electric vehicle manufacturers, had received public subsidies, creating an opportunity for organizers to appeal to politicians for help raising pay and improving benefits so that they more closely resembled what the U.A.W. just won.

“The administration is investing in these industries,” she added. “The question is how to use this to raise the floor.”

PHOTOS: The U.A.W.’s strike was the first to target all three Detroit automakers. It started with one key plant at each location. (B1); The U.A.W. leader, Shawn Fain, invited unions nationwide to align their contract expirations, highlighting the sweeping ambition of its strategy.; Members and supporters at a U.A.W. rally in September. The tentative contracts in place award the union more influence over company decision-making. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY BRITTANY GREESON FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (B3) This article appeared in print on page B1, B3.

**Load-Date:** November 1, 2023

**End of Document**



[***Now Showing, an Ancient Spell Book for the Dead***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69HK-05H1-JBG3-60T0-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

October 31, 2023 Tuesday 12:03 EST

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**Section:** SCIENCE

**Length:** 1460 words

**Byline:** Franz Lidz

**Highlight:** An exhibition at the Getty reveals the Egyptian Book of the Dead, long relegated to a dark vault, in the light of day.

**Body**

In the mid-19th century, a British antiquarian named Sir Thomas Phillipps announced his intention of owning one copy of every book in the world. A professed “vello-maniac,” Mr. Phillipps, a quarrelsome baronet, bought manuscripts indiscriminately from booksellers with whom he engaged in ceaseless battle. Soon there was hardly room in his moldering Cotswolds mansion for his second wife, Elizabeth, who eventually moved to a boardinghouse in Torquay, an English ***working-class*** seaside resort. By the time Mr. Phillipps died in 1872, he had amassed an unparalleled collection of 60,000 documents and 50,000 printed books.

His descendants auctioned off his private library bit by bit, and by the late 1970s his collection of 19 ancient funerary scroll fragments — each a part of what is today collectively known as the Egyptian Book of the Dead — was acquired by the New York book dealer Hans P. Kraus. Together with his wife, Hanni, Mr. Kraus donated the lot to the J. Paul Getty Museum in Los Angeles in 1983. For the last four decades, the writings, which span a period from around 1450 B.C. to 100 B.C., have been stowed in a vault, fragile and easily damaged by light. On Nov. 1, an exhibition at the Getty will present seven of the most representative pieces to the public for the first time. The show will run until Jan. 29.

Rita Lucarelli, an Egyptologist at the University of California, Berkeley, said, “I am glad that the Getty finally decided to disclose and exhibit what has been until now an almost forgotten part of its glorious collection of antiquities, but that contains in fact important specimens of one of the most famous ancient Egyptian corpus in the world.”

You only live twice

A standard component in Egyptian elite burials, the Book of the Dead was not a book in the modern sense of the term but a compendium of some 200 ritual spells and prayers, with instructions on how the deceased’s spirit should recite them in the hereafter. Sara E. Cole, the curator of the Getty exhibition, called the incantations a kind of supernatural “travel insurance” designed to empower and safeguard the departed on the long, tortuous journey through the afterlife. Unlike today’s insurance policies, no two copies were the same.

Despite the book’s title, it was life rather than the afterlife that preoccupied ancient Egyptians, who lived for 35 years on average. “Your happiness weighs more happily than the life to come,” reads one inscription from the New Kingdom period, which lasted from 1550 B.C. to 1069 B.C.

“The texts are a means to assuage your mortal anxiety and control your destiny,” said Foy Scalf, an Egyptologist at the University of Chicago and the editor of the exhibition catalog.

Indeed, the original name for the text translates to the “Book of Coming Forth By Day.” In 1842 the German scholar Karl Richard Lepsius published a translation of a manuscript and coined the name Book of the Dead (das Todtenbuch), which reflected longstanding fantasies about the nature and character of Egyptian civilization. The numbering system he used to identify the various spells is still used today and figures prominently on the Getty’s exhibition panels.

Compiled and refined over millenniums since about 1550 B.C., the Book of the Dead provided a sort of visual map that allowed the newly disembodied soul to navigate the duat, a maze-like netherworld of caverns, hills and burning lakes. Each spell was intended for a specific situation that the dead might encounter along the way. For instance, Spell 33 was used to ward off snakes, which had an unsettling taste for chewing “the bones of a putrid cat.”

Without the right spells, you could be decapitated (Spell 43), placed onto a slaughter block (Spell 50) or, perhaps most humiliating of all, turned upside down (Spell 51), which would reverse your digestive functions and cause you to consume your own waste (Spells 52 and 53).

In a hellscape primed with booby traps and populated by some of antiquity’s most fearful imaginings, magic mattered. Among the spookier illustrations on display at the Getty are depictions of gods (the jackal-headed Anubis; the falcon-headed Horus) and monsters (Ammit the Devourer, a crocodile-headed hybrid of a lion and a hippopotamus).

“The reason that the creatures are terrifying is not to scare souls trying to access these places, but to keep out those who don’t belong there,” Dr. Scalf said. “Entering in among the gods is a very restricted thing.”

The intended destination was the realm of the gods and the safe haven of eternal paradise, a field of gently waving reeds that resembled an idealized version of the Egypt that the deceased had left behind. The lush landscape had field hands who helped each arrival sow, plow and harvest the grain that supplied sustenance for the gods.

“Not only are the dead worshiping and feeding the gods, but worshiping and feeding their deceased ancestors and even themselves,” Dr. Scalf said. “This isn’t servitude, this is pious work that shows your piety toward the gods.”

Having attained divinity, the deceased joined the sun god Re as he traversed the sky in a solar boat. At sunset, they crossed in the West and merged with Osiris, god of the netherworld, and assumed regenerative powers. Near dawn, Re would fight the giant serpent Apep, lord of chaos, and emerge victorious in the East to complete an endless cycle of renewal and rebirth.

Scrolling at the Getty

Ownership of the Book of the Dead was largely limited to nobility, priests, courtiers and other patrons who could afford the extravagance. Individuals of high status would commission a scribal workshop to produce a customized selection of spells that mentioned them by name.

Two of the four papyrus scrolls in the Getty show belonged to women named Aset and Ankhesenaset, both of whom were priestesses and ritual “singers of Amun” at the god’s temple in the Karnak complex of Thebes. The scrolls are tattered scraps, having been removed from tombs during an unregulated age of European colonialism and altered for the art market.

The oldest roll of papyrus in the Getty collection was the property of a woman named Webennesre and includes Spell 149, in which the deceased encounters 14 mounds in the netherworld, each with its own inhabitants. “Spells were inscribed on nearly every available space in burials,” Dr. Scalf said. Some were painted on the interior and exterior of sarcophagi, others were imprinted on shrouds, statuettes, amulets and “magical bricks” embedded in the walls of tombs.

Another of the exhibition’s highlights are three thin linen strips that were inked with spells and then wrapped around mummified bodies as part of the ritual embalming process. “The bandages brought the sacred texts in direct physical contact with the deceased, enveloping and protecting them,” Dr. Cole, the show’s curator, said. “That made the relationship of people to the Book of the Dead even more personal.”

Once part of longer textiles applied to the cadavers of two men named Petosiris, the wrappings were torn off during the 19th century and sold in pieces. The bodies themselves may have been pulverized and sold as paint pigment (mummy brown) or medicine (mummia, a powder found on apothecary shelves throughout Europe).

Grateful dead

The show’s coup de théâtre is a papyrus rendering of the Hall of Judgment made for Pasherashakhet, a “doorkeeper” who served the moon god Khonsu at Karnak. The vignette detail shows an episode from Spell 125, in which the deceased appears before Osiris and a tribunal of gods while his heart — believed to be the site of the intellect — is weighed by Anubis, keeper of the kingdom of the dead.

On one side of the scale is the heart; on the other, the feather of the goddess Maat, the embodiment of truth and justice. If Pasherashakhet’s heart equals the weight of the feather, he will be admitted into the next world. If the heart is too heavy, meaning his sins outweigh his good deeds, the crouching, open-mouthed Ammit the Devourer will consume and consign him to a second, and lasting, death.

In the accompanying hieroglyphics, Thoth, the ibis-headed god of writing, announces the result: “His heart is safe upon the scale without fault found.”

Pasherashakhet has passed the test. It is time to join Re and climb aboard the solar boat.

There is a spell for that, too.

PHOTOS: Above, a piece of the Papyrus of Pasherashakhet, dating to about 375 B.C. to 275 B.C., is part of several ancient Egyptian funerary scroll fragments collectively known as the Book of the Dead. (D1); Top, mummy wrapping of Petosiris, son of Nanesbastet. Middle, a detail from the Papyrus of Ankhesenaset. Above, mummy wrapping of Petosiris, son of Tetosiris. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY THE J. PAUL GETTY MUSEUM) (D5) This article appeared in print on page D1, D5.

**Load-Date:** April 14, 2025

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[***Republicans Against Inequality***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68H7-WC81-JBG3-631K-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

June 20, 2023 Tuesday 06:22 EST

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**Section:** BRIEFING

**Length:** 1711 words

**Byline:** David Leonhardt

**Highlight:** We’re covering a new breed of Republicans, a missing submersible near the Titanic and Judge Judy’s new TV empire.

**Body**

We’re covering a new breed of Republicans, a missing submersible near the Titanic and Judge Judy’s new TV empire.

A rising generation of Republican politicians is more skeptical of the free market and more comfortable using government power to regulate the economy than the party has traditionally been. Consider:

* Senator J.D. Vance, the Ohio Republican, and Senator Elizabeth Warren, the Massachusetts progressive, have collaborated on a bill to claw back executive pay at failed banks. The two [*worked through the details*](https://www.politico.com/news/2023/06/01/warren-vance-failed-banking-crackdown-bill-00099579) through in-person conversations, weekend phone calls and late-night texts.

1. Senator Marco Rubio of Florida has [*signed a public letter*](https://americancompass.org/conservatives-should-ensure-workers-a-seat-at-the-table/) calling for the reinvigoration of collective bargaining and praising the German approach, in which labor unions play a larger role in the economy. Rubio this month published a book, [*“Decades of Decadence,”*](https://www.harpercollins.com/products/decades-of-decadence-marco-rubio?variant=40952115101730) that criticizes the past 30 years of globalization.
2. Senator Todd Young of Indiana has helped write a bipartisan bill [*to restrict noncompete agreements*](https://www.young.senate.gov/newsroom/press-releases/young-murphy-reintroduce-bill-to-protect-american-workers-limit-non-compete-agreements), which companies use to prevent their employees from leaving for jobs at a competitor.
3. Senator Tom Cotton of Arkansas was among a bipartisan group of lawmakers who began pushing a few years ago for federal subsidies [*to expand domestic semiconductor manufacturing*](https://www.cotton.senate.gov/news/press-releases/cotton-bill-to-support-semiconductor-manufacturing-in-us). President Biden signed a version of the policy last year.

Tomorrow afternoon, these four Republican senators — Cotton, Rubio, Vance and Young — will speak at an event on Capitol Hill that’s meant to highlight the emergence of a populist conservative movement in economics. The event is organized around [*a policy manifesto*](https://americancompass.org/rebuilding-american-capitalism/), called “Rebuilding American Capitalism: A Handbook for Conservative Policymakers.”

“We really like capitalism, but we recognize it’s not working right now,” said Oren Cass, a former aide to Mitt Romney and the executive director of American Compass, a think tank that published the manifesto.

Cass is right about that: Income growth for most families has been [*sluggish for decades*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2017/08/07/opinion/leonhardt-income-inequality.html), trailing well behind economic growth. Life expectancy [*stagnated*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/03/06/opinion/working-class-death-rate.html) even before Covid. And polls show that Americans of all ideological stripes are frustrated with the country’s direction.

“Capitalism is a complex system dependent on rules and institutions,” Cass told me. “And conservatism calls for building and maintaining institutions that work well.”

A new capitalism

I recognize that many liberals will be skeptical of the new breed of Republicans. For one thing, they really are conservative; they’re not disaffected right-wingers who have become moderates without admitting it. They support abortion restrictions and oppose gun laws. They make excuses for Donald Trump’s anti-democratic behavior or even spread his falsehoods.

But the preference for a different kind of economic policy than one Republicans have long supported is nonetheless significant. It is a sign that the consensus in Washington is [*moving away*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/04/13/opinion/biden-trump-populism.html) from the neoliberal, laissez-faire approach that has dominated since the 1980s. These new conservatives are trying to separate themselves from anti-government Republicans like Paul Ryan — and, although they won’t say so, Ronald Reagan.

One major reason is [*the class inversion of American politics*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/13/briefing/democrats-elections-poll.html). Most professionals now vote for Democrats, which is a stark change from past decades. Most ***working-class*** voters vote Republican, partly because they see Democrats as an elite party dominated by socially liberal and secular college graduates.

Yet the Republican Party still has a major vulnerability with ***working-class*** voters. The party has long pushed the laissez-faire agenda that has hurt those voters, and polls show the country to be left of center on economic policy. Most Americans favor a higher minimum wage, higher taxes on the rich, expanded government health insurance and subsidies for well-paying jobs.

When Democrats can flip the script on elitism and paint a Republican candidate as an out-of-touch protector of the rich, the Democratic candidate can often draw enough blue-collar support to win. John Fetterman used this approach to beat Mehmet Oz last year in Pennsylvania, the only state where a Senate seat switched parties.

Politically, the new conservative populism is an effort to show that Republicans understand Americans’ struggles and want to help. Economically, the new approach offers a glimpse of a Republican Party that’s starting to grapple with the economy’s true challenges.

The manifesto rejects the idea that free trade is inherently good and argues for policies to ensure the U.S. has a thriving, well-paying manufacturing sector that makes strategically important goods like semiconductors. “The idea that trade would lead to liberalization and a happy world was wildly wrong,” Cass said.

The document also calls for:

* a guaranteed right for workers to organize and industrywide bargaining, which could increase the number of union contracts — and raise wages.

1. a financial transaction tax, meant to reduce Wall Street trading that makes people rich without making the economy more productive.
2. a monthly child benefit of around $300, as well as changes to Medicare and Social Security to recognize the work done by stay-at-home parents.
3. [*an easing of government regulations*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/12/briefing/electrical-grid-america-clean-energy.html), to encourage new construction.

Progressives will raise principled objections to some ideas — such as a ban on unions’ campaign donations. And that’s how a democracy should function. The country’s two political parties are not on the verge of agreeing about most economic issues.

But something is changing. More politicians are recognizing that the policies of the past several decades have [*failed*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/02/24/opinion/income-inequality-upper-middle-class.html) to create a broadly prosperous economy. From that emerging consensus may eventually come a longer list of bipartisan legislation designed to lift living standards.

THE LATEST NEWS

International

* Ukraine has paid contractors hundreds of millions of dollars for weapons that [*have not been delivered*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/19/world/europe/ukraine-weapons-howitzers-contracts.html).

1. The Greek Coast Guard is under scrutiny after it [*decided to not help save*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/19/world/europe/greece-migrants-ship-sinking.html) hundreds of smuggled migrants on an overloaded boat.
2. An Israeli raid on terrorism suspects in the West Bank [*turned into a gun battle*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/19/world/middleeast/israel-west-bank-raid.html). At least five Palestinians were killed, and eight Israeli soldiers were wounded.

Submersible Disappearance

* The Coast Guard is [*rushing to find a submersible*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2023/06/20/us/titanic-missing-submarine) that was on its way to the wreck of the Titanic.

1. The craft has been missing in the North Atlantic since Sunday, and is equipped with only a few days’ worth of oxygen.
2. Among [*the people on board*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/19/us/hamish-harding-explorer-missing-sub-titanic.html) are a British explorer and a Pakistani businessman with his son.

Politics

* Trump’s real estate project in Oman puts a renewed focus on [*how his business deals could influence his foreign policy*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/20/us/politics/trump-real-estate-deal-oman.html).

1. Republicans [*are taking legal action*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/19/business/gop-disinformation-researchers-2024-election.html) against disinformation researchers, who say this is undermining their work.
2. Trump told Fox News the secret document he described in a recorded meeting [*was just news clippings*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/19/us/politics/trump-classified-document-fox-news.html).

Other Big Stories

* Some local officials in the U.S. are seeking [*revenge on their hometown newspapers*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/18/business/newspapers-public-notices.html) when they publish critical coverage.

1. Ice and snow in the world’s highest mountains are [*disappearing at a faster pace than thought*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/19/climate/himalayas-melting-water-source.html).
2. Alibaba, China’s e-commerce giant, said its chairman and chief executive [*would leave his post in September*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/20/business/alibaba-daniel-zhang-joseph-tsai.html).

Opinions

Seventeen columnists each picked one piece of culture that captures America’s true spirit. [*Find them all here*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/06/20/opinion/nyt-columnists-culture.html).

It was once possible to be a pro-life Democrat or an anti-gun Republican. Remixing alliances [*is a way out*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/18/opinion/whole-life-movement-polarization.html) of our political stalemate, Tish Harrison Warren writes.

The Biden administration [*has been surprisingly aggressive*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/19/opinion/environmental-racism-justice.html) in pursuing environmental justice for minority communities, Nick Tabor writes.

MORNING READS

The Judy-verse: Judge Judith Sheindlin is [*building her brand*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/16/business/amazon-freevee-judge-judy.html) at Amazon.

Vegan living: In this spacious Brooklyn apartment you’re [*not allowed to cook meat*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/18/nyregion/vegan-tenants-landlord-ny.html).

Sex aids: A new generation of lube [*is too chic to hide*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/19/style/lube-sex-packaging-design.html).

100 places: Ken Jennings, the “Jeopardy!” host, wrote [*a travel guide for the afterlife*](https://www.washingtonpost.com/books/2023/06/13/ken-jennings-afterlife-100-places-see-after-you-die/), The Washington Post reports.

Lives Lived: The pianist Max Morath found his calling in a fascination with ragtime. In nightclubs and on television, he combined showmanship with scholarly commentary. Morath [*died at 96*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/19/arts/music/max-morath-dead.html).

SPORTS NEWS

A new study: A football player’s chances of developing the brain disease C.T.E. are related not only to the number of blows to the head, but also to [*the cumulative impact of all those hits*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/20/sports/football/cte-study-concussions-brain-tackle.html), The Times writes.

A star on the market: Draymond Green [*opted out*](https://theathletic.com/4622330/2023/06/19/draymond-green-declines-player-option-warriors-free-agency/) of his contract with the Golden State Warriors and will become a free agent, The Athletic reports.

A new Dodger? The Angels superstar Shohei Ohtani could be playing in Los Angeles soon, according to The Athletic’s [*M.L.B. player poll*](https://theathletic.com/article/4598257).

“An unpopular surface”: Kgothatso Montjane, a tennis champion in women’s wheelchair doubles, spoke to ESPN about the [*challenges of playing on grass*](https://www.espn.co.uk/espn/story/_/id/37856291/kgothatso-montjane-sets-sights-wimbledon-roland-garros-triumph).

ARTS AND IDEAS

On the runway: Pharrell Williams will unveil his [*first collection as creative director of Louis Vuitton*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/18/style/louis-vuitton-menswear-pharrell-williams-louis-vuittons.html) today. Williams, a hip-hop artist with a famed sense of style, was catapulted into one of fashion’s pre-eminent jobs this year. “I am a creative designer from the perspective of the consumer,” Williams told The Times’s Jon Caramanica.

More on culture

* Thousands of Reddit boards have gone dark in [*protest of changes*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/16/style/whats-going-on-with-reddit.html) to the company’s business model.

1. Curators from the Met Museum are [*teaching Ukrainian military officers*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/13/arts/design/met-museum-trains-monuments-men-ukraine.html) to save art.
2. “[*Astonishing*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/16/theater/romeo-and-juliet-toheeb-jimoh.html),” a Times review says about “Romeo and Juliet” at London’s Almeida Theater. “Ted Lasso” fans will recognize one of the stars: Toheeb Jimoh, who played Sam Obisanya.

THE MORNING RECOMMENDS …

Cook [*Thai red curry noodles*](https://cooking.nytimes.com/recipes/1019142-thai-red-curry-noodles-with-vegetables) with vegetables.

Walk through cities, from [*Seoul to Marrakesh and beyond*](https://www.nytimes.com/explain/2023/06/19/travel/walking-marrakesh-paris-seoul).

Choose from Wirecutter’s [*four best collapsible wagons*](https://www.nytimes.com/wirecutter/reviews/best-folding-wagons/).

Mow [*your lawn with a robot*](https://www.nytimes.com/wirecutter/reviews/best-robot-lawn-mower/).

GAMES

Here are [*today’s Spelling Bee*](https://www.nytimes.com/puzzles/spelling-bee) and [*the Bee Buddy*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/upshot/spelling-bee-buddy.html), which helps you find remaining words. Yesterday’s pangrams were hateful and healthful.

And here are [*today’s Mini Crossword*](https://www.nytimes.com/crosswords/game/mini), [*Wordle*](https://www.nytimes.com/games/wordle/index.html) and [*Sudoku*](https://www.nytimes.com/puzzles/sudoku/easy).

Thanks for spending part of your morning with The Times. See you tomorrow. — David

P.S. The word [*“puzzleist”*](https://twitter.com/NYT_first_said/status/1669640554106191874) — a puzzle constructor — appeared for the first time in The Times recently, in a book review.

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[***‘The Ezra Klein Show’ Book Recommendations (2023)***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B61-6SM1-JBG3-602V-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Length:** 2705 words

**Highlight:** Readings that the podcast’s guests say shaped their thinking.

**Body**

Readings that the podcast’s guests say shaped their thinking.

“The Ezra Klein Show” explores ideas with some of today’s most dynamic thinkers. We cover politics, culture, history, philosophy, psychology, technology and more. The topics are wide-ranging, but every episode ends with Ezra asking his guest (or guests) to recommend a few books that have shaped their thinking. Below is a list of all the books recommended on the show in 2023, in reverse-chronological order.

You can view book recommendations from the latest episodes [*here*](https://www.nytimes.com/article/ezra-klein-show-book-recs.html). Listen to and follow “The Ezra Klein Show” on [*Apple*](https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/the-ezra-klein-show/id1548604447), [*Spotify*](https://open.spotify.com/show/3oB5noYIwEB2dMAREj2F7S), [*Google*](https://www.google.com/podcasts?feed=aHR0cHM6Ly9mZWVkcy5zaW1wbGVjYXN0LmNvbS84MkZJMzVQeA%3D%3D) or [*wherever you get your podcasts*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/19/opinion/how-to-listen-ezra-klein-show-nyt.html?action=click&amp;module=RelatedLinks&amp;pgtype=Article).

Pratap Mehta

[*India Is Transforming. But Into What?*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/12/opinion/ezra-klein-podcast-pratap-bhanu-mehta.html) (Dec. 12, 2023)

* “The India Trilogy” by V.S. Naipaul

1. “India in Asian Geopolitics” by Shivshankar Menon
2. “Dreamers” by Snigdha Poonam

Nimrod Novik

[*A Different Path Israel Could Have Taken — and Maybe Still Can*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/08/opinion/ezra-klein-podcast-nimrod-novik.html) (Dec. 8, 2023)

* “The Back Channel” by William J. Burns

1. “Master of the Game” by Martin Indyk

Tareq Baconi

[*‘This Is How Hamas Is Seeing This’*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/05/opinion/ezra-klein-podcast-tareq-baconi.html) (Dec. 5, 2023)

* “The Hundred Years’ War on Palestine” by Rashid Khalidi

1. “Returning to Haifa” by Ghassan Kanafani
2. “Light in Gaza” edited by Jehad Abusalim, Jennifer Bing and Mike Merryman-Lotze

Kevin Roose and Casey Newton

[*A Lot Has Happened in A.I. Let’s Catch Up.*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/01/opinion/ezra-klein-podcast-casey-newton-kevin-roose.html?action=click&amp;module=audio-series-bar&amp;region=header&amp;pgtype=Article) (Dec. 1, 2023)

* “Electrifying America” by David E. Nye

1. “Your Face Belongs to Us” by Kashmir Hill
2. “Intro to Large Language Models” by Andrej Karpathy (video)
3. Import AI by Jack Clark (newsletter)
4. AI Snake Oil by Arvind Narayanan and Sayash Kapoor (newsletter)
5. Pragmatic Engineer by Gergely Orosz (newsletter)

Aaron David Miller

[*The Best Primer I’ve Heard on Israeli-Palestinian Peace Efforts*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/21/opinion/ezra-klein-podcast-aaron-david-miller.html) (Nov. 21, 2023)

* “The Peace Puzzle” by Daniel C. Kurtzer, Scott B. Lasensky, William B. Quandt, Steven L. Spiegel and Shibley Telhami

1. “Arabs and Israelis” by Abdel Monem Said Aly, Shai Feldman and Khalil Shikaki
2. “The Missing Peace” by Dennis Ross

Sharon Brous

[*The Sermons I Needed to Hear Right Now*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/17/opinion/ezra-klein-podcast-sharon-brous.html) (Nov. 17, 2023)

* “The Prophets” by Abraham J. Heschel

1. “To Bless the Space Between Us” by John O’Donohue
2. “Homegoing” by Yaa Gyasi

Michael Podhorzer

[*Are Democrats Whistling Past the Graveyard?*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/14/opinion/ezra-klein-podcast-michael-podhorzer.html) (Nov. 14, 2023)

* “Politics and the English Language” by George Orwell (Essay)

1. “Tyranny, Inc.” by Sohrab Ahmari
2. “Crashed” by Adam Tooze

Yossi Klein Halevi

[*What Israelis Fear the World Does Not Understand*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/10/opinion/ezra-klein-podcast-yossi-klein-halevi.html) (Nov. 10, 2023)

* “A Tale of Love and Darkness” by Amos Oz

1. “Who By Fire” by Matti Friedman
2. “The War of Return” by Adi Schwartz and Einat Wilf

Amjad Iraqi

[*Why Palestinians Feel They’ve Been ‘Duped’*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/07/opinion/ezra-klein-podcast-amjad-iraqi.html) (Nov. 7. 2023)

* “East West Street” by Philippe Sands

1. “Orientalism” by Edward Said
2. “The Fire Next Time” by James Baldwin

Amaney Jamal

[*She Polled Gazans on Oct. 6. Here’s What She Found.*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/03/opinion/ezra-klein-podcast-amaney-jamal.html) (Nov. 3, 2023)

* “The One State Reality” edited by Michael Barnett, Nathan J. Brown, Marc Lynch and Shibley Telhami

1. “Arabs and Israelis” by Abdel Monem Said Aly, Shai Feldman and Khalil Shikaki
2. “A History of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict” by Mark Tessler

Zack Beauchamp

[*If Not This, Then What Should Israel Do?*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/31/opinion/ezra-klein-podcast-zack-beauchamp.html) (Oct. 31, 2023)

* “A High Price” by Daniel Byman

1. “The Selected Works of Edward Said, 1966 – 2006” by Edward W. Said
2. “The Accidental Empire” by Gershom Gorenberg

McKay Coppins

[*The Conflicted Legacy of Mitt Romney*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/27/opinion/ezra-klein-podcast-mckay-coppins.html) (Oct. 27, 2023)

* “The Last Politician” by Franklin Foer

1. “Number the Stars” by Lois Lowry
2. “The Plot” by Jean Hanff Korelitz
3. “Hell of a Book” by Jason Mott
4. “Less” by Andrew Sean Greer

Spencer Ackerman and Peter Beinart

[*The Jewish Left Is Trying to Hold Two Thoughts at Once*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/24/opinion/ezra-klein-podcast-spencer-ackerman-peter-beinart.html) (Oct. 24, 2023)

* “The Hundred Years’ War on Palestine” by Rashid Khalidi

1. “An Oral History of the Palestinian Nakba” edited by Nahla Abdo and Nur Masalha
2. “Israel’s Secret Wars” by Ian Black
3. “The Question of Palestine” by Edward W. Said
4. “Strangers in the House” by Raja Shehadeh
5. “Hamas Contained” by Tareq Baconi

Masha Gessen

[*We Need Better Narratives About Gender*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/10/opinion/ezra-klein-podcast-masha-gessen-oct-2023.html) (Oct. 10, 2023)

* “The Myth of the Wrong Body” by Miquel Misse

1. “Conundrum” by Jan Morris
2. “Who’s Afraid of Gender” by Judith Butler

Stephanie Slade

[*Your Guide to the New Right*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/03/opinion/ezra-klein-podcast-stephanie-slade.html) (Oct. 3, 2023)

* “Radicals for Capitalism” by Brian Doherty

1. “The Ethics of Authenticity” by Charles Taylor
2. “War and Peace” by Leo Tolstoy

Ken White

[*Two Attorneys Rank the Severity of Trump’s Indictments*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/26/opinion/ezra-klein-podcast-ken-white.html) (Sep. 26, 2023)

* “Pax” by Tom Holland

1. “The Shadow Docket” by Stephen Vladeck
2. “The Enchanters” by James Ellroy

Pooja Lakshmin

[*Boundaries, Burnout and the ‘Goopification’ of Self-Care*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/19/opinion/ezra-klein-podcast-pooja-lakshmin.html) (Sep. 19, 2023)

* “Living Resistance” by Kaitlin B. Curtice

1. “The Emotional Lives of Teenagers” by Lisa Damour
2. “The Fifth Season” by N.K. Jemisin

Emily Drabinski

[*America’s Top Librarian on the Rise of Book Bans*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/12/opinion/ezra-klein-podcast-emily-drabinski.html?action=click&amp;module=audio-series-bar&amp;region=header&amp;pgtype=Article) (Sep. 12, 2023)

* “The Promise of Access” by Daniel Greene

1. “Flamer” by Mike Curato
2. “How Beautiful We Were” by Imbolo Mbue

Kate Marvel

[*What Have We Learned From a Summer of Climate Reckoning?*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/05/opinion/ezra-klein-podcast-kate-marvel.html?action=click&amp;module=audio-series-bar&amp;region=header&amp;pgtype=Article) (Sep. 5, 2023)

* “On Exactitude in Science” by Jorge Luis Borges

1. “Macbeth” by William Shakespeare
2. “Troubled Waters” by Mary Annaïse Heglar

Katelyn Jetelina

[*It’s Time to Talk About ‘Pandemic Revisionism’*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/29/opinion/ezra-klein-podcast-katelyn-jetelina.html?action=click&amp;module=audio-series-bar&amp;region=header&amp;pgtype=Article) (Aug. 29, 2023)

* “Lessons from the Covid War” by Covid Crisis Group

1. “Open” by Andre Agassi
2. “Lessons in Chemistry” by Bonnie Garmus

Jason Bordoff and Meghan O’Sullivan

[*When Great Power Conflict and Climate Action Collide*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/22/opinion/ezra-klein-podcast-meghan-osullivan-jason-bordoff.html) (Aug, 22, 2023)

“The Prize” by Daniel Yergin

“Silent Spring Revolution” by Douglas Brinkley

“The Avoidable War” by Kevin Rudd

“How to Avoid a Climate Disaster” by Bill Gates

Mary Katharine Ham

[*This Conservative Thinks America’s Institutions ‘Earned’ Their Distrust*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/15/opinion/ezra-klein-podcast-mary-katharine-ham.html) (Aug. 15, 2023)

* “Wise Blood” by Flannery O’Connor

1. “Rules of Civility” by Amor Towles
2. “The Right” by Matthew Continetti

Ben Domenech

[*A Conservative on How His Party Has Changed Since 2016*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/08/opinion/ezra-klein-podcast-ben-domenech.html) (Aug. 8, 2023)

* “The War on the West” by Douglas Murray

1. “The Mandibles” by Lionel Shriver
2. “Running the Light” by Sam Tallent

Martin Wolf

[*How Martin Wolf Understands This Global Economic Moment*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/01/opinion/ezra-klein-podcast-martin-wolf.html) (Aug. 1, 2023)

* “The Narrow Corridor” by Daron Acemoglu and James A. Robinson

1. “Power and Progress” by Daron Acemoglu and Simon Johnson
2. “The Rise and Fall of American Growth” by Robert J. Gordon

Ezra Klein

[*Psychedelic Therapy, Threads vs. Twitter, My New Book and More*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/07/25/opinion/ezra-klein-podcast-ask-me-anything.html) (July 25, 2023)

* “Orange” by Caroline Shaw and Attacca Quartet (music)

1. Fred again..: Tiny Desk Concert on NPR Music (music)
2. “USB” by Fred again.. (music)
3. “Midas” by Maribou State (music)

Barbara Kingsolver

[*Barbara Kingsolver Thinks Urban Liberals Have It All Wrong on Appalachia*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/07/21/podcasts/ezra-klein-podcast-barbara-kingsolver.html) (July 21, 2023)

* “Landings” by Arwen Donahue

1. “Raising Lazarus” by Beth Macy
2. “Pod” by Laline Paull

Jerusalem Demsas

[*What We Learned From the Deepest Look at Homelessness in Decades*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/07/18/opinion/ezra-klein-podcast-jerusalem-demsas.html) (July 18, 2023)

* “Homelessness Is a Housing Problem” by Gregg Colburn and Clayton Page Aldern

1. “Children of Time” by Adrian Tchaikovsky
2. “Strangers to Ourselves” by Rachel Aviv

Tom Hanks

[*What Tom Hanks Thinks of America*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/07/14/opinion/ezra-klein-podcast-tom-hanks.html) (July 14, 2023)

“Beartown” by Fredrik Backman

“The Swerve” by Stephen Greenblatt

“Trust” by Hernan Diaz

Demis Hassabis

[*A.I. Could Solve Some of Humanity’s Hardest Problems. It Already Has.*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/07/11/opinion/ezra-klein-podcast-demis-hassabis.html) (July 11, 2023)

* “The Fabric of Reality” by David Deutsch

1. “Permutation City” by Greg Egan
2. “Consider Phlebas” by Iain M. Banks

Robinson Meyer

[*This Taught Me a Lot About How Decarbonization Is Really Going*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/07/07/opinion/ezra-klein-podcast-robinson-meyer.html) (July 7, 2023)

* “The Ends of the World” by Peter Brannen

1. “Climate Shock” by Gernot Wagner and Martin L. Weitzman
2. “Shorting the Grid” by Meredith Angwin

Stephen Kotkin

[*What’s Really Going On in Russia?*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/30/opinion/ezra-klein-podcast-stephen-kotkin.html) (June 30, 2023)

* “Chagall” by Jackie Wullschlager

1. “Invisible China” by Scott Rozelle and Natalie Hell
2. “Classified” by David Bernstein

Melanie Challenger

[*How ‘Being Animal’ Could Help Us Be Better Humans*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/27/opinion/ezra-klein-podcast-melanie-challenger.html) (June 27, 2023)

* “Love’s Work” by Gillian Rose

1. “Summertime” by Danielle Celermajer
2. “Lighthead” by Terrance Hayes

Darrick Hamilton

[*Why This Economist Wants to Give Every Poor Child $50,000*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/23/opinion/ezra-klein-podcast-darrick-hamilton.html) (June 23, 2023)

* “When Affirmative Action Was White” by Ira Katznelson

1. “Racial Conflict and Economic Development” by W. Arthur Lewis
2. “Postcolonial Love Poem” by Natalie Diaz

Leslie Kean

[*What the Heck Is Going on With These U.F.O. Stories?*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/20/opinion/ezra-klein-podcast-leslie-kean.html) (June 20, 2023)

* “The U.F.O. Experience” by J. Allen Hynek

1. “The U.F.O. Evidence” by Richard H. Hall
2. “American Cosmic” by D.W. Pasulka

Jon Favreau

[*Why Do So Few Democrats Want Biden to Run in 2024?*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/16/opinion/ezra-klein-podcast-jon-favreau.html) (June 16, 2023)

* “How to Break Up with Your Phone” by Catherine Price

1. “A Visit from the Goon Squad” by Jennifer Egan
2. “No One Is Talking About This” by Patricia Lockwood

Carlos Lozada

[*What We Learned Reading Ron DeSantis’s Books*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/13/opinion/ezra-klein-podcast-carlos-lozada.html) (June 13, 2023)

* “Personal Memoirs of U.S. Grant” by Ulysses Grant

1. “An Hour Before Daylight” by Jimmy Carter
2. “All the Best, George Bush” by George H.W. Bush

Kristen Ghodsee

[*What Communes and Other Radical Experiments in Living Together Reveal (June 9, 2023)*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/09/opinion/ezra-klein-kristen-ghodsee.html)

* “Pirate Enlightenment, or the Real Libertalia” by David Graeber

1. “The Dispossessed” by Ursula K. LeGuin
2. “Gender and the Politics of History” by Joan Wallach Scott

Jennifer Pahlka

[*The Book I Wish Every Policymaker Would Read*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/06/opinion/ezra-klein-podcast-jennifer-pahlka.html) (June 6, 2023)

* “Implementation” by Jeffrey L. Pressman and Aaron Wildavsky

1. “Radical Help” by Hilary Cottam
2. “Mandate for Leadership” (chapter 3), edited by Paul Dans and Steven Groves

Fareed Zakaria

[*Fareed Zakaria on Where Russia’s War in Ukraine Stands — and Much More*](https://nytimes.com/2023/06/02/opinion/ezra-klein-podcast-fareed-zakaria.html) (June 2, 2023)

* “Imagined Communities” by Benedict Anderson

1. “Wealth and Power” by Orville Schell and John Delury
2. “The Idea of India” by Sunil Khilnani

Joseph Henrich

[*If You’re Reading This, You’re Probably ‘WEIRD’ (May 26, 2023)*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/26/opinion/ezra-klein-podcast-joseph-henrich.html)

* “Why Europe?” by Michael Mitterauer

1. “Guns, Germs, and Steel” by Jared Diamond
2. “The Chosen Few” by Maristella Botticini and Zvi Eckstein

Lisa Damour

[*Our Obsession With Wellness Is Hurting Teens — and Adults*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/23/opinion/ezra-klein-podcast-lisa-damour.html) (May 23, 2023)

* “Psychoanalytic Diagnosis” by Nancy McWilliams

1. “Transcendent Kingdom” by Yaa Gyasi
2. “A Swim in a Pond in the Rain” by George Saunders

Jean Twenge

[*Why Are Teens in Crisis? Here’s What the Evidence Says.*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/19/opinion/ezra-klein-podcast-jean-twenge.html) (May 19, 2023)

* “The Problem With Everything” by Meghan Daum

1. “What’s Our Problem?” by Tim Urban
2. “Nine Ladies” by Heather Moll

Veronique de Rugy

[*A Libertarian and I Debate the Debt Ceiling*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/16/opinion/ezra-klein-podcast-veronique-derugy.html) (May 16, 2023)

* “Range” by David Epstein

1. “Kindly Inquisitors” by Jonathan Rauch
2. “Let Them In” by Jason L. Riley

Erik Davis

[*The Future Is Going to Be Weird. Are We Ready?*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/02/opinion/ezra-klein-podcast-erik-davis.html) (May 2, 2023)

* “God, Human, Animal, Machine” by Meghan O’Gieblyn

1. “Psychonauts” by Mike Jay
2. “Weird Studies” (podcast)

Scott Wiener

[*Democrats: Pay Attention to What’s Happening in California*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/04/28/opinion/ezra-klein-podcast-scott-wiener.html) (April 28, 2023)

* “And the Band Played On” by Randy Shilts

1. “The House on Mango Street” by Sandra Cisneros
2. “Last Call” by Daniel Okrent
3. “Wheel of Time” (series)

Matthew Desmond

[*Matthew Desmond on America’s Addiction to Poverty*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/04/21/opinion/ezra-klein-podcast-matthew-desmond.html) (April 21, 2023)

* “What Then Must We Do?” by Leo Tolstoy

1. “Race for Profit” by Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor
2. “Random Family” by Adrian Nicole LeBlanc

Sheila Liming

[*The ‘Quiet Catastrophe’ Brewing in Our Social Lives*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/04/18/opinion/ezra-klein-podcast-sheila-liming.html) (April 18, 2023)

* “Black Paper” by Teju Cole

1. “On the Inconvenience of Other People” by Lauren Berlant
2. “The Hare” by Melanie Finn

Danielle Allen

[*This Philosopher Wants Liberals to Take Political Power Seriously*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/04/14/opinion/ezra-klein-podcast-danielle-allen.html) (April 14, 2023)

* “The Darkened Light of Faith” by Melvin L. Rogers

1. “Life 3.0” by Max Tegmark
2. “Open Democracy” by Héléne Landemore

Alondra Nelson

[*What Biden’s Top A.I. Thinker Concluded We Should Do*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/04/11/opinion/ezra-klein-podcast-alondra-nelson.html) (April 11, 2023)

* “Data Driven” by Karen Levy

1. “The Master Switch” by Tim Wu
2. “Kindred” by Octavia Butler

Chris Miller

[*The Most Amazing — and Dangerous — Technology in the World*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/04/04/opinion/ezra-klein-podcast-chris-miller.html) (April 4, 2023)

* “The World For Sale” by Javier Blas and Jack Farchy

1. “Nexus” by Jonathan Reed Winkler
2. “Prestige, Manipulation and Coercion” by Joseph Torigian

David French

[*Trump’s Legal Jeopardy and America’s Political Crossroads*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/28/opinion/ezra-klein-podcast-david-french.html) (Mar. 28, 2023)

* “We the Fallen People” by Robert Tracy McKenzie

1. “The Napoleonic Wars” by Alexander Mikaberidze
2. “Ring of Steel” by Alexander Watson

Morgan Ricks

[*A Radical Way of Thinking About Money*](https://nytimes.com/2023/03/24/opinion/ezra-klein-podcast-morgan-ricks.html) (Mar. 24, 2023)

* “Flash Boys” by Michael Lewis

1. “The Idea Factory” by Jon Gertner
2. “The Fed Unbound” by Lev Menand

Kelsey Piper

[*A.I. Is About to Get Much Weirder. Here’s What to Watch For.*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/21/opinion/ezra-klein-podcast-kelsey-piper.html) (Mar. 21, 2023)

* “The Making of the Atomic Bomb” by Richard Rhodes

1. Asterisk Magazine
2. “The Silmarillion” by J. R. R. Tolkien

Noah Smith

[*Why Silicon Valley Bank Collapsed — And What Comes Next*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/16/opinion/ezra-klein-podcast-noah-smith.html) (Mar. 16, 2023)

* “Chip War” by Chris Miller

1. “How Asia Works” by Joe Studwell
2. “The Invisible Bridge” by Rick Perlstein

Dan Wang

[*How China Went From Economic Superstar to Faltering Giant*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/14/opinion/ezra-klein-podcast-dan-wang.html) (Mar. 14, 2023)

* “The Jesuits” by Markus Friedrich

1. “Last and First Men” by Olaf Stapledon
2. “Disturbing the Universe” by Freeman Dyson

Richard Reeves

[*The Men — and Boys — Are Not Alright*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/10/opinion/ezra-klein-podcast-richard-reeves.html) (Mar. 10, 2023)

* “[*The Tenuous Attachments of* ***Working-Class*** *Men*](https://pubs.aeaweb.org/doi/pdf/10.1257/jep.33.2.211)” by Kathryn Edin, Timothy Nelson, Andrew Cherlin and Robert Franci

1. “[*Career and Family*](https://press.princeton.edu/books/hardcover/9780691201788/career-and-family)” by Claudia Goldin
2. “[*The Life of Dad*](https://www.simonandschuster.co.uk/books/The-Life-of-Dad/Anna-Machin/9781471161407)” by Anna Machin

Gillian Branstetter

[*If You Read the G.O.P.’s Anti-Trans Policies, You’ll See What It Really Wants*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/07/opinion/ezra-klein-podcast-gillian-branstetter.html) (Mar. 7, 2023)

* “Homintern” by Gregory Woods

1. “Caliban and the Witch” by Silvia Federici
2. “Can the Monster Speak?” by Paul B. Preciado

Jane Hirshfield

[*What a Poetic Mind Can Teach Us About How to Live*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/03/opinion/ezra-klein-podcast-jane-hirshfield.html) (Mar. 3, 2023)

* “Metaphors We Live By” by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson

1. “Less Than One” by Joseph Brodsky
2. “The Fire Next Time” by James Baldwin

Stephan Guyenet

[*Our Brains Weren’t Designed for This Kind of Food*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/02/28/opinion/ezra-klein-podcast-stephen-guyenet.html) (Feb. 28, 2023)

* “Burn” by Herman Pontzer

1. “Salt Sugar Fat” by Michael Moss
2. “The Secret of Our Success” by Joseph Henrich

Adrian Tchaikovsky

[*Is A.I. Actually Creative? Are We?*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/02/24/opinion/ezra-klein-podcast-adrian-tchaikovsky.html) (Feb. 24, 2023)

* “Soldier of the Mist” by Gene Wolfe

1. “After Atlas” by Emma Newman
2. “Babel” by R. F. Kuang

Rachel Zoffness

[*A Surprising Theory for Understanding — and Healing — Pain*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/02/21/opinion/17eks-ezra-klein-podcast-rachel-zoffness.html) (Feb. 21, 2023)

* “Why Zebras Don’t Get Ulcers” by Robert M. Sapolsky

1. “The Body Keeps the Score” by Bessel van der Kolk
2. “Pain” by Patrick Wall

Paul Krugman

[*The Inflation Story Has Changed Significantly. Paul Krugman Breaks It Down.*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/02/17/opinion/ezra-klein-podcast-paul-krugman.html) (Feb. 17, 2023)

* “Slouching Towards Utopia” by J. Bradford DeLong

1. “How the War Was Won” by Phillips Payson O’Brien
2. “Ninth House” by Leigh Bardugo

Tim Hwang

[*How the $500 Billion Attention Industry Really Works*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/02/14/opinion/ezra-klein-podcast-tim-hwang.html) (Feb. 14, 2023)

* “Here Comes Everybody” by Clay Shirky

1. “The Profiteers” by Sally Denton
2. “Jim Ravel’s Theatrical Pickpocketing”

Rick Rubin

[*The Tao of Rick Rubin*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/02/10/opinion/ezra-klein-podcast-rick-rubin.html) (Feb. 10, 2023)

* “Forever Changes” by Love (album)

1. “The Beatles” by The Beatles (album)
2. “Ramones” by Ramones (album)

Nicholas Bagley

[*How Liberals — Yes, Liberals — Are Hobbling Government*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/02/07/opinion/ezra-klein-podcast-nicholas-bagley.html) (Feb. 7, 2023)

* “Public Citizens” by Paul Sabin

1. “The Fifth Risk” by Michael Lewis
2. “Babel” by R.F. Kuang

Jessica Chen Weiss

[*Is This How a Cold War With China Begins?*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/01/27/opinion/ezra-klein-podcast-jessica-chen-weiss.html) (Jan. 27, 2023)

* “Seeking Truth and Hiding Facts” by Jeremy L. Wallace

1. “Our Missing Hearts” by Celeste Ng
2. “See No Stranger” by Valarie Kaur

Yuen Yuen Ang

[*There’s Been a Revolution in How China Is Governed*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/01/24/opinion/ezra-klein-podcast-yuen-yuen-ang.html) (Jan. 24, 2023)

* “From The Soil” by Xiaotong Fei

1. “Fei Xiaotong and Sociology in Revolutionary China” by R. David Arkush
2. “The Fractalist” by Benoit Mandelbrot

Nicole Hemmer

[*How Right-Wing Media Ate the Republican Party*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/01/20/opinion/ezra-klein-podcast-nicole-hemmer.html) (Jan. 20, 2023)

* “Fit Nation” by Natalia Mehlman Petrzela

1. “Dreamland” by Carly Goodman
2. “Freedom’s Dominion” by Jefferson Cowie

Brandon Terry

[*A Revelatory Tour of Martin Luther King Jr.’s Forgotten Teachings*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/01/16/opinion/ezra-klein-podcast-brandon-terry.html) (Jan. 16, 2023)

* “Where Do We Go From Here” by Martin Luther King Jr.

1. “The Trumpet of Conscience” by Martin Luther King Jr.
2. “The Sword and the Shield” by Peniel E. Joseph
3. “A More Beautiful and Terrible History” by Jeanne Theoharis
4. “Dark Ghettos” by Tommie Shelby

Katharina Pistor

[*A Guide to the ‘Legal Fictions’ That Create Wealth, Inequality and Economic Crises*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/01/13/opinion/ezra-klein-podcast-katharina-pistor.html) (Jan. 13, 2023)

* Capital in the Twenty-First Century by Thomas Piketty

1. Crashed by Adam Tooze
2. Ages of American Capitalism by Jonathan Levy

Dan Savage

[*Dan Savage on Polyamory, Chosen Family and Better Sex*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/01/10/opinion/ezra-klein-podcast-dan-savage.html) (Jan. 10, 2023)

* “The Ethical Slut” by Janet W. Hardy and Dossie Easton

1. “Berlin Diary” by William L. Shirer
2. “A Royal Affair” by Stella Tillyard

Gary Marcus

[*A Skeptical Take on the A.I. Revolution*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/01/06/opinion/ezra-klein-podcast-gary-marcus.html) (Jan. 6, 2023)

* “The Language Instinct” by Steven Pinker

1. “How the World Really Works” by Vaclav Smil
2. “The Martian” by Andy Weir

Judith Shulevitz

[*Sabbath and the Art of Rest*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/01/03/opinion/ezra-klein-podcast-judith-shulevitz.html) (Jan. 3, 2023)

* “Adam Bede” by George Eliot

1. “The Seven Day Circle” by Eviatar Zerubavel
2. “On the Clock” by Emily Guendelsberger
3. “Public Man, Private Woman” by Jean Bethke Elshtain

**Load-Date:** January 29, 2024

**End of Document**



[***Feminist Gangsters, Brazilian Style***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:682F-2641-JBG3-61D9-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

April 21, 2023 Friday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section C; Column 0; Movies, Performing Arts/Weekend Desk; Pg. 7; CRITIC'S PICK

**Length:** 614 words

**Byline:** By Beatrice Loayza

**Body**

Featuring a cast of local actors playing semi-fictionalized versions of themselves, this movie flies in the face of the country's political establishment.

In Hollywood these days, radical chic is back in fashion. A number of sexy thrillers that dramatize the history of radical politics or pose provocative hypotheticals about the future of activism have emerged. For my money, none match the incendiary power of ''Dry Ground Burning,'' a feminist gangster movie from Brazil that spits oil in the face of that country's political establishment.

Directed by Joana Pimenta and Adirley Queirós, ''Dry Ground Burning'' is a film about insurrection set in the central Brazilian region of Sol Nascente. Chitara (Joana Darc Furtado) is the leader of an all-female crew that steals oil from underground pipelines, and as the kingpin, she strikes deals with gasoline vendors who sell the product at a discounted price. Chitara's half sister, Léa (Léa Alves da Silva), an androgynous charmer with a mane of black hair, joins the posse after an eight-year stint in prison, and her arrival inspires several nostalgic conversations that temper the action with hangout-movie vibes. The two siblings nonchalantly discuss their playboy father and Léa's 12-year-old son, conceived with an ex-con who was murdered.

Meanwhile, their compatriot, Andreia (Andreia Vieira), launches a campaign against the pro-cop candidate running for office. Hers is the Prison People Party, which represents those with criminal records, the ***working class***, and Indigenous and Black people -- in other words, those who fared the worst under the policies of Jair Bolsonaro's far-right government, which was in power when the film was in production.

[Video: Watch on YouTube.]

Because most people aren't familiar with the films of Pimenta and Queirós, I'm compelled to draw a connection between ''Dry Ground Burning'' and ''Mad Max: Fury Road,'' two pyromaniacal dystopian westerns in which lawless women are not only their own saviors but everyone else's, too.

But if ''Fury Road'' is a perpetual joyride, ''Dry Ground'' erupts between smoke breaks, switching between moments of rugged quietude and bracing scenes distinguished by invigorating, industrial sound design and the collective exultation of bodies -- like the one with a motorcade carrying the rowdy members of an anarchic political party hollering a profanity-laced campaign jingle. Sodium-lit nightscapes filled with steely, gun-toting dames recall the glossy crime dramas of Michael Mann (''Heat'').

Yet ''Dry Ground Burning'' isn't divorced from reality. Though Pimenta and Queirós sprinkle science-fiction touches throughout the film, their approach is steeped in renegade documentary methods and influenced by the contributions of real locals. The cast is composed of nonprofessional actors from the region who play semi-fictionalized versions of themselves -- Silva, for instance, joined the production when she was released from prison. In order to clear the streets for the motorcade scene, the People Prison Party was officially registered as a political campaign.

Pimenta and Queirós invent a world in which Brazilian women at the very bottom of the social totem pole take matters into their own hands. They do so without an ounce of fear or self-pity -- and in killer style to boot. And it's not just artist types and famous actors who enact these possibilities, but the very people most empowered by imagining themselves otherwise.

Dry Ground BurningNot rated. In Portuguese, with subtitles. Running time: 2 hours 33 minutes. In theaters. Dry Ground BurningNot rated. In Portuguese, with subtitles. Running time: 2 hours 33 minutes. In theaters.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/04/20/movies/dry-ground-burning-review.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/04/20/movies/dry-ground-burning-review.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: Joana Darc Furtado plays the leader of an all-female crew in ''Dry Ground Burning.'' (PHOTOGRAPH BY GRASSHOPPER FILM) This article appeared in print on page C7.

**Load-Date:** April 21, 2023

**End of Document**



[***Mars One***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6782-8JV1-JBG3-62G7-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

January 6, 2023 Friday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section C; Column 0; Movies, Performing Arts/Weekend Desk; Pg. 8; CRITIC'S PICK

**Length:** 369 words

**Byline:** By Amy Nicholson

**Body**

This film from Gabriel Martins follows the dreams of a Black Brazilian family living on the outskirts of Belo Horizonte.

The Brazilian director Gabriel Martins shot his tender-eyed family drama ''Mars One'' in 2018, shortly after the election of Jair Bolsonaro. Martins intended to hold up the billion-dollar space colonization project as a symbol of hope. Since then, it's gone bankrupt, and the disillusionment only deepens this film about the struggle to feel satisfied on earth.

Deivinho (Cícero Lucas), a ***working class*** kid on the outskirts of Belo Horizonte, yearns to join the Mars One mission. His father, Wellington (Carlos Francisco), a maintenance worker, is all-in on a more lucrative plan to turn his shrimpy son into a soccer star. Deivinho's sister, Eunice (Camilla Damião), hopes to afford an apartment with her girlfriend (Ana Hilário), while his mother, Tércia (Rejane Faria), a housekeeper, just wants a good night's sleep after a bomb threat prank that her loved ones wave off as a joke. Though the family members are supportive of each other, the cinematographer Leonardo Feliciano prefers to shoot them in isolation, often from behind as they gaze out at the horizon. (They spend more time staring at the city than the stars.)

[Video: Watch on YouTube.]

Dreams are incubators for dissatisfaction, Martins seems to sigh. He's not above leaning on cloying music and groaner contrivances to milk empathy. We predict before the characters catch on that Deivinho's club tryouts will happen on the same day as a Neil deGrasse Tyson lecture. Yet, the film's emotions are otherwise scrupulously fair -- the dad might be blinkered, but he clearly loves his boy.

While Bolsonaro's victory celebration opens the film, these parents would call themselves contentedly apolitical. Never once do they express jealousy toward their wealthy clients, who include the soccer player Juan Pablo Sorín as himself. Instead, the audience takes up the burden of wanting more for these good people then they're willing to imagine.

Mars OneNot rated. In Portuguese, with subtitles. Running time: 1 hour 55 minutes. Watch on Netflix.Not rated. In Portuguese, with subtitles. Running time: 1 hour 55 minutes. On Netflix.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/01/05/movies/mars-one-review.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/01/05/movies/mars-one-review.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: From left, Camilla Damião, Rejane Faria, Cícero Lucas and Carlos Francisco in Gabriel Martins's ''Mars One.'' (PHOTOGRAPH BY ARRAY RELEASING) This article appeared in print on page C8.

**Load-Date:** January 6, 2023

**End of Document**



[***‘Dry Ground Burning’ Review: Feminist Gangsters, Brazilian Style; Critic’s Pick***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6828-XRW1-JBG3-612C-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

April 20, 2023 Thursday 17:23 EST

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**Section:** MOVIES

**Length:** 636 words

**Byline:** Beatrice Loayza

**Highlight:** Featuring a cast of local actors playing semi-fictionalized versions of themselves, this movie flies in the face of the country’s political establishment.

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[Video: [*Watch on YouTube.*](http://youtube.com/embed/nUHNDxOOvgk)]

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Yet “Dry Ground Burning” isn’t divorced from reality. Though Pimenta and Queirós sprinkle science-fiction touches throughout the film, their approach is steeped in renegade documentary methods and influenced by the contributions of real locals. The cast is composed of nonprofessional actors from the region who play semi-fictionalized versions of themselves — Silva, for instance, joined the production when she was released from prison. [*In order to clear the streets for the motorcade scene,*](https://filmmakermagazine.com/120363-interview-joana-pimenta-and-adirley-queirosdry-ground-burning/#.ZEA4eS9h1mA) the People Prison Party was officially registered as a political campaign.

Pimenta and Queirós invent a world in which Brazilian women at the very bottom of the social totem pole take matters into their own hands. They do so without an ounce of fear or self-pity — and in killer style to boot. And it’s not just artist types and famous actors who enact these possibilities, but the very people most empowered by imagining themselves otherwise.

Dry Ground Burning

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PHOTO: Joana Darc Furtado plays the leader of an all-female crew in “Dry Ground Burning.” (PHOTOGRAPH BY GRASSHOPPER FILM) This article appeared in print on page C7.

**Load-Date:** April 20, 2023

**End of Document**



[***Battle-Hardened Citizens in Israel's North Brace for New Front***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69CJ-0911-DXY4-X0DV-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

October 12, 2023 Thursday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; Foreign Desk; Pg. 11

**Length:** 1206 words

**Byline:** By Isabel Kershner

**Body**

The Hamas assault on Israel's south has inspired new levels of fear among the battle-hardened citizens along the country's northern border with Lebanon, where another group that has clashed with Israel holds forces.

The villages along Israel's northern border with Lebanon have become ghost towns, as most of their residents have already gone south. Army reservists have taken their place, on high alert and standing guard at the locked electronic gates of their communities and at new checkpoints along the roads.

Any civilians left in the villages on Wednesday were bracing for the possible opening of a new front. People rushed in and out of the few stores that remain open. With every rumble, eyes darted upward to scan the skies. The atmosphere bristled with fear.

''It's terrifying,'' said Michael Fakin, 33, who distributes newspapers and has lived most of his life in Shlomi, a ***working-class*** town of about 7,000 people close to the border with Lebanon. ''It's nerve-racking even to walk around my neighborhood,'' he said, having just made a quick run to the only store that was open ''for ice cream and caffeine.''

Around noon on Wednesday, the Lebanese Shiite group Hezbollah took responsibility for firing an anti-tank missile at an Israeli military position at Arab Al Aramshe, an Israeli Bedouin border village in the western Galilee. Israeli aircraft responded by destroying a Hezbollah observation post. At dusk, sirens wailed all along the northern frontier amid rumors of swarms of drones entering Israeli airspace, setting the whole country on edge.

That, the military said, turned out to be a false alarm.

Israelis have long been dreading another war with Hezbollah, which has proved to be a formidable enemy in the past. A taut quiet has prevailed since the last conflict, in 2006, which began with a cross-border raid by Hezbollah and the abduction of two Israeli soldiers. It ended a month later, with some 165 Israelis dead, and more than 1,000 dead on the Lebanese side.

The expectation has been that Israel's next all-out war would start here. Security officials have been warning for years that Hezbollah, an Iranian-backed group, has stockpiled tens of thousands of rockets and missiles, and that the next round of fighting could involve Hezbollah commandos infiltrating Israeli territory and capturing a village or two. Over the years, Israel has invested in bolstering its northern border defenses, building long concrete walls and digging deep ravines.

The surprise, however, came on Saturday when the Palestinian group Hamas, which controls Gaza, breached Israel's southwestern border with the Palestinian enclave, overrunning about two dozen Israeli villages and towns, killing at least 1,200 civilians and soldiers, and taking scores back to Gaza as hostages.

The horrors of that day, the deadliest in Israel's history, have only inspired new levels of anxiety among Israel's battle-hardened citizens of the north, who worry about a similar fate.

Hamas has called on its allies to open a multi-front war against Israel. The Israeli government and President Biden have warned Hezbollah to stay out of the fray. The decision of the Biden administration to deploy an aircraft carrier strike group in the eastern Mediterranean and other assets in the region is a signal, experts say, to Hezbollah's leader, Hassan Nasrallah, that he would be taking on more than Israel if he joined in the conflict.

But after the colossal failure of Israeli intelligence and military preparedness on Saturday, few Israelis are complacent about Mr. Nasrallah's calculations.

In addition to the events on Wednesday, Israeli forces on Tuesday thwarted gunmen from Lebanon near Arab Al Aramshe. Three Israeli soldiers were killed in the firefight, including a senior commander.

In such a jittery environment, any miscalculation by either side, experts say, could set off all-out war even if that was not the intention. In the meantime, Hezbollah's steady drumbeat of provocations both signals solidarity with Hamas, and forces Israel to concentrate significant military resources in the north.

In Adamit, a small kibbutz, or collective village, up a winding road with corkscrew turns a few minutes' drive from Arab Al Aramshe, there wasn't a living soul in sight on Wednesday other than a force of reserve troops and a cat lazing under a car.

From the top of this wooded mountain, with spectacular panoramic views, a border wall can be seen looping in S-shapes along the hills, making it difficult to tell at times which side is Israel and which Lebanon.

In 2018, Israeli forces found a tunnel here, one of six that Hezbollah had built under the border and that Israel exposed. The area has historically been prone to terrorist infiltrations. In the 1970s and 1980s armed Palestinian groups took hostages, and killed adults and children in several shocking assaults on towns here.

Moshe Davidovich, the local council head, said on Wednesday that 80 percent of the residents living within four kilometers of the border had already evacuated voluntarily. Many have gone to the houses of relatives or friends, or to hotels in safer parts of the country.

''They went wherever they possibly could to get as far away from the border,'' said David Vaknin, 70, from Shomera, another small border village, who had come to Shlomi to stock up on medications from the only pharmacy still open in the area.

He and his wife had not evacuated, he said, because they have a farm and animals to care for.

Most of the residents of Arab Al Aramshe have also gone. ''I'm afraid for my children,'' said Awni Ali, 29, speaking by telephone from his wife's family's village, Sheikh Danun, a bit further south, where they were sheltering.

But some young men have remained in Arab Al Aramshe, where an Israeli flag flies on a pole at the entrance of the village. They called for the state to arm them, or at least those who have performed military service, saying they wanted to defend their homes, or alternatively, for the authorities to send buses to take them to a hotel.

''He hates us, and we hate him,'' Ahmad Mahamid, 20, a student who stayed behind, said of Mr. Nasrallah, explaining why the village would be a target.

''It's frightening but we have nowhere to go,'' Yazid Ali, 21, a cousin, added.

Mr. Davidovich, the council head, said thousands of older homes in the area lacked their own fortified safe rooms to protect people from incoming rocket fire when sirens go off -- a situation he has been sounding the alarm about for years, he said. The council has organized the evacuation of Shlomi's older residents, who find it difficult to run to public shelters.

Some residents said they were hoping that Hezbollah would stay out of the fray and that quiet would soon be restored.

But others saw the recent provocations and the Hamas assault as an opportunity for Israel to deal a blow to the menacing enemy to the north, whose positions are clearly visible from their bedroom windows.

''My dream is that there won't be any more Hezbollah or Hamas, and that we will be able to walk across the border and have coffee with our neighbors,'' said Juliette Levy, 48. ''The quiet,'' she said, ''will come after the blow.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/11/world/middleeast/israel-gaza-lebanon.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/11/world/middleeast/israel-gaza-lebanon.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: The town of Shlomi, above, along Israel's northern border with Lebanon, has seen most of its residents flee to the south. Army reservists, some with Israeli tanks, left, have taken their place. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY THOMAS COEX/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE -- GETTY IMAGES

ARIEL SCHALIT/ASSOCIATED PRESS) This article appeared in print on page A11.

**Load-Date:** October 12, 2023

**End of Document**



[***‘Mars One’ Review: Hope on the Horizon; Critic’s Pick***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:677W-0XR1-JBG3-61C9-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

January 5, 2023 Thursday 17:00 EST

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**Section:** MOVIES

**Length:** 399 words

**Byline:** Amy Nicholson

**Highlight:** This film from Gabriel Martins follows the dreams of a Black Brazilian family living on the outskirts of Belo Horizonte.

**Body**

This film from Gabriel Martins follows the dreams of a Black Brazilian family living on the outskirts of Belo Horizonte.

The Brazilian director Gabriel Martins shot his tender-eyed family drama “Mars One” in 2018, shortly after the election of Jair Bolsonaro. Martins intended to hold up the billion-dollar space colonization project as a symbol of hope. Since then, it’s gone bankrupt, and the disillusionment only deepens this film about the struggle to feel satisfied on earth.

Deivinho (Cícero Lucas), a ***working class*** kid on the outskirts of Belo Horizonte, yearns to join the Mars One mission. His father, Wellington (Carlos Francisco), a maintenance worker, is all-in on a more lucrative plan to turn his shrimpy son into a soccer star. Deivinho’s sister, Eunice (Camilla Damião), hopes to afford an apartment with her girlfriend (Ana Hilário), while his mother, Tércia (Rejane Faria), a housekeeper, just wants a good night’s sleep after a bomb threat prank that her loved ones wave off as a joke. Though the family members are supportive of each other, the cinematographer Leonardo Feliciano prefers to shoot them in isolation, often from behind as they gaze out at the horizon. (They spend more time staring at the city than the stars.)

[Video: [*Watch on YouTube.*](http://youtube.com/embed/Z7QE0uKnpDM)]

Dreams are incubators for dissatisfaction, Martins seems to sigh. He’s not above leaning on cloying music and groaner contrivances to milk empathy. We predict before the characters catch on that Deivinho’s club tryouts will happen on the same day as a Neil deGrasse Tyson lecture. Yet, the film’s emotions are otherwise scrupulously fair — the dad might be blinkered, but he clearly loves his boy.

While Bolsonaro’s victory celebration opens the film, these parents would call themselves contentedly apolitical. Never once do they express jealousy toward their wealthy clients, who include the soccer player Juan Pablo Sorín as himself. Instead, the audience takes up the burden of wanting more for these good people then they’re willing to imagine.

Mars One

Not rated. In Portuguese, with subtitles. Running time: 1 hour 55 minutes. [*Watch on Netflix.*](https://www.netflix.com/)

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PHOTO: From left, Camilla Damião, Rejane Faria, Cícero Lucas and Carlos Francisco in Gabriel Martins’s “Mars One.” (PHOTOGRAPH BY ARRAY RELEASING) This article appeared in print on page C8.

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**End of Document**



[***New Chancellor Offers Blueprint to Revive Left***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6481-SKB1-DXY4-X05W-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Length:** 1545 words

**Byline:** By Katrin Bennhold

**Body**

Olaf Scholz wants to win back workers who defected to the populist far right. Success could make him a model for Social Democrats everywhere.

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Mr. Scholz, a Social Democrat, wanted to talk to the philosopher, Prof. Michael J. Sandel of Harvard, about why center-left parties like his had been losing ***working-class*** voters to populists, and the two men spent an hour discussing a seemingly simple theme that would become the centerpiece of the Scholz campaign: ''Respect.''

On Wednesday, Mr. Scholz will be sworn in as Germany's ninth postwar chancellor -- and the first Social Democrat in 16 years -- succeeding Angela Merkel and heading a three-party coalition government. Defying polls and pundits, he led his 158-year-old party from the precipice of irrelevance to an unlikely victory -- and now wants to show that the center-left can again become a political force in Europe.

Mr. Scholz won for many reasons, not least because he persuaded voters that he was the closest thing to Ms. Merkel, but his message of respect resonated, too. For the first time since 2005, the Social Democrats became the strongest party among the ***working class***. Just over 800,000 voters who had abandoned the party for the far left and far right returned in the last election.

''Scholz touched a nerve,'' said Jutta Allmendinger, president of the research institute WZB Berlin Social Science Center and an expert on inequality who has known Mr. Scholz for almost two decades. ''Many see him as a Merkel clone,'' she noted. ''But he is a Social Democrat to the core.''

Mr. Scholz served as finance minister in Ms. Merkel's conservative-led coalition government and has promised continuity and stability. Yet he also intends to make Germany a political laboratory of sorts, to try to repair the bridge between the Social Democrats and the ***working class***, an effort with parallels to President Biden's political agenda in the United States.

For the center-left in Europe, Mr. Scholz's victory comes at a critical moment. Over the past decade, many of the parties that once dominated European politics have become almost obsolete, seemingly bereft of ideas and largely abandoned by their ***working-class*** base.

The political energy has been on the right, especially the populist far right, with many American conservatives flocking to countries like Hungary to study the ''illiberal democracy'' of Viktor Orban, that nation's far-right prime minister.

''Everyone is looking at us,'' said Wolfgang Schmidt, Mr. Scholz's longstanding adviser, whom he has picked to head the chancellery. ''If we do things right, we have a real chance. We mustn't make mistakes, we mustn't disappoint expectations.''

In her final years in office, Ms. Merkel, a conservative, was at times regarded as the lone defender of liberal democracy in an age of global strongmen, whether President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia or President Donald J. Trump. Yet Germany was not immune to populist fury, and the Alternative for Germany, or AfD, won seats in Parliament and became a political force in the country's east.

''The biggest concern in politics for me is that our liberal democracies are coming increasingly under pressure,'' Mr. Scholz says about himself on the Social Democrats' website. ''We have to solve the problems so that the cheap slogans of the populists don't catch.''

Mr. Scholz has traveled extensively in the United States, including in the years before the 2016 election. One of his advisers recalled that in a private conversation he even predicted a Trump victory. Then he spent months analyzing why the Democrats lost and reading a raft of books by authors from ***working-class*** backgrounds in the United States, France and Germany.

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When Mr. Scholz's own party collapsed in the 2017 election, losing for the fourth time in a row, he wrote an unsparing paper concluding that one reason the Social Democrats had lost their core voters was that they had failed to offer them ''recognition.''

Last year, in the middle of the first Covid-19 lockdown, Mr. Scholz read Professor Sandel's latest book, ''The Tyranny of Merit'' in which the Harvard philosopher argued that the meritocratic narrative of education as an engine of social mobility had fueled resentment and contributed to the rise of populists like Mr. Trump.

''The backlash of 2016 vividly expressed that simply telling people, 'You can make it if you try,' was not an adequate response to the wage stagnation and job loss brought about by globalization,'' Professor Sandel said in an interview. ''What Social Democratic elites missed was the insult implicit in this response to inequality, because what it said was, 'If you're struggling in the new economy, your failure is your fault.'''

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Across the European Union, Social Democrats govern in nine of the 27 member states, and lessons from Germany are already proving influential. In France, the Socialist mayor of Paris, Anne Hidalgo, who recently announced her own long-shot presidential bid, has evoked the ''respect'' theme.

But slogans go only so far. The Social Democrats came in first in the splintered September vote in Germany but mustered only 26 percent of the total, a far cry from the 40 percent they recorded at the start of Mr. Schröder's first term. Mr. Kühnert, the party's general secretary, said that Mr. Scholz's challenge was to show that the Social Democratic model is the right approach for the country and beyond.

''We hope that our election victory in Germany will send a signal for the revival of social democracy internationally,'' Mr. Kühnert said. ''We're looking above all to the rest of Europe, because we need to strengthen the E.U. in the next years if we want to have anything to say in the world in coming years.''

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[*https://www.nytimes.com/2021/12/07/world/europe/germany-olaf-scholz-chancellor.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/12/07/world/europe/germany-olaf-scholz-chancellor.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Olaf Scholz's message of respect resonated with German voters. (PHOTOGRAPH BY SEAN GALLUP/GETTY IMAGES) (A1)

Above, Olaf Scholz, left, at the signing of a coalition agreement to form the federal government in Berlin on Tuesday. Left, supporters of his Social Democrat Party rallying in August. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY MICHAEL KAPPELER/DPA, VIA ASSOCIATED PRESS

MAJA HITIJ/GETTY IMAGES) (A9)

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**Byline:** Katrin Bennhold

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Mr. Scholz will now lead a three-party government with the progressive Greens and the libertarian Free Democrats. Their governing treaty calls for raising the minimum wage to 12 euros, or about $13.50, an hour, from ?9.60 today -- an instant pay rise for some 10 million people. Mr. Scholz has also promised to build 400,000 homes a year, 100,000 more than was previously planned, and to guarantee stable pension levels.

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''We need to tell people two things,'' Mr. Scholz said during the campaign. ''First, that we need respect, we need good pay and proper recognition for work. And second, we have to ensure that there are good jobs in the future.''

Across the European Union, Social Democrats govern in nine of the 27 member states, and lessons from Germany are already proving influential. In France, the Socialist mayor of Paris, Anne Hidalgo, who recently announced her own long-shot presidential bid, has evoked the ''respect'' theme.

But slogans only go so far. The Social Democrats came in first in the splintered September vote in Germany, but mustered only 26 percent of the total, a far cry from the 40 percent they recorded at the start of Mr. Schröder's first term. Mr. Kühnert, the party's general secretary, said that Mr. Scholz's challenge is to show that the Social Democratic model is the right approach for the country and beyond.

''We hope that our election victory in Germany will send a signal for the revival of social democracy internationally,'' Mr. Kühnert said. ''We're looking above all to the rest of Europe. Because we need to strengthen the E.U. in the next years if we want to have anything to say in the world in coming years.''

Christopher F. Schuetze contributed reporting.Christopher F. Schuetze contributed reporting.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2021/12/07/world/europe/germany-olaf-scholz-chancellor.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/12/07/world/europe/germany-olaf-scholz-chancellor.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: Olaf Scholz, center right, with members of the Social Democratic party's parliamentary group in in Berlin in September. Mr. Scholz will be Germany's ninth postwar chancellor. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Tobias Schwarz/Agence France-Presse -- Getty Images FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** December 7, 2021

**End of Document**



[***A ‘Really Online’ Writer Looks Beyond the Internet***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6972-4SC1-JBG3-608R-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

September 21, 2023 Thursday 10:54 EST

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**Section:** BOOKS

**Length:** 1139 words

**Byline:** Eleanor Stanford

**Highlight:** Eliza Clark’s debut novel was a hit on TikTok. With her next book, “Penance,” she aims for literary longevity over viral success.

**Body**

Eliza Clark’s debut novel was a hit on TikTok. With her next book, “Penance,” she aims for literary longevity over viral success.

When videos about Eliza Clark’s debut novel “Boy Parts” started going viral on TikTok, she tried to ignore it, at first.

The book, which was published in 2020, follows a violent female photographer who likes to shoot explicit pictures of young men, and is a feverish exploration of how power, gender and beauty can intersect.

On a short-form platform like TikTok, though, “obviously people can be quite reductive” when making reaction videos about books, Clark said in a recent interview. Those snappy takes were “not really for me,” she said.

In a few months, the novel became a staple of [*“BookTok,” the book-obsessed corner of TikTok*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/07/01/books/tiktok-books-booktok.html), where videos tagged #boyparts have been viewed more than 6 million times. A sudden spike in royalty checks was harder to ignore, Clark said.

Clark, 29, spent much of her late teens and 20s “really, really online,” she said. Now, though, shielding herself from internet reactions is just one of the ways she hopes to build on her early viral success and make a literary career with real longevity.

With the publication of her second novel, “Penance,” released Tuesday in the United States by Harper Collins, comes another intentional move: a genre switch. Whereas “Boy Parts” is “an extended dramatic monologue,” Clark said, “Penance” is a satire of nonfiction crime writing.

Before she had even released her debut, Clark wanted her follow-up to be a change of direction. There was a perception in the publishing industry, she said, that young, especially female, writers get book deals because they are easily marketable, but run out of ideas after their debut. “I knew that I needed to do something different,” Clark said.

In Britain, where “Penance” was released in July, it was eagerly awaited. A few months earlier, Clark had appeared on the literary magazine [*Granta’s list of Best of Young British Novelists*](https://www.theguardian.com/books/2023/apr/15/grantas-best-of-young-british-novelists-meet-the-class-of-23). Released once a decade, the roundup selects 20 promising authors under 40, and has previously tipped names including Zadie Smith; Ian McEwan, [*who went on to win the Booker Prize*](https://www.nytimes.com/1998/10/28/world/amsterdam-by-ian-mcewan-wins-booker-prize.html); and Kazuo Ishiguro, who [*in 2017 was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature*](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/10/05/books/nobel-prize-literature.html).

“Penance” is set in Crow-on-Sea, a fictional British seaside town, and is narrated by Alec Z. Carelli, a crime reporter who feels sure he’s found the story to relaunch his flagging career. Nearly a decade earlier, a girl in the town called Joni was set on fire by three of her classmates, and Carelli retells the events that lead up to the murder, interspersed with transcripts from podcast episodes, newspaper reports and Tumblr posts about the crime.

There was “something quite innate and biological about wanting to hear about the ways other people have died,” Clark said, adding, “You can’t really help being interested.” In the novel, two of Joni’s killers spend a lot of time posting on Tumblr about serial murderers and school shooters, but Clark also shows that a voyeuristic interest in violence is centuries old. In Crow-on-Sea, there are walking tours exploring grisly spectacles in the town that date back to the Vikings.

The novel is a critical look at what the writer Rachel Monroe, whose 2019 book “[*Savage Appetites*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/08/20/books/review/savage-appetites-rachel-monroe.html)” focuses on women who become fixated on crime, called the “true crime industrial complex.” In an interview, she said that when it came to violent crimes, like murder, “these stories either get too much, or not enough, attention, and both are traumatic, in their own ways.”

In “Penance,” Joni’s murder is initially overshadowed in the news cycle, because it takes place on [*the night in 2016 that Britain voted to leave the European Union*](https://www.nytimes.com/2016/06/25/world/europe/britain-brexit-european-union-referendum.html), but Carelli’s unscrupulous reporting methods and attention from tasteless true crime podcasts stoke interest in the case. “The way people make use of these stories, the darkness of it all — we’re all caught in that web,” Monroe said.

As a teenager, Clark was very aware of power and social hierarchy, she said. She grew up in Newcastle-upon-Tyne, in northern England, the only child in what she called a “quite standard U.K. lower-middle class, ***working class***” household. As a teenager, writing fan fiction was Clark’s main hobby, but she decided after high school to do a yearlong art foundation course, where she made sculpture.

After that, she came down to London to study at the Chelsea College of Art and Design, a school in a well-heeled district of the city. It was a “huge culture shock,” she said, and she lost confidence in making work in the studio. Instead, she found herself “working on original fiction, which I was incorporating into the art stuff,” she said, “almost as if I was a writer on an arts course.”

After graduating in 2016, Clark returned to Newcastle and began to take writing more seriously, meeting weekly with the crime author Matt Wesolowski through a mentorship program organized by the nonprofit [*New Writing North*](https://newwritingnorth.com/).

Wesolowski said that, even then, Clark excelled at depicting “the little corners of life that you feel, but you don’t want to look at.” The pair discussed short stories that Clark had written, one of which became “Boy Parts.”

Around the same time, Clark got a job at [*Mslexia, a magazine for women’s writing*](https://mslexia.co.uk/), where she learned about getting an agent and how publishing works.

“It was a very creatively fruitful time, where I was paid terribly,” Clark said, but it was possible thanks to cheap Newcastle rent, which her partner sometimes subsidized. At 25, she got a book deal with Influx, an independent publishing house, and in 2020 “Boy Parts” came out in Britain. ([*Harper Collins released it in the United States*](https://www.harpercollins.com/products/boy-parts-eliza-clark?variant=40980049854498) this past May.)

When Clark thinks about the “insane lineup of good fortune” at the start of her career, “it almost makes me feel sick,” she said. She now writes full time, and is working on several onscreen projects, including a TV adaptation of “Boy Parts,” and a short story collection, slated for a November 2024 release. After employing unreliable narrators in her first two novels, she said she was experimenting with writing in the third person for a third.

Clark said the author she most wanted to emulate was another alum of the Granta Best Young British Novelists list: Ishiguro. Recently, she had been thinking a lot about the shape of his career, she said, and how varied his output had been.

“That’s ideally what you want: a long career, where all of your books are really different, and no one thinks any of them are bad, and you get lots of awards,” she said, laughing. “That’s really what I’m aiming for.”

PHOTO: Eliza Clark spent much of her late teens and 20s “really, really online,” she said. Now, though, she’s shielding herself from internet reactions in hopes of a long career as a writer. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Charlotte Hadden for The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** September 22, 2023

**End of Document**



[***A 'Really Online' Writer Looks Beyond the Internet***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6972-K9W1-DXY4-X0T4-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

September 21, 2023 Thursday

The New York Times on the Web

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**Section:** Section ; Column 0; The Arts/Cultural Desk

**Length:** 1112 words

**Byline:** By Eleanor Stanford

**Body**

Eliza Clark's debut novel was a hit on TikTok. With her next book, ''Penance,'' she aims for literary longevity over viral success.

When videos about Eliza Clark's debut novel ''Boy Parts'' started going viral on TikTok, she tried to ignore it, at first.

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In Britain, where ''Penance'' was released in July, it was eagerly awaited. A few months earlier, Clark had appeared on the literary magazine Granta's list of Best of Young British Novelists. Released once a decade, the roundup selects 20 promising authors under 40, and has previously tipped names including Zadie Smith; Ian McEwan, who went on to win the Booker Prize; and Kazuo Ishiguro, who in 2017 was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature.

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[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/21/books/eliza-clark-penance.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/21/books/eliza-clark-penance.html)

**Graphic**

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**Load-Date:** September 21, 2023

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[***‘It’s Terrifying’: Residents in Israel’s North Brace for Another Possible Front***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69CD-7121-DXY4-X07W-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

October 11, 2023 Wednesday 23:22 EST

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**Section:** WORLD; middleeast

**Length:** 1250 words

**Byline:** Isabel Kershner

**Highlight:** The Hamas assault on Israel’s south has inspired new levels of fear among the battle-hardened citizens along the country’s northern border with Lebanon, where another group that has clashed with Israel holds forces.

**Body**

The Hamas assault on Israel’s south has inspired new levels of fear among the battle-hardened citizens along the country’s northern border with Lebanon, where another group that has clashed with Israel holds forces.

The villages along Israel’s northern border with Lebanon have become ghost towns, as most of their residents have already gone south. Army reservists have taken their place, on high alert and standing guard at the locked electronic gates of their communities and at new checkpoints along the roads.

Any civilians left in the villages on Wednesday were bracing for the possible opening of a new front. People rushed in and out of the few stores that remain open. With every rumble, eyes darted upward to scan the skies. The atmosphere bristled with fear.

“It’s terrifying,” said Michael Fakin, 33, who distributes newspapers and has lived most of his life in Shlomi, a ***working-class*** town of about 7,000 people close to the border with Lebanon. “It’s nerve-racking even to walk around my neighborhood,” he said, having just made a quick run to the only store that was open “for ice cream and caffeine.”

Around noon on Wednesday, the Lebanese Shiite group Hezbollah took responsibility for firing an anti-tank missile at an Israeli military position at Arab Al Aramshe, an Israeli Bedouin border village in the western Galilee. Israeli aircraft responded by destroying a Hezbollah observation post. At dusk, sirens wailed all along the northern frontier amid rumors of swarms of drones entering Israeli airspace, setting the whole country on edge.

That, the military said, turned out to be a false alarm.

Israelis have long been dreading another war with Hezbollah, which has proved to be a formidable enemy in the past. A taut quiet has prevailed since the last conflict, in 2006, which began with a cross-border raid by Hezbollah and the abduction of two Israeli soldiers. It ended a month later, with some 165 Israelis dead, and more than 1,000 dead on the Lebanese side.

The expectation has been that Israel’s next all-out war would start here. Security officials have been warning for years that [*Hezbollah*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/11/world/middleeast/israel-lebanon-hezbollah-hamas.html), an Iranian-backed group, has stockpiled tens of thousands of rockets and missiles, and that the next round of fighting could involve Hezbollah commandos infiltrating Israeli territory and capturing a village or two. Over the years, Israel has invested in bolstering its northern border defenses, building long concrete walls and digging deep ravines.

The surprise, however, came on Saturday when the Palestinian group Hamas, which controls Gaza, breached Israel’s southwestern border with the Palestinian enclave, overrunning about two dozen Israeli villages and towns, killing at least 1,200 civilians and soldiers, and taking scores back to Gaza as hostages.

The horrors of that day, the deadliest in Israel’s history, have only inspired new levels of anxiety among Israel’s battle-hardened citizens of the north, who worry about a similar fate.

Hamas has called on its allies to open a multi-front war against Israel. The Israeli government and President Biden have warned Hezbollah to stay out of the fray. The decision of the Biden administration to deploy an aircraft carrier strike group in the eastern Mediterranean and other assets in the region is a signal, experts say, to Hezbollah’s leader, Hassan Nasrallah, that he would be taking on more than Israel if he joined in the conflict.

But after [*the colossal failure of Israeli intelligence and military preparedness*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/10/world/middleeast/israel-gaza-security-failure.html#:~:text=Israel's%20military%20and%20espionage%20services,defenses%20in%20half%20a%20century.) on Saturday, few Israelis are complacent about Mr. Nasrallah’s calculations.

In addition to the events on Wednesday, Israeli forces on Tuesday thwarted gunmen from Lebanon near Arab Al Aramshe. Three Israeli soldiers were killed in the firefight, including a senior commander.

In such a jittery environment, any miscalculation by either side, experts say, could set off all-out war even if that was not the intention. In the meantime, Hezbollah’s steady drumbeat of provocations both signals solidarity with Hamas, and forces Israel to concentrate significant military resources in the north.

In Adamit, a small kibbutz, or collective village, up a winding road with corkscrew turns a few minutes’ drive from Arab Al Aramshe, there wasn’t a living soul in sight on Wednesday other than a force of reserve troops and a cat lazing under a car.

From the top of this wooded mountain, with spectacular panoramic views, a border wall can be seen looping in S-shapes along the hills, making it difficult to tell at times which side is Israel and which Lebanon.

In 2018, Israeli forces found a tunnel here, one of six that Hezbollah had built under the border and that Israel exposed. The area has historically been prone to terrorist infiltrations. In the 1970s and 1980s armed Palestinian groups took hostages, and killed adults and children in several shocking assaults on towns here.

Moshe Davidovich, the local council head, said on Wednesday that 80 percent of the residents living within four kilometers of the border had already evacuated voluntarily. Many have gone to the houses of relatives or friends, or to hotels in safer parts of the country.

“They went wherever they possibly could to get as far away from the border,” said David Vaknin, 70, from Shomera, another small border village, who had come to Shlomi to stock up on medications from the only pharmacy still open in the area.

He and his wife had not evacuated, he said, because they have a farm and animals to care for.

Most of the residents of Arab Al Aramshe have also gone. “I’m afraid for my children,” said Awni Ali, 29, speaking by telephone from his wife’s family’s village, Sheikh Danun, a bit further south, where they were sheltering.

But some young men have remained in Arab Al Aramshe, where an Israeli flag flies on a pole at the entrance of the village. They called for the state to arm them, or at least those who have performed military service, saying they wanted to defend their homes, or alternatively, for the authorities to send buses to take them to a hotel.

“He hates us, and we hate him,” Ahmad Mahamid, 20, a student who stayed behind, said of Mr. Nasrallah, explaining why the village would be a target.

“It’s frightening but we have nowhere to go,” Yazid Ali, 21, a cousin, added.

Mr. Davidovich, the council head, said thousands of older homes in the area lacked their own fortified safe rooms to protect people from incoming rocket fire when sirens go off — a situation he has been sounding the alarm about for years, he said. The council has organized the evacuation of Shlomi’s older residents, who find it difficult to run to public shelters.

Some residents said they were hoping that Hezbollah would stay out of the fray and that quiet would soon be restored.

But others saw the recent provocations and the Hamas assault as an opportunity for Israel to deal a blow to the menacing enemy to the north, whose positions are clearly visible from their bedroom windows.

“My dream is that there won’t be any more Hezbollah or Hamas, and that we will be able to walk across the border and have coffee with our neighbors,” said Juliette Levy, 48. “The quiet,” she said, “will come after the blow.”

PHOTOS: The town of Shlomi, above, along Israel’s northern border with Lebanon, has seen most of its residents flee to the south. Army reservists, some with Israeli tanks, left, have taken their place. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY THOMAS COEX/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE — GETTY IMAGES; ARIEL SCHALIT/ASSOCIATED PRESS) This article appeared in print on page A11.

**Load-Date:** October 11, 2023

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[***Trump Flails. America Is Still Feverish.***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:672H-XT11-DXY4-X110-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

December 11, 2022 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section SR; Column 0; Editorial Desk; Pg. 2; NICHOLAS KRISTOF

**Length:** 901 words

**Byline:** By Nicholas Kristof

**Body**

Has America's fever broken?

An optimist could make a case. Donald Trump, the central figure in America's febrile ailment, was further tarnished this past week, including by the conviction of his company for fraud. Trump wasn't personally in the dock, but his reputation was -- and the fraud involved checks he personally signed.

Meanwhile, the Senate Republican candidate whom Trump anointed in Georgia was defeated on Tuesday. That came after a midterm election in which some prominent Trump-backed candidates were trounced.

Trump's willingness to socialize with Nazi sympathizers and his calls for a suspension of the Constitution also suggest that he is marching into extremist territory in a way that may leave him marginalized and less of a threat to the country. My own bet is that in the next presidential term from 2025 to 2029, there's more chance that Trump's federal housing will involve a prison than the White House.

But I may be wrong -- and I worry that it's premature to argue that the national fever has broken. We as a nation still face arguably the greatest peril since the end of Reconstruction, for three reasons.

First, remember that this extremism goes beyond Trump and even beyond the United States. Italy has just installed a far-right prime minister whose party has its roots in neo-fascism, a reminder that the fever persists globally.

Second, even when Trump broke bread with Holocaust-deniers and then urged a suspension of the Constitution, congressional Republicans mostly looked the other way. When leaders of one of our major political parties struggle to defend the Constitution or condemn neo-Nazis, America still feels feverish.

Third and most fundamentally, our political dysfunction is driven in complex ways by a broader economic and social dysfunction and despair, one that we fail to grapple with effectively.

A few metrics of our national crisis:

We are now losing roughly 300,000 Americans a year to drugs, alcohol and suicide in ''deaths of despair.'' The social fabric of innumerable families and countless communities (including my own) has been unraveling.

About one in seven prime-age men (ages 25 to 54), historically the pillar of the American labor force, are not working today. We don't fully understand why, but it's not because jobs don't exist -- there are 1.7 job openings for each unemployed worker.

Life expectancy for a newborn boy in Mississippi appears to be shorter than for a newborn boy in Bangladesh.

When so many adults are struggling, the problems are transmitted to the next generation. Every 19 minutes, a child is born with a dependence on opioids, and one in eight American children is growing up with a parent with a substance use disorder.

The coronavirus pandemic also seems to have aggravated loneliness and mental health problems, even as it has led to shortages of frontline workers to help them. Children suffering mental health crises are sometimes housed for days or weeks in hospital emergency rooms because there are no other beds available.

One doctor told me of a troubled 15-year-old boy in Oregon who was kept for two months in emergency rooms, and then finally shipped to New Jersey when a bed opened up there.

The problems are far from hidden, even if we don't fully understand the connections or pathologies. Walk by a homeless encampment in Portland or San Francisco, or visit a neonatal ward in West Virginia where newborn babies are crying because of a dependency on opioids, or chat with Idahoans who believe that leading Democrats are part of a Satanic cult trafficking in babies.

We may not full understand how socio-economic crises build support for conspiracy theories and for authoritarian leaders, but the linkage isn't new. That's part of the story of the rise of fascism in Germany, Italy and Spain between the world wars. The great social philosopher Erich Fromm described in his masterwork, ''Escape from Freedom,'' how a people buffeted by insecurity and social isolation may turn to authoritarianism, with the promise of greatness and a path of certainty.

We in journalism pay close attention to politics. But I don't think we pay sufficient attention to the larger social problems that shape ideology or, as today, drive authoritarianism and extremism. While support for authoritarian candidates is particularly pronounced in the white ***working class***, it has also gained ground among ***working-class*** people of color.

People have agency, of course, and none of this is to excuse either the extremism or the bigotry that often escorts it. But if we want to solve problems in the political world, it may help to recognize that in the United States, in Italy, in Britain, the problems begin upstream from politics. They begin upstream even from Donald Trump. And unless we tackle them more seriously -- I would suggest investments in early childhood, in education, in mental health, in fighting addiction -- I fear we won't resolve either our social mess or our political one.

So I'd like to say that the fever is broken, but that seems premature. We can't confidently heal America's body politic unless we do a better job treating our nation's broader social and economic dysfunction.

The Times is committed to publishing a diversity of letters to the editor. We'd like to hear what you think about this or any of our articles. Here are some tips. And here's our email: [*letters@nytimes.com*](mailto:letters@nytimes.com)

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2022/12/10/opinion/trump-politics-despar.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/12/10/opinion/trump-politics-despar.html)

**Graphic**

This article appeared in print on page SR2.

**Load-Date:** December 11, 2022

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[***Trump Struggles, but America Is Still Feverish; Nicholas Kristof***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:672B-3B71-JBG3-62H1-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

December 10, 2022 Saturday 16:58 EST

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 902 words

**Byline:** Nicholas Kristof

**Highlight:** To heal the body politic, we must cure our socioeconomic crisis.

**Body**

Has America’s fever broken?

An optimist could make a case. Donald Trump, the central figure in America’s febrile ailment, was further tarnished this past week, including by the conviction of his company for fraud. Trump wasn’t personally in the dock, but his reputation was — and the fraud [*involved*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/12/06/nyregion/trump-org-verdict-guilty.html) checks he personally signed.

Meanwhile, the Senate Republican candidate whom Trump anointed in Georgia was defeated on Tuesday. That came after a midterm election in which some prominent Trump-backed candidates were trounced.

Trump’s willingness to socialize with Nazi sympathizers and his calls for a suspension of the Constitution also suggest that he is marching into extremist territory in a way that may leave him marginalized and less of a threat to the country. My own bet is that in the next presidential term from 2025 to 2029, there’s more chance that Trump’s federal housing will involve a prison than the White House.

But I may be wrong — and I worry that it’s premature to argue that the national fever has broken. We as a nation still face arguably the greatest peril since the end of Reconstruction, for three reasons.

First, remember that this extremism goes beyond Trump and even beyond the United States. Italy has just installed a far-right prime minister whose party has its roots in neo-fascism, a reminder that the fever persists globally.

Second, even when Trump broke bread with Holocaust deniers and then urged a suspension of the Constitution, congressional Republicans mostly looked the other way. When leaders of one of our major political parties struggle to defend the Constitution or condemn neo-Nazis, America still feels feverish.

Third and most fundamentally, our political dysfunction is driven in complex ways by a broader economic and social dysfunction and despair, one that we fail to grapple with effectively.

A few metrics of our national crisis:

* We are now losing roughly 300,000 Americans a year to drugs, alcohol and suicide in “deaths of despair.” The social fabric of innumerable families and countless communities (including [*my own*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/09/opinion/sunday/deaths-despair-poverty.html)) has been unraveling.

1. About [*one-seventh*](https://fred.stlouisfed.org/series/LREM25MAUSA156S) of prime-age men (ages 25 to 54), historically the pillar of the American labor force, are not working today. We don’t fully understand why, but it’s not because jobs don’t exist — there are [*1.7 job openings*](https://www.npr.org/2022/12/02/1140117598/jobs-employment-unemployment-rate-november-workers) for each unemployed worker.
2. Life expectancy for a newborn boy [*in Mississippi*](https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nvsr/nvsr71/nvsr71-02.pdf) appears to be shorter than for a newborn boy [*in Bangladesh*](https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.DYN.LE00.MA.IN?locations=BD).
3. When so many adults are struggling, the problems are transmitted to the next generation. Every [*19 minutes*](https://www.cdc.gov/pregnancy/opioids/data.html), a child is born with a dependence on opioids, and [*one in eight*](https://ncsacw.acf.hhs.gov/topics/parental-substance-use-disorder.aspx) American children is growing up with a parent with a substance use disorder.

The coronavirus pandemic also seems to have aggravated loneliness and mental health problems, even as it has led to shortages of frontline workers to help them. Children suffering from mental health crises are sometimes [*housed*](https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2021/06/23/1005530668/kids-mental-health-crisis-suicide-teens-er-treatment-boarding) for days or weeks in hospital emergency rooms because there are no other beds available.

One doctor told me of a troubled 15-year-old boy in Oregon who was kept for two months in emergency rooms and then finally shipped to New Jersey when a bed opened up there.

The problems are far from hidden, even if we don’t fully understand the connections or pathologies. Walk by a homeless encampment in Portland or San Francisco, or visit a neonatal ward in West Virginia where newborn babies are crying because of a dependency on opioids, or chat with Idahoans who believe that leading Democrats are part of a Satanic cult trafficking in babies.

We may not fully understand how socioeconomic crises build support for conspiracy theories and for authoritarian leaders, but the linkage isn’t new. That’s part of the story of the rise of fascism in Germany, Italy and Spain between the world wars. The great social philosopher Erich Fromm described in his masterwork, “Escape from Freedom,” how a people buffeted by insecurity and social isolation may turn to authoritarianism, with the promise of greatness and a path of certainty.

We in journalism pay close attention to politics. But I don’t think we pay sufficient attention to the larger social problems that shape ideology or, as today, drive authoritarianism and extremism. While support for authoritarian candidates is particularly pronounced in the white ***working class***, it has also [*gained ground*](https://www.politico.com/news/2022/11/13/latino-voters-midterm-elections-republicans-00066618) among ***working-class*** people of color.

People have agency, of course, and none of this is to excuse either the extremism or the bigotry that often escorts it. But if we want to solve problems in the political world, it may help to recognize that in the United States, in Italy, in Britain, the problems begin upstream from politics. They begin upstream even from Donald Trump. And unless we tackle them more seriously — I would suggest investments in early childhood, in education, in mental health, in fighting addiction — I fear we won’t resolve either our social mess or our political one.

So I’d like to say that the fever is broken, but that seems premature. We can’t confidently heal America’s body politic unless we do a better job treating our nation’s broader social and economic dysfunction.

The Times is committed to publishing [*a diversity of letters*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/01/31/opinion/letters/letters-to-editor-new-york-times-women.html) to the editor. We’d like to hear what you think about this or any of our articles. Here are some [*tips*](https://help.nytimes.com/hc/en-us/articles/115014925288-How-to-submit-a-letter-to-the-editor). And here’s our email: [*letters@nytimes.com*](mailto:letters@nytimes.com).

This article appeared in print on page SR2.

**Load-Date:** December 11, 2022

**End of Document**



[***With Confidence, and Glitter, Labour’s Leader Vows to Rebuild Britain***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69C5-VBW1-JBG3-62DD-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

October 10, 2023 Tuesday 07:50 EST

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**Section:** WORLD; europe

**Length:** 1234 words

**Byline:** Mark Landler and Stephen CastleMark Landler is the London bureau chief of The Times, covering the United Kingdom, as well as American foreign policy in Europe, Asia and the Middle East. He has been a journalist for more than three decades.

**Highlight:** Keir Starmer, the leader of the U.K. opposition, brushed off an unexpected onstage protest to make a pitch that his party could rebuild the country after 13 years of Conservative rule.

**Body**

Keir Starmer, the leader of the U.K. opposition, brushed off an unexpected onstage protest to make a pitch that his party could rebuild the country after 13 years of Conservative rule.

Buoyed by the polls and brimming with confidence, the leader of Britain’s opposition Labour Party, Keir Starmer, declared on Tuesday that he was ready to assume the mantle of power. But first he had to shake the glitter off his suit jacket.

As Mr. Starmer took the stage at his party’s annual conference in Liverpool, he was interrupted by a protester who rushed up behind him and showered him with green and blue glitter. It took a full seven seconds for security guards to run onstage and tackle the man, who shouted, “Politics needs an update!”

Taken aback but not thrown off his stride, Mr. Starmer shed his jacket, rolled up his shirt sleeves, and tried to turn the spectacle into an object lesson about the transformed party he now led.

“Protest or power,” he said, referring to Labour’s lengthy stint in opposition. “That’s why we changed our party.”

After the police dragged the protester from the stage, Mr. Starmer vowed to rebuild a Britain that he said had been broken by 13 years of Conservative rule, a project that he suggested would take two terms — a decade — in government.

“What is broken can be repaired; what is ruined can be rebuilt; wounds do heal,” Mr. Starmer said to a cheering crowd. “Today we turn the page, answer the question ‘why Labour?’ with a plan” for what he grandly proclaimed a “decade of national renewal.”

He offered no new announcements, but outlined an ambitious commitment to change planning laws to help build 1.5 million new houses, add more police officers, and overhaul the ailing National Health Service. He also promised to end preferential tax treatment for residents of Britain with non-domiciled status — a [*longstanding Labour goal*](https://ifs.org.uk/articles/unknown-quantities-labours-non-dom-proposal) but one with particular relevance given that the wealthy wife of Prime Minister Rishi Sunak, Akshata Murty, [*claimed that status*](https://ifs.org.uk/articles/unknown-quantities-labours-non-dom-proposal) until last year.

For Mr. Starmer, 61, an intense, serious-minded but charisma-challenged former prosecutor, the conference was vivid evidence of how far he has been able to pull his party out of the wilderness since he took over as leader after Labour’s crushing defeat in the general election in 2019, its worst performance since 1935.

Once torn by divisions between its hard-left and centrist factions, Labour projected near-lockstep unity in Liverpool, with little of the backbiting or protests that used to interrupt its gatherings. Once contaminated by [*anti-Semitism in its far-left ranks*](https://ifs.org.uk/articles/unknown-quantities-labours-non-dom-proposal) under Mr. Starmer’s predecessor, Jeremy Corbyn, the party this week expressed robust support for Israel in the aftermath of the bloody incursions into Israeli territory by Hamas fighters.

“I utterly condemn the senseless murder of men, women and children — including British citizens — in cold blood by the terrorists of Hamas,” Mr. Starmer said, to a standing ovation.

Except for a handful of activists waving Palestinian flags outside the conference hall, there was little evidence of the rancorous battles over the Middle East that used to rage at these gatherings.

Since becoming leader in 2020, Mr. Starmer has taken a “zero tolerance” approach to anti-Semitism, including purging Mr. Corbyn, who now sits as an independent lawmaker and will not be allowed to run as a Labour candidate in the next election.

At a panel on Palestinian rights held on the sidelines, the mood was cautious and subdued. Chris Hoyle, the director of the Council for Arab-British Understanding, warned the audience he would not tolerate “shouting and screaming.”

Labour’s [*decisive victory*](https://ifs.org.uk/articles/unknown-quantities-labours-non-dom-proposal) in a Scottish parliamentary election on Friday contributed to a sense of hopefulness, even inevitability, among the party faithful.

In a speech on Monday, Rachel Reeves, who leads economic policy for the party, [*said*](https://ifs.org.uk/articles/unknown-quantities-labours-non-dom-proposal) she looked forward to addressing the next conference as Britain’s first female chancellor of the Exchequer. She won a video endorsement from the former governor of the Bank of England, Mark Carney.

“You cannot trust the Tories with our economy ever again,” Ms. Reeves declared, pointing to the markets chaos that followed [*Liz Truss’s brief stint*](https://ifs.org.uk/articles/unknown-quantities-labours-non-dom-proposal) in office as prime minister last year.

Yet some worried that Labour’s confidence risked edging into hubris. While the party has an 18 percentage point lead over the Conservatives in polls, analysts warned that this lead is fragile, having to do more with voter frustration with the Tories than excitement about Labour.

Mr. Starmer has not reached anything like the levels of popularity that Tony Blair, another Labour leader, achieved before his landslide election victory in 1997. [*According to one recent survey*](https://ifs.org.uk/articles/unknown-quantities-labours-non-dom-proposal), only a quarter of those asked said they were very or fairly clear about what Mr. Starmer stands for.

That partly reflects his decision to abandon some of the pledges on which he ran for the party’s leadership in 2020, including the nationalization of public services like water, energy and rail companies.

Mr. Starmer has also struggled to project a clear image to British voters. Opponents in the Conservative Party like to refer to his full title, “Sir” Keir Starmer, which he received for his “services to law and criminal justice” in 2014, but which they use to cast the Labour leader as a member of the elite.

On Tuesday, he played up his ***working-class*** roots, talking about how he was raised by his father, a toolmaker and his mother, a nurse. And he recalled how his dreams were incubated in his family’s semidetached house in Surrey, not far from London.

“That pebble-dashed semi was everything to my family,” he said.

The lineup of Labour speakers — all singing from the same song sheet — underscored Mr. Starmer’s ironclad control over the party. It contrasted starkly with last week’s Conservative Party conference, where Ms. Truss and an ambitious home secretary, Suella Braverman, seemed to be competing openly with Mr. Sunak to be the future of the party.

Mr. Starmer has moved swiftly to take control of Labour’s power structures, junking most of the polices of Mr. Corbyn, the most left-wing leader of the party in decades.

With the party under his thumb, he has developed a warm relationship with Mr. Blair and brought his former aides back into the fold. One of them, Peter Mandelson, a member of the House of Lords, said Britain’s economic woes would present a huge challenge for Mr. Starmer, if he wins power.

“The country is in a state of pessimism bordering on depression at the state of politics, given everything we have gone through in recent years,” Mr. Mandelson said. “He’s got to give them hope mixed with realism.”

Mr. Starmer struck that balance, warning that a Labour victory in 2024 would require equaling the achievements of great Labour victories in 1945, when a Labour government rebuilt Britain after World War II; 1964, when it modernized Britain’s sclerotic economy; and 1997, when Mr. Blair set about fixing crumbling public services.

“Britain can, Britain must, and Britain will get its future back,” Mr. Starmer said, the glitter sparkling in his hair. He received a rapturous ovation from the activists of his rejuvenated party.

PHOTO: Keir Starmer was showered in glitter as he took to the stage to deliver a speech on the third day of the Labour Party conference. (PHOTOGRAPH BY CHRISTOPHER FURLONG/GETTY IMAGES) This article appeared in print on page A5.

**Load-Date:** December 31, 2024

**End of Document**



[***‘You don’t know how much you fuel me,’ Adams says in victory speech.***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:640J-24V1-DXY4-X37J-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

November 2, 2021 Tuesday 00:39 EST

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**Section:** NYREGION

**Length:** 498 words

**Byline:** Jeffery C. Mays

**Highlight:** Eric Adams promised to focus on the communities of color and the ***working-class*** and poor residents he said had carried him to victory.

**Body**

Eric Adams promised to focus on the communities of color and the ***working-class*** and poor residents he said had carried him to victory.

Eric Adams claimed victory as New York City’s second Black mayor on Tuesday night and promised to unite the city while focusing his administration on the communities of color and the ***working-class*** and poor residents he said had carried him to success.

“New York has chosen one of its own,” Mr. Adams said. “I am you.”

Just 17 minutes after the polls closed, Ingrid Lewis-Martin, one of Mr. Adams’s top aides, ran onstage at the Marriott in Brooklyn and shouted, “We won,” doubling over as if in disbelief.

But the outcome of the election was never much in question. Mr. Adams, 61, easily triumphed over Curtis Sliwa, the founder of the Guardian Angels patrol group and a radio host.

Gov. Kathy Hochul joined Mr. Adams onstage in the middle of his speech.

In a show of where he intends to focus his administration, Mr. Adams’s remarks were preceded by a performance from a group of young people of color from the Devora Dance Center in Jamaica, Queens. They performed to “Empire State of Mind” by Jay-Z and Alicia Keys and the sounds of African drummers.

Mr. Adams made his way to the stage by walking through the center of the crowd, and hugged his brother onstage before greeting supporters.

“You don’t know how much you fuel me,” Mr. Adams said, explaining that he rejected the recommendation of advisers to enter from the back of the stage.

Mr. Adams said it was neighborhoods like those in southeast Queens, where he grew up, that now needed his attention the most.

During his victory speech, Mr. Adams, as he did throughout the primary and general election, leaned on his biography: The teen who was beaten by the police and sat in the station house will now be in charge of the precinct. The child who had a learning disability and struggled in school will now be in charge of educating one million students.

“This is about carving out a pathway so people can enjoy the prosperity this city has to offer,” Mr. Adams said.

Mr. Adams said he would also reach out to the business community to help the city recover from the pandemic, crime and economic difficulties that people are experiencing. He also promised not just to “talk about safety” but to “have safety” in the city.

His victory comes 32 years after David N. Dinkins was elected the city’s first Black mayor.

“It’s been a long time,” said J. Phillip Thompson, a deputy mayor for strategic policy initiatives under Mayor Bill de Blasio, who also worked as an aide to Mr. Dinkins.

Mr. Thompson said he was optimistic that Mr. Adams could live up to his promises to help the city’s most vulnerable.

“There is an opportunity to tackle poverty and racial equality,” Mr. Thompson said. “More importantly, Eric Adams understands the opportunity is there.”

PHOTO: “New York has chosen one of its own,” Eric Adams said on election night. “I am you.” (PHOTOGRAPH BY James Estrin/The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** November 3, 2021

**End of Document**



[***Anderson and Haynes To Compete at Cannes***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6815-75W1-JBG3-62BM-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

April 15, 2023 Saturday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section C; Column 0; The Arts/Cultural Desk; Pg. 4

**Length:** 585 words

**Byline:** By Alex Marshall

**Body**

More than 50 movies will be screened at the event, including Johnny Depp's first major film since a defamation trial and Martin Scorsese's latest epic.

Movies by Wes Anderson, Todd Haynes and Ken Loach will compete for the Palme d'Or at this year's Cannes Film Festival, the event's organizers announced during a news conference on Thursday.

Also in the running for the festival's top prize will be films by the returning winners Wim Wenders, Hirokazu Kore-eda, Nuri Bilge Ceylan and Nanni Moretti.

But Martin Scorsese will not compete at the festival, which opens May 16 and runs through May 27. Instead, his eagerly anticipated movie ''Killers of the Flower Moon,'' which stars Leonardo DiCaprio and is about the murder of Osage Indians in 1920s Oklahoma, will appear out of competition. Thierry Frémaux, Cannes's artistic director, said during Thursday's news conference that the festival wanted ''Killers of the Flower Moon'' to play in competition, but Scorsese had turned him down.

The Wes Anderson picture in competition is ''Asteroid City,'' about a space cadet convention that is interrupted by aliens; Todd Haynes will show ''May December,'' starring Natalie Portman and Julianne Moore, which follows an actress researching the woman she is set to play.

Ken Loach, whose movies focused on ***working-class*** life in Britain have twice won the Palme d'Or, will present ''The Old Oak,'' about Syrian refugees arriving in an economically depressed English mining town.

A jury led by the Swedish director Ruben Ostlund will choose the winner. Ostlund won last year's Palme d'Or for ''Triangle of Sadness,'' a satire of the international superrich; he also took the 2017 award for ''The Square,'' a sendup of the art world.

Of the 19 titles in competition, five are directed by women, including the Cannes veterans Jessica Hausner and Alice Rohrwacher, and Ramata-Toulaye Sy, a French-Senegalese newcomer.

Many of the highest profile titles at this year's event will be shown out of competition. The festival will open with ''Jeanne du Barry,'' a period drama about a poor woman who becomes a lover of King Louis XV of France. It stars Johnny Depp in his first major role since he won a defamation trial against his ex-wife Amber Heard.

Other high-profile movies scheduled to premiere at Cannes's 76th edition include ''Indiana Jones and the Dial of Destiny,'' directed by James Mangold -- the final movie in the Harrison Ford adventure series about a globe-trotting archaeology professor -- and Pedro Almodóvar's ''Strange Way of Life,'' the Spanish director's second movie in English. Starring Ethan Hawke and Pedro Pascal, that movie is a short western about a reunion between two hit men.

Wim Wenders, the German director who won the 1984 Palme d'Or for ''Paris, Texas,'' has two films in the official selection. In the main competition, he will show ''Perfect Days,'' which Frémaux said was about a janitor in Japan who drives between jobs listening to rock music. Out of competition, Wenders will show a 3-D documentary about Anselm Kiefer, one of Germany's most revered artists.

Frémaux said that over 2,000 movies were submitted for the festival, although only 52 made Thursday's selection. Of those, one other notable title is Steve McQueen's ''Occupied City,'' about Amsterdam under the Nazis. Frémaux said that McQueen, the director of ''12 Years a Slave'' and ''Widows,'' had made a ''very radical'' film that was several hours long. But, Frémaux added, watching it, ''you won't fall asleep.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/04/13/movies/cannes-film-festival-lineup-2023.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/04/13/movies/cannes-film-festival-lineup-2023.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: The director Wes Anderson at Cannes in 2021. (PHOTOGRAPH BY VADIM GHIRDA/ASSOCIATED PRESS) This article appeared in print on page C4.

**Load-Date:** April 15, 2023

**End of Document**



[***14 New Books Coming in August***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68TB-JKS1-JBG3-60YG-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

July 28, 2023 Friday 07:53 EST

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**Section:** BOOKS; review

**Length:** 897 words

**Byline:** The New York Times Books Staff

**Highlight:** Novels from Ann Patchett and James McBride, a biography of the Chinese American movie star Anna May Wong and a handful of edgy thrillers — including one about a scuba driver swallowed by a whale.

**Body**

Novels from Ann Patchett and James McBride, a biography of the Chinese American movie star Anna May Wong and a handful of edgy thrillers — including one about a scuba driver swallowed by a whale.

[*Anansi’s Gold: The Man Who Looted the West, Outfoxed Washington, and Swindled the World*](https://www.bloomsbury.com/us/anansis-gold-9781635574739/), by Yepoka Yeebo

The story of John Ackah Blay-Miezah, a prolifically successful swindler who took advantage of Ghana’s political instability to create one of the most lucrative scams in the world during the 1970s and ’80s.

Bloomsbury, Aug. 1

[*Tom Lake*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/07/30/books/review/ann-patchett-tom-lake.html), by Ann Patchett

Patchett’s new novel explores a shimmer of the silver lining around pandemic lockdowns: Family stories finally got their due because nobody had anything to do but listen. In “Tom Lake,” three daughters hear the unabridged version of their mother’s long-ago relationship with a famous actor while picking cherries in their Michigan orchard.

Harper, Aug. 1

[*The Visionaries: Arendt, Beauvoir, Rand, Weil, and the Power of Philosophy in Dark Times*](https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/669211/the-visionaries-by-wolfram-eilenberger/), by Wolfram Eilenberger; translated by Shaun Whiteside

Think of this as the companion to Eilenberger’s previous book, “[*Time of the Magicians*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/04/books/review/time-of-the-magicians-wolfram-eilenberger.html?searchResultPosition=1),” about four male philosophers who helped reinvent their discipline in the 1920s. Here Eilenberger considers four equally distinguished female thinkers, who, during the grim years between 1933 and 1943, developed cogent moral visions for a free society in light of the growing authoritarian threat.

Penguin Press, Aug. 1

[*Waiting to Be Arrested at Night: A Uyghur Poet’s Memoir of China’s Genocide*](https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/708470/waiting-to-be-arrested-at-night-by-tahir-hamut-izgil-translation-and-introduction-by-joshua-l-freeman/), by Tahir Hamut Izgil; translated by Joshua L. Freeman

A prominent Uyghur poet, Izgil fled China with his family in 2017. His understated memoir, among the first such accounts available in English, recounts with poetic restraint the increasingly brutal treatment of a Chinese ethnic minority at the hands of a state that uses mass detentions, interrogations, surveillance, even torture to suppress dissent.

Penguin Press, Aug. 1

[*Whalefall*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/07/30/books/review/daniel-kraus-whalefall.html), by Daniel Kraus

A horror-tinged thriller that asks, can a scuba diver inadvertently swallowed alive by a 60-ton sperm whale escape before his oxygen runs out?

MTV Books, Aug. 8

[*Witness: Stories*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/07/31/books/review/witness-jamel-brinkley.html), by Jamel Brinkley

At the core of Brinkley’s sophomore collection lies a question: What does it mean to be a witness? Through 10 stories, Brinkley explores how perceiving and being perceived shape our lives, our relationships and our communities.

Farrar, Straus &amp; Giroux, Aug. 1

[*The Heaven &amp; Earth Grocery Store*](https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/691602/the-heaven-and-earth-grocery-store-by-james-mcbride/), by James McBride

McBride returns with a murder mystery set in Chicken Hill, a vibrant Black and Jewish neighborhood in Pottstown, Pa. The novel opens in 1972, when workers unearth skeletal remains in a well; then travels back to the 1920s and ’30s to unspool the tale of what transpired.

Riverhead, Aug. 8

[*Pet*](https://www.europaeditions.com/book/9781609459307/pet), by Catherine Chidgey

In this twisted psychological thriller, a 12-year-old Catholic school student in 1980s New Zealand grows increasingly enamored of her glamorous and alluring new teacher, even as her class becomes the target of a series of mysterious thefts.

Europa, Aug. 8

[*August Wilson: A Life*](https://www.simonandschuster.com/books/August-Wilson/Patti-Hartigan/9781501180668), by Patti Hartigan

Hartigan drew on personal interviews for this biography of the Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright, a poetic chronicler of Black American life [*who died in 2005*](https://www.nytimes.com/2005/10/03/theater/newsandfeatures/august-wilson-theaters-poet-of-black-america-is-dead-at-60.html). The book traces his formative years in ***working-class*** Pittsburgh, the creation of his 10-play Century Cycle and his role in [*debates*](https://www.nytimes.com/1997/01/29/theater/face-to-face-encounter-on-race-in-the-theater.html) over race and representation in the theater.

Simon &amp; Schuster, Aug. 15

[*The Bee Sting*](https://us.macmillan.com/books/9780374600303/thebeesting), by Paul Murray

Murray’s latest is a comedy of errors, emphasis on both the comedy and the errors. The novel follows the reversal of fortunes of the Barnes family, a decline sparked by the Irish financial crash, yes, but perhaps set in motion by fateful moments in the family’s past.

Farrar, Straus &amp; Giroux, Aug. 15

[*Daughter of the Dragon: Anna May Wong’s Rendezvous With American History*](https://wwnorton.com/books/9781631495809), by Yunte Huang

Huang, the author of a biography of Charlie Chan and another book about the conjoined twins Chang and Eng, now recounts the life of the Chinese American movie star Anna May Wong, who was born in Los Angeles in 1905. Wong went on to appear in more than 60 films — an astonishing number, given the few roles afforded nonwhite actors in the early decades of the 20th century.

Liveright, Aug. 22

[*The Breakaway*](https://www.simonandschuster.com/books/The-Breakaway/Jennifer-Weiner/9781668033425), by Jennifer Weiner

Before marrying her childhood sweetheart, a 34-year-old woman agrees to lead a group cycling trip from New York City to Niagara Falls — a journey that’s as much about self-discovery as it is about exploring new territory on two wheels.

Atria, Aug. 29

[*Everything/Nothing/Someone: A Memoir*](https://www.spiegelandgrau.com/everything/nothing/someone), by Alice Carrière

Raised in a household divided between “massive” residences in New York City and Paris — her parents, the conceptual artist Jennifer Bartlett and the German actor Mathieu Carrière, divorced when she was 6 — the author chronicles her downward spiral into depression, her institutionalizations and her dissociations.

Spiegel &amp; Grau, Aug. 29

[*Happiness Falls*](https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/690563/happiness-falls-by-angie-kim/), by Angie Kim

When Mia’s father doesn’t come home from a hike, the person who has answers can’t speak them: Her younger brother, Eugene, the only member of the family with their dad that day, has a genetic condition that makes him nonverbal. Over the course of the investigation, Mia comes into a new appreciation of the difference between language and cognition.

Hogarth, Aug. 29

PHOTO: (PHOTOGRAPH BY FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** September 1, 2023

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[***Lombardo Ousts Sisolak in Nevada Governor’s Race***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:66V8-VS11-DXY4-X45B-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

November 11, 2022 Friday 09:14 EST

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**Section:** US; politics

**Length:** 323 words

**Byline:** Jennifer Medina

**Highlight:** Joseph Lombardo, the Clark County sheriff, ran as a law-and-order Republican who would focus on reducing regulations.

**Body**

Joseph Lombardo, the Clark County sheriff, ran as a law-and-order Republican who would focus on reducing regulations.

LAS VEGAS — Joseph Lombardo, the Clark County sheriff who rose to prominence after the 2017 mass shooting in Las Vegas, defeated Gov. Steve Sisolak of Nevada, a Democrat who faced intense criticism over pandemic-era shutdowns, according to The Associated Press.

Mr. Sisolak conceded to Mr. Lombardo shortly before The A.P. called the race on Friday. “It appears we will fall a percentage point or so short of winning,” he said in a statement. “Obviously that is not the outcome I want, but I believe in our election system, in democracy and honoring the will of Nevada voters. So whether you voted for me or Sheriff Lombardo, it is important that we now come together to continue moving the state forward.”

Mr. Lombardo focused much of his campaign tying Mr. Sisolak to President Biden, who won the state in 2020, but whose approval ratings have been dismal. Mr. Lombardo was endorsed by former President Donald J. Trump during the Republican primary this year, but did not make his policies or personality central to his campaign in the fall.

Instead, Mr. Lombardo presented himself as a law-and-order Republican who would focus on reducing regulations in the state, where the economy remains largely dependent on the gambling industry. Public opinion polls repeatedly showed that voters in Nevada, with a large ***working-class*** population, viewed the economy as the most important issue.

Economic conditions are mixed in the state. Mr. Sisolak often focused on the recovery since the start of the pandemic more than two years ago, as unemployment dropped to 4.4 percent from 28.5 percent in April of 2020. But inflation remains stubbornly high, and Mr. Lombardo consistently attacked what he called “Bidenflation” and high gasoline prices, which he similarly attributed to Democrats.

This article appeared in print on page A13.

**Load-Date:** November 12, 2022

**End of Document**



[***Is the American Dream More Dead Than Alive?; Nonfiction***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69G4-0SY1-DXY4-X0MS-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

October 24, 2023 Tuesday 17:12 EST

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**Section:** BOOKS; review

**Length:** 1449 words

**Byline:** Roger Lowenstein

**Highlight:** In “Ours Was the Shining Future,” the New York Times writer David Leonhardt dissects the country’s record on prosperity, arguing that progressive policies are best suited for achieving our ideals.

**Body**

In “Ours Was the Shining Future,” the New York Times writer David Leonhardt dissects the country’s record on prosperity, arguing that progressive policies are best suited for achieving our ideals.

OURS WAS THE SHINING FUTURE: The Story of the American Dream, by David Leonhardt

David Leonhardt, a senior writer for The New York Times, has written a “biography” of the American dream, specifically — as his title, “Ours Was the Shining Future,” suggests — an account of how the dream has withered and all but died.

His striking contention, based on a [*study of census and income tax data*](https://opportunityinsights.org/paper/the-fading-american-dream/) by the Harvard economist Raj Chetty, is that where once the great majority of Americans could hope to earn more than their parents, now [*only half are likely to*](https://opportunityinsights.org/national_trends/). Although the precise ratio depends on assumptions about inflation, and is less striking, as Chetty notes, when one takes into account shrinking household size, the general point is unquestionable. Economic progress used to define America. Now, Leonhardt finds “stagnation in nearly every reliable measure of well-being.” He arguably overstates the case — for instance, median household income has [*generally continued to rise*](https://fred.stlouisfed.org/series/MEHOINUSA672N) — but the malady he identifies is real.

Leonhardt maintains that over the past 50 years the United States has gone off the rails by moving from a more regulated capitalism to a rough-and-tumble version that is more individualistic and market-centered. This shift, he asserts, has led to greater inequality and — a causal logic that is harder to prove — slower growth.

Leonhardt’s chief culprit is the political system: in a phrase, too many Republicans, and the wrong kind of Republicans. In the 1950s, we had Dwight D. Eisenhower, a nonideological retired general who extended New Deal-era reforms and invested in one of the great infrastructure projects of the century, the national highway system. Business executives of Eisenhower’s era were similarly socially minded. Nurtured by the twin crises of the Depression and World War II, they felt a common purpose with workers, tolerated unions and abided relatively modest executive pay.

Goodbye to all that. Come Ronald Reagan, Republicans traded the country club for the think tank. Conservative intellectuals and judges like Robert Bork (who was both) helped to change the culture and ultimately weakened both federal regulation and federal purpose.

The United States once had the world’s most educated population and an impressive transportation system. Now, we don’t. We also rank near the bottom among developed nations in [*providing pre-K*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/10/06/upshot/child-care-biden.html) classes. “We have drifted from our ideals” of “equality, liberty, opportunity and democracy,” Leonhardt writes, and, beginning in the mid-1970s, “entered a dark new economic era.”

While Leonhardt is a man of progressive sympathies — perhaps because of those sympathies — he devotes plenty of ink to castigating Democrats. He charges them with abandoning bread-and-butter issues like labor unions and the minimum wage for neoliberal causes, such as free trade and unreserved support for immigration. He also laments the party’s deep dive into identity politics, which has alienated ***working-class*** whites. The Democrats have become a party for college people.

Although this argument is familiar, “Ours Was the Shining Future” is not a familiar-feeling book. Leonhardt introduces every section with a historical vignette: A. Philip Randolph organizing train porters and winning raises of up to 30 percent for his union; Secretary of Labor Frances Perkins, the first woman to serve in a presidential cabinet, demanding that Franklin D. Roosevelt fight for unemployment insurance, disability and an eight-hour workday.

Leonhardt has clearly cherry-picked his anecdotes to make his case, but the stories enliven what could have been a dry or data-heavy polemic. They also advance his worldview: Policies and personalities have a great effect on economic progress.

If you think of the economy as something like an ecosystem, in which millions of self-interested agents interact through the medium of price, this is not the book for you. “Ours Was the Shining Future” offers a top-down view of economics. It’s a book about capitalism in which the heavy lifting is done by presidents, progressives and union bosses — not capitalists. In a sort of blue version of MAGA, Leonhardt is nostalgic for the era when C.E.O.s, unions and government officials ran the show. He has kind words not only for Roosevelt’s necessary job and entitlement programs, but also for the New Deal’s [*National Industrial Recovery Act*](https://www.archives.gov/milestone-documents/national-industrial-recovery-act), which mandated industry codes for fixing prices, wages and production quotas — a vast experiment in planning that the Supreme Court mercifully scrapped.

It occurs to Leonhardt only in passing that investors, business people, journalists, retail clerks, stockbrokers and others among the [*85 percent of workers*](https://www.bls.gov/spotlight/2021/occupational-employment-and-wages-in-state-and-local-government/home.htm#:~:text=%E2%80%8B%20Source%3A%20U.S.%20Bureau%20of%20Labor%20Statistics.&amp;text=There%20were%20nearly%20118%20million,million%20jobs%20(10.1%20percent).) in the country’s private sector might contribute to its prosperity, thus this remarkably modest concession: “A progressive agenda, from the political left, is not the only plausible way to lift the living standards of most members of a society.” Well, thanks for that.

Leonhardt is fashionably focused on inequality to the almost total neglect of growth rates (where [*America generally ranks high*](https://www.businessinsider.com/us-economy-doing-way-better-than-rest-of-rich-world-2023-7#:~:text=The%20US%20came%20in%20well,were%20both%20in%20the%20negatives.)). “Living standards here,” he notes, “are vastly higher than in much of the world.” That should count for something, but he repeatedly rates presidents, or their eras, by the yardstick of economic inequality.

What’s missing is a sense that policies to equalize, such as trade barriers, often involve a trade-off — benefits but also costs in the form of lost efficiency. He castigates President Clinton for being a Democratic version of Reagan, in particular for signing a free trade deal. He notes that upper-tier incomes grew more quickly under Clinton than wages at the bottom. Yet [*blue-collar wages notably revived, jobs boomed*](https://washingtonmonthly.com/2022/07/21/the-case-for-bill-clintons-economic-record/) and the country flourished. Would blue-collar workers have given up prosperity in order to see investors suffer?

Clinton’s other sin, according to Leonhardt, is that “he did little to strengthen labor unions.” Leonhardt posits unions as an unqualified blessing, dismissing out of hand, or merely paying lip service to, the possibility that unions might have pushed up wages and benefits — in the automobile industry, say — to the point where their sectors became uncompetitive. And he asserts as received truth that the decline of unions held down wages. It’s also possible (something Leonhardt acknowledges) that as other nations rebuilt, or emerged, after World War II, America’s competitive position naturally diminished. Thus declining union membership may have been more effect than cause.

Leonhardt knows that Americans have “mixed feelings” about labor unions; he had mixed feelings as a member of a union at The Times. His union reps “seemed more interested in getting their own paychecks and reaching retirement than helping their members,” he writes. When he left the union to enter the ranks of management, he felt frustrated by the union’s “resistance to change” at a company “that needed to evolve.” Perhaps it has occurred to him that other companies also need to evolve.

Despite the implication of Leonhardt’s stylized narrative, economic trends such as wages do not always line up neatly with political eras. Real wages, along with union membership, had begun to decline by the early 1970s — well before the cultural triumph of the right in the Reagan years. The economic rebound under Reagan is inconvenient for Leonhardt, who maintains that conservative policies augur ill for growth. He marks down Reagan’s economic performance as less spectacular than that of Roosevelt, John F. Kennedy or Lyndon B. Johnson. Maybe a more apt, and fairer, comparison would have been to Reagan’s immediate (and weaker) predecessors: Nixon, Ford and Carter.

“Ours Was the Shining Future” is an interesting book, with many provocative points, but I found it too tendentious to be the last word on the fate of the American dream. Leonhardt tells us that his book is “for anybody trying to understand how our economy — and, with it, our society — has been hobbled.” He concludes with a discussion of how progressives might win elections in the future. His partisan pitch may put off some of the anybodies he aims to reach.

Roger Lowenstein is the author of “Ways and Means: Lincoln and His Cabinet and the Financing of the Civil War.”

OURS WAS THE SHINING FUTURE: The Story of the American Dream | By David Leonhardt | Random House | 492 pp. | $32

PHOTO: Sanitation workers picketing at a landfill in New Jersey in 1984. (PHOTOGRAPH BY MARILYNN K. YEE/THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page BR18.

**Load-Date:** November 22, 2023

**End of Document**



[***Can Mississippi Have Democratic Governor?***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69K3-CMT1-DXY4-X4SR-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

November 7, 2023 Tuesday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; National Desk; Pg. 18

**Length:** 1574 words

**Byline:** By Rick Rojas

**Body**

With a promise to expand Medicaid and a focus on turning out Black voters, Brandon Presley is confident he can do what no Democrat has done in 20 years.

After stopping by a meet-and-greet in Ridgeland, a porch festival in Vicksburg, the Great Delta Bear Affair in Rolling Fork and an event on a baseball diamond in Yazoo City, Brandon Presley entered a packed room in McComb, launching into the message he believes can get a Democrat -- namely, himself -- elected governor of Mississippi.

He would immediately move to expand Medicaid, which would help resuscitate rural hospitals and provide largely free government health insurance to most low-income adults. He would slash a hated tax on groceries. Above all, he assured the crowd, he would be a very different governor than Tate Reeves, the Republican incumbent, whom he denounced as ensconced in privilege and dented by scandal.

''The fight in politics in Mississippi is not right versus left,'' Mr. Presley, an elected public utilities commissioner and a former mayor of Nettleton, his tiny hometown in northern Mississippi, said in McComb. ''And sometimes, it's not even Democrat versus Republican. It's those of us on the outside versus those of them on the inside.''

Mr. Presley's campaign has been a built on a bet that his human touch and populist platform can forge a coalition of Black and liberal-to-centrist white voters, some disaffected Republicans among them, that is robust enough for him to win. It is a test of a blueprint that Democrats have long relied on, but to diminishing effect in recent decades, as Republicans have tightened their grip on power in Mississippi and most of the South.

Yet Mr. Presley has gained decent momentum -- and with it, the attention of Democrats outside Mississippi. He has raised more than $11 million since January, far outpacing Mr. Reeves, and has used the money to flood television and radio stations with campaign advertisements.

The nonpartisan Cook Political Report recently found that the election had ''morphed into a competitive fight.'' But it also classified the race as ''lean Republican'' -- a splash of cold water underscoring that, no matter how much ground Mr. Presley gains or optimism he has inspired in Southern Democrats, he still faces difficult odds in a state that has not elected a Democratic governor in 24 years.

In the race for governor four years ago, Jim Hood, then the state attorney general and the last Democrat elected to statewide office, was seen as the most viable candidate the party had fielded in Mississippi in more than a decade. Yet he lost to Mr. Reeves by about five percentage points.

Still, Mr. Presley sensed an opening. He believed that Mr. Reeves's shaky popularity ratings, fury over a sprawling scandal involving welfare funds being directed to the pet projects of wealthy and connected Republicans, and dissatisfaction over the state's eternal struggle for prosperity could allow him to accomplish what previous Democratic candidates could not.

If neither candidate wins a majority of the popular vote on Tuesday, the race will go to a runoff on Nov. 28.

Mr. Presley has invested enormous effort in mobilizing Black voters, a crucial bloc in a state where nearly 40 percent of the population is Black. But turning out the rest of the coalition that Mr. Presley needs -- for example, white ***working-class*** voters who might have voted for Mr. Reeves last time -- will be instrumental.

''You can't win if you don't win white crossover votes,'' said Byron D'Andra Orey, a political science professor at Jackson State University.

For months, Mr. Presley has had marathon days ping-ponging across Mississippi, stopping in all 82 counties. He has become a frequent presence at football games on historically Black college campuses, as well as at festivals and small gatherings in community centers.

In each place, he has made the same case: He is not a liberal -- he opposes abortion rights -- and he is certainly no elite. True, Elvis Presley was his second cousin, but a distant relative's fame did nothing to boost his family's fortunes. His mother was left to raise him and his siblings on her own after his father was killed when he was 8.

''I'm white, and I'm country -- it ain't nothing I can do about it,'' Mr. Presley told a mostly Black audience at one campaign stop. ''But I get up every day and go to bed every night trying to pull Mississippi together.''

The state fractures along racial and regional lines, creating a landscape that is anything but homogeneous, even as it tilts heavily in the Republican Party's favor. The western flank, including the flat expanse of farmland in the Delta, votes for Democrats.

Mr. Presley has wagered that one of his goals in particular can unify Democrats and Republicans, Black and many white voters: joining the 40 other states that have expanded Medicaid under the Affordable Care Act. Researchers have forecast that doing so would make the coverage available to roughly 230,000 lower-income adults over six years.

Polls in Mississippi -- where death rates are among the nation's highest for heart disease, stroke, diabetes and cancer -- have indicated overwhelming support.

Mr. Reeves has been adamant in his opposition to expanding Medicaid, pointing to the cost (most of which would be a federal responsibility) and dismissing it as ''welfare.'' In September, he proposed an alternative that, if approved by federal officials, would increase funding for some hospitals but would not provide coverage for the uninsured.

Grant Dowdy, a dentist in Greenville who came to the festival in Rolling Fork, said he was prepared to break a consistent streak of voting for Republicans precisely because of Mr. Presley's support for Medicaid expansion. Mississippi, he said, ''needs to be like every other sensible state in the nation.''

But in such a polarized political climate, where party allegiance often outweighs all else, recruiting enough Republicans to tip the scale toward Mr. Presley may prove impossible.

In 2001, he became the youngest mayor in Mississippi when was elected to lead Nettleton, a city of some 1,900 people in the state's northeast.

Since then, Mr. Presley, 46, has been elected four times to represent a vast swath of northern Mississippi on the state's Public Service Commission, which regulates telecommunications, electric, gas, water and sewer utilities. Colleagues and supporters said the position -- in a district filled with heavily conservative areas -- helped him hone the solicitous approach he is bringing to the governor's race.

Mr. Reeves has cast Mr. Presley as a liberal aligned with President Biden, and his campaign as orchestrated by the national Democratic Party. He has pointed out that most of Mr. Presley's fund-raising haul has come from outside Mississippi.

''Ask yourself: Why are they dropping historic money on Mississippi to flip it blue?'' Mr. Reeves said on social media in October. ''It's because they know Brandon Presley will govern like a liberal Democrat.''

Mr. Reeves is also emphasizing his conservative bona fides, including tax cuts he has signed and a promise to keep pursuing his ambition of eliminating the state income tax.

He has touted the state's unemployment rate, which has fallen to just over 3 percent -- the lowest it has been in decades. He has also campaigned on raises he approved last year for public schoolteachers that were among the largest in state history, amounting to average increase of about $5,100 a year.

Mr. Reeves has also said that his administration is trying to claw back money misspent in the welfare scandal, in which more than $77 million was siphoned from the state's poorest residents to fund projects like one championed by Brett Favre, the former N.F.L. player, to build a volleyball stadium at the University of Southern Mississippi. Mr. Reeves was the state's lieutenant governor at the time.

Mr. Presley knows how to rouse a crowd, evoking a pastor in one moment and insult comic the next. He skewered Mr. Reeves at the candidate forum in McComb to cheers of approval and howling laughter, offering an almost cartoonish depiction of the governor as unfamiliar with and unsympathetic to the hardships facing the working poor.

''Like the pharaoh of old, his heart has turned to stone,'' Mr. Presley said. He also took particular delight in roasting upgrades reportedly made to the governor's mansion, like a special shelter for lemon trees and a pricey ice maker (''It better make that good Sonic ice!'').

At various stops, he has told crowds about a promise to his wife, Katelyn, whom he married just three months ago: If he wins, they will feed the homeless out of the governor's mansion. His concern for the needy, he says, grew out his own experience enduring the turmoil and indignities of poverty.

Some who came out to hear him speak recently said they were drawn to Mr. Presley because his early struggles sounded familiar -- and simply because he was there, reaching out to them.

''Look where he is,'' said Joseph M. Daughtry Sr., the police chief in Columbus, where Mr. Presley had navigated a maze of country highways to speak to a few dozen people at a community center in a poor, largely Black neighborhood.

''We have somebody who understands us,'' Chief Daughtry said. ''Somebody who cares about us. And somebody who is not ashamed of us.''

Mr. Presley walked over to shake his hand.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/06/us/mississippi-governor-brandon-presley.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/06/us/mississippi-governor-brandon-presley.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: Brandon Presley, a gubernatorial candidate in Mississippi, believes he can do what no Democrat has done in decades: get elected. (PHOTOGRAPH BY EMILY KASK FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A18.

**Load-Date:** November 7, 2023

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[***Vance Elected Senator in Ohio; Once Anti-Trump, He Benefited From His Support***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:66TN-CY51-DXY4-X4W4-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

November 8, 2022 Tuesday 12:30 EST

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**Section:** US; politics

**Length:** 310 words

**Byline:** Katie Glueck

**Highlight:** J.D. Vance, the Republican author of “Hillbilly Elegy,” defeated Representative Tim Ryan. Mr. Vance was once a sharp critic of Donald J. Trump but refashioned himself.

**Body**

J.D. Vance, the Republican author of “Hillbilly Elegy,” defeated Representative Tim Ryan. Mr. Vance was once a sharp critic of Donald J. Trump but refashioned himself.

[*J.D. Vance*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/27/us/politics/jd-vance-trump-ohio.html), the Republican author of the book “Hillbilly Elegy,” won his Senate race in Ohio, according to The Associated Press, defeating Representative Tim Ryan, a Democrat who ran an [*attention-grabbing campaign*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/24/us/politics/tim-ryan-ohio-senate.html) as he tried to win back some of the white ***working-class*** voters who had fled his party in the Trump era.

Mr. Vance was once a [*sharp critic of Donald J. Trump*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/08/08/us/politics/jd-vance-trump-ohio.html), but he refashioned himself as a hard-right acolyte of the former president. Mr. Trump [*endorsed Mr. Vance*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/04/15/us/politics/ohio-jd-vance-trump-endorsement.html) during the primary and campaigned for him in the general election. Mr. Vance has questioned the results of the 2020 presidential election and said last week that he “[*won’t run away from it*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/11/01/us/politics/jd-vance-election-results-2020.html).”

He will replace Senator Rob Portman, a Republican who did not run for re-election.

Mr. Vance, who previously worked as a venture capitalist in San Francisco for Peter Thiel, a billionaire founder of PayPal, struggled to connect with voters in Ohio over the summer, maintaining a light campaign presence that worried some Republicans.

But he accelerated his pace this fall, aided by an [*onslaught of outside Republican spending*](https://www.cleveland.com/news/2022/08/national-republican-group-plans-massive-ad-buy-boosting-jd-vance-signaling-deepening-gop-focus-on-ohios-senate-race.html). National Democrats did little to boost Mr. Ryan, whose candidacy was regarded as a long shot in a state that shifted to the right in the Trump era.

Mr. Ryan, a [*prolific fund-raiser,*](https://www.cincinnati.com/story/news/politics/elections/2022/10/17/ohio-senate-race-tim-ryan-outraises-j-d-vance/69536947007/) kept the race competitive as he [*ran as a moderate Democrat*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/24/us/politics/tim-ryan-ohio-senate.html) who frequently broke with his national party.

Mr. Ryan cast Mr. Vance as an [*Ohio outsider*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/08/us/politics/jd-vance-ohio-senate-nonprofit.html) who promoted views far outside the political mainstream. Mr. Vance, for his part, sought to [*tie Mr. Ryan to national Democrats*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/17/us/politics/vance-ryan-ohio-senate-debate-takeaways.html), reflecting the Republican bet that in a midterm election, amid intense voter frustration with the party in power, partisan instincts would prevail.

**Load-Date:** November 9, 2022

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[***Kaptur, a veteran Democrat, defeats Majewski in an Ohio congressional race.***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:66TN-BS31-JBG3-61KX-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

November 8, 2022 Tuesday 23:04 EST

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**Section:** US; politics

**Length:** 310 words

**Byline:** Catie Edmondson

**Highlight:** Marcy Kaptur, the 20-term Democratic congresswoman, won re-election against J.R. Majewski, a far-right Air Force veteran who was found to have misled voters about his service.

**Body**

Marcy Kaptur, the 20-term Democratic congresswoman, won re-election against J.R. Majewski, a far-right Air Force veteran who was found to have misled voters about his service.

Representative Marcy Kaptur of Ohio, the 20-term Democratic congresswoman, won re-election on Tuesday, according to The Associated Press, putting down a challenge from J.R. Majewski, a far-right Air Force veteran who rallied at the Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021, and whose campaign unraveled after he was found to have misled voters about the extent of his military service.

For much of the year, Ms. Kaptur, a [*classic pro-union Democrat and a fixture on the powerful Appropriations Committee*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/04/28/us/politics/labor-unions-ohio-democrats.html), was widely seen to be facing the toughest fight of her long political career, thanks to redistricting that redrew her district to include more conservative voters, as well as rising dissatisfaction with the Democratic Party among ***working-class*** voters without a college degree.

But national Republicans abandoned Mr. Majewski after [*The Associated Press reported in September*](https://apnews.com/article/2022-midterm-elections-afghanistan-ohio-campaigns-e75d2566635f11f49332bd1c46711999) that he had overstated his military service.

Those reports were the final straw for the national groups that had propped Mr. Majewski up in the hopes of flipping a Democratic-held seat. Representative Kevin McCarthy of California, the Republican leader, had earlier campaigned with Mr. Majewski, who attended the Stop the Steal rally at the Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021, with a livestreamer who [*frequently elevates*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/04/27/technology/twitch-livestream-extremists.html) the QAnon conspiracy theory.

Ms. Kaptur, 76, cast herself on the campaign trail as an experienced pragmatist who often worked across party lines.

In her most explicit ad breaking from President Biden, she declared, “I took on Joe Biden for not supporting Ohio energy and manufacturing jobs.”

PHOTO: Representative Marcy Kaptur at the Capitol in September. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Anna Moneymaker/Getty Images FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** November 8, 2022

**End of Document**



[***How to Win Friends and Hustle People***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BJD-S921-DXY4-X00K-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

March 14, 2024 Thursday 22:55 EST

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**Section:** STYLE

**Length:** 4749 words

**Byline:** Joseph Bernstein Joseph Bernstein is a Times reporter who writes feature stories for the Styles section.

**Highlight:** Ashwin Deshmukh built a reputation as a nightlife impresario by burning close friends, new acquaintances, big corporations, local bars and even his subletter.

**Body**

Sometimes, you meet someone in New York who gives you a good feeling and a bad feeling at the same time. Maybe you’re introduced at a bar, through a friend of a friend. This person is charming and full of ideas, ideas that resonate with you. He seems to know everyone you know, and some other people you follow only on social media. You like him, even though you wonder whether he’s for real. He has a story about the city and his place in it, a story in which he may invite you to play a role. This is tempting. You get the sense that he has a momentum unlike other people’s, toward a destination that could be glamorous — or maybe catastrophic.

One such person is Ashwin Deshmukh, the 38-year-old managing partner of Superiority Burger, one of the most acclaimed restaurants in New York.

Since reopening last April, the high-low vegetarian diner in the East Village has garnered a three-star [*review*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/27/dining/restaurant-review-superiority-burger-east-village.html) from The New York Times, a James Beard Award nomination, and the title, bestowed by GQ magazine, of “Buzziest Restaurant in America.” That it took over the space once occupied by the venerable Odessa Restaurant, saving the neighborhood from yet another Duane Reade or Capital One, has made it only more beloved.

But June Kwan, the owner of the East Village Sichuan restaurant Spicy Moon, does not love Superiority Burger — or at least, the people behind the restaurant. In February, she sued them twice. The first suit asserts that since 2021, when Ms. Kwan invested a quarter of a million dollars in Superiority Burger through Mr. Deshmukh, the business has gone dark, refusing to send her proof of her equity, and eventually ignoring her altogether. The second suit alleges that in 2022, Ms. Kwan lent $200,000 to Mr. Deshmukh, and that he hasn’t repaid a penny.

Text messages attached to the suits capture the breakdown of Mr. Deshmukh’s relationship with Ms. Kwan, a Taiwanese immigrant who started her business in middle age. Ahead of Ms. Kwan’s initial investment, Mr. Deshmukh wrote to her that “I am so confident in this and our friendship that I am happy to personally guarantee your investment on a five-year basis.”

In October 2022, after a month of asking Mr. Deshmukh to repay the loan in increasingly desperate terms, Ms. Kwan wrote: “I have supported you with my full heart, but now you don’t pay me back the money and don’t update what happened to sb when I’m a shareholder. I don’t sleep well because of this.”

Later that month, she wrote again: “Ash, give me some answer please. Where in the world are you?” And again, a few days later: “Where are you? Ash… where are you?”

Had Ms. Kwan gone looking for him, the businessman and promoter was likely to be found somewhere in a small rectangle of Manhattan where he had spent the previous decade dragging himself ever closer to the heart of downtown clout. This rectangle was formed in the northeast, at Avenue A and St. Marks Place, by Superiority Burger; in the southwest, at Mercer Street and Prince Street, by Fanelli Cafe, above which he has lived; in the southeast, at Broome Street and Allen Street, by Williamsburg Pizza, which he has told many people, including reporters at [*The Washington Post*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/27/dining/restaurant-review-superiority-burger-east-village.html), that he owns; and finally, in the northwest, at Lafayette Street and East 4th Street by Jean’s, a popular nightclub and restaurant where he is a partner. Here, dressed in a tuxedo and sporting bleach blond hair, he posed for an [*Instagram photo*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/27/dining/restaurant-review-superiority-burger-east-village.html), his hand resting on the hood of a teal Mercedes, at about the same time June Kwan was begging him for her money.

Ms. Kwan’s suits were filed on Feb. 1 and 2. On March 8, Mr. Deshmukh agreed to be served, less than an hour after receiving a fact-checking inquiry from The Times. Five days later, Ms. Kwan agreed to drop the suits after the parties settled.

Sheryl Heefner, Superiority Burger’s general manager, wrote in a statement that “Ashwin has been critical to the development of Superiority Burger,” adding, “he is also my friend who I love working alongside.”

Mr. Deshmukh is not famous, but he is widely known among downtown tech investors, restaurateurs, bar owners, journalists, fashionistas, podcasters, D.J.s and influencers. If you work in New York in the culture industry — in media, fashion, art, music, publishing — it is a distinct possibility that you have gone to a party at Jean’s sponsored by a cool brand or a brand trying to be cool, or else eaten a slice of one of the pizzas he sent to a birthday party or an opening or a corporate event. And if not, the Instagram algorithm may have shown you one of these things. You are probably aware of the world of Ashwin Deshmukh, even if you don’t know it.

Most people who meet Mr. Deshmukh say he is intelligent, informed, funny, kind and slightly elusive, in a quirky way. But among the many New Yorkers who know Mr. Deshmukh only a bit, there is a subgroup of people who know him a bit more. These people, who are numerous, embarrassed and still finding one another, will say that Ashwin Deshmukh is a thief.

In response to a detailed list of questions, Mr. Deshmukh responded with an email through a representative at Jean’s disputing many aspects of this story without providing further detail.

Ben Carlos Thypin met Mr. Deshmukh in 2012, through a mutual friend. Mr. Thypin is a real estate broker and political player, who co-founded Open New York, a prominent pro-housing group. But at the time, he was an unproven heir to a steel-turned-real estate fortune, eager to make a name for himself. His first impression of Mr. Deshmukh, he said, was that he “seemed like a smart and knowledgeable guy.”

As the men became friends over occasional drinks and more frequent texts, Mr. Thypin came to appreciate Mr. Deshmukh’s well-articulated ideas about trends in technology and investing. True, Mr. Deshmukh said he ran a hedge fund on behalf of high-net-worth individuals from outside the United States, which Mr. Thypin found hard to square with Mr. Deshmukh’s slovenly dress, casual manner and the fact that he wouldn’t let anyone see his apartment. But everyone in New York had a story, Mr. Thypin reasoned. Besides, Mr. Deshmukh was quoted in a [*2010 piece*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/27/dining/restaurant-review-superiority-burger-east-village.html) in The New York Observer as working for a hedge fund.

In 2014, Mr. Thypin said, Mr. Deshmukh approached him with an opportunity: to buy a stake in a promising software start-up through a specialized business he had created to bundle small investments. Mr. Thypin said he had sent $5,000 to Mr. Deshmukh and then forgotten about it. For him, $5,000 wasn’t much money — which was maybe why he didn’t do more due diligence on Mr. Deshmukh.

In 2016, Mr. Thypin got a Google alert that the software company had been bought. He called Mr. Deshmukh to celebrate. But according to Mr. Thypin, Mr. Deshmukh didn’t call or text him back, and didn’t respond to his emails. Only then did Mr. Thypin search for the LLC he had wired the money to, and found that it had never been registered in New York. He then tried to look for the hedge fund Mr. Deshmukh said he worked for, but couldn’t find any evidence it existed.

Mr. Thypin’s first reaction to losing the money was shame. He was a rich guy who had gotten taken for a ride by a charismatic hustler — a New York cliché. Later, he said, he resigned himself to the fact that if Mr. Deshmukh was “that hard up he would steal from his friend, he must be in dire straits.” Mr. Thypin decided to move on.

But he kept hearing stories about other people who had been tricked in the exact same way. There was Rich Abreu, who said he had invested $12,500 in two businesses through Mr. Deshmukh. He, too, had stopped hearing from him. There was Kenny Chen, who in 2014 had given Mr. Deshmukh more than $100,000 to invest in the media start-up On Ramp. The company’s then-chief executive, Harry Poloner, told The Times he had to break the news to Mr. Chen that Mr. Deshmukh had never invested any money. And there was Jonathan Kule, who said he gave Mr. Deshmukh $10,000 to invest in a luxury subscription box business, after which Mr. Deshmukh stopped responding to him.

Not all these men were sophisticated tech investors: Mr. Abreu, for example, owned a Midtown streetwear showroom. Nor were they all in a position to wave away thousands of dollars — Mr. Kule had just bought a house, and didn’t have much cash on hand.

Mr. Kule also felt personally wounded. He had thought Mr. Deshmukh was slightly odd — he told Mr. Kule that he worked on behalf of a family office in Paris, but he sometimes smelled like he hadn’t showered in days. But they had become tight, and had made plans to make further investments together.

“The scary thing is that all the while, I considered you to be a close friend and confidant whom we shared deep and personal stories with regarding our personal lives,” Mr. Kule wrote in an email that he shared with The Times.

In 2017, Mr. Chen sued Mr. Deshmukh, but Mr. Deshmukh didn’t respond to demand letters. Eventually, a process server tracked down Mr. Deshmukh in the Williamsburg Pizza on Broome Street, where she handed him the complaint and snapped his photograph. (According to Mr. Chen’s lawyer, Arthur Soong, Mr. Chen dropped the suit after he reached a settlement with Mr. Deshmukh.)

Mr. Kule filed a suit, too, but dropped it after Mr. Deshmukh’s father agreed to pay him $11,500. In an email that Mr. Kule shared with The Times, Mr. Deshmukh’s father writes: “Ashwin has asked me to give you the money he owes you. I appreciate you reaching out to settle the matter. On the other hand you probably can understand my reluctance and difficulty in paying off his obligation.” (His father did not respond to requests for comment about his son’s legal troubles.)

And Mr. Thypin, who had gotten over his shame in the face of what he felt was a “white collar crime spree,” joined Mr. Abreu in suing Mr. Deshmukh in New York civil court in 2018.

That summer, Mr. Thypin was scrolling through Instagram when he noticed that a friend had started a new bar on the Bowery called Short Stories, and that Mr. Deshmukh was one of his partners. Alarmed, he called his friend, who confirmed that Mr. Deshmukh was managing promotion for the bar. (This friend and another partner of the bar asked not to be named because of the potential financial implications of being associated with Mr. Deshmukh, but they corroborated the account that Mr. Thypin gave The Times and provided more details.)

Mr. Thypin’s friend first encountered Mr. Deshmukh at a tech investment meet-up at the East Village bar Scratcher, where he presented himself as a hedge fund manager working on behalf of a family office in India. The two started to go to parties together, where the partner was impressed that Mr. Deshmukh seemed to know everyone downtown. When he opened Short Stories, he brought Mr. Deshmukh in as a junior partner, but he kept him off the company’s bank accounts.

Shortly after this friend talked to Mr. Thypin, Mr. Deshmukh reached out to the lawyer representing Mr. Thypin and Mr. Abreu to settle their suit, citing his wish to prevent “contact from your clients to my family or business associates or interference with my existing contacts.” The parties signed a settlement in August 2018 for $17,500. But Mr. Deshmukh never paid, and the court ruled in January 2019 that he had defaulted. By this point, the pair thought the settlement with Mr. Chen had left Mr. Deshmukh broke. They dropped it.

Then, a few years later, Mr. Thypin was at a party on the Lower East Side when he overheard some people talking about a bar on the Bowery getting ripped off. He asked them if it was Short Stories, and they said yes. He called his friend, the partner at the bar, who said it was true, and that Mr. Deshmukh was responsible.

The partners told The Times that for several years Mr. Deshmukh had worked diligently as a promoter. He had [*gotten Diplo to come to the bar, and Kaia Gerber, and ASAP Rocky*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/27/dining/restaurant-review-superiority-burger-east-village.html), along with a parade of the [*internet*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/27/dining/restaurant-review-superiority-burger-east-village.html)’s semifamous, all of whom he captured on social media. The bar was a success, they said, in part because of how well Mr. Deshmukh had marketed it. He built up trust. In 2021, they gave Mr. Deshmukh access to one of the company’s bank accounts so he could handle business expenses.

Shortly after, they checked on the account and discovered that more than $100,000 was missing. They tried to track down Mr. Deshmukh, who was suddenly hard to reach. Eventually, after threatening to contact his family, the partners confronted Mr. Deshmukh in person. They said that Mr. Deshmukh agreed to pay back some of the money, as well as give up his equity in the bar. When the partners informed Mr. Deshmukh they were taking away his Short Stories email account, he began to cry. (Around the same time, Mr. Deshmukh listed himself as the co-owner of Short Stories on a city liquor license application for Superiority Burger.)

Meanwhile, the demise of another business relationship was playing out 10 blocks away at Williamsburg Pizza, whose pies Mr. Deshmukh often handed out at Short Stories. According to Aaron McCann, the chain’s owner, Mr. Deshmukh invested a small amount of money in the Broome Street location of the six-shop chain in 2014, and offered to run the company’s social media accounts.

For years, Mr. Deshmukh spearheaded efforts to send pizzas to brands and micro-celebrities; encouraged influencers and prominent friends who bought the pizzas to tag the shop; and featured others on Williamsburg Pizza’s Instagram page, all in an effort to make it the coolest pizza in the city. Here was Rupi Kaur, the Canadian poet, posing with a Williamsburg Pizza, her name piped on top in creamy ricotta. There was the Vogue writer Zachary Weiss at Temple Bar, holding a pizza that read “Aries Daddy.” The D.J. Michael Bibi celebrated a New York show with a pizza. Eva Chen, Instagram’s director of fashion partnerships, celebrated her son’s birthday with a pizza. The cult skin care maven and influencer Marta Mae Freedman posted a pizza, as did the viral street interviewer Isaac Hindin-Miller, and the beauty and baking influencer Dana Hasson. At Mr. Deshmukh’s club, Jean’s, The New York Times reporter Joe Coscarelli and The New Yorker writer Carrie Battan posed with one of the pizzas they bought for guests at their wedding party. In 2022, after New York magazine heralded Williamsburg Pizza in its “Reasons to Love New York” issue, Mr. Deshmukh tweeted a knowing reference to how effective his efforts had been.

Mr. McCann said he was thrilled with Mr. Deshmukh’s work and the attention it brought to his business. But then something strange started to happen. The owner said he was approached, repeatedly, by people he didn’t know who said they had invested in the shop through Mr. Deshmukh and hadn’t received any money.

“When we learned the extent of Ashwin’s dishonest practices, we terminated the relationship with him,” Mr. McCann said.

One confused investor was Brady Donnelly, who had gone to New York University with Mr. Deshmukh and founded a creative agency called Hungry in 2014. Soon after, Mr. Donnelly hired Mr. Deshmukh as a contractor to do business development. Mr. Deshmukh had pitched him in 2013 on an investment of several thousand dollars in Williamsburg Pizza.

“It’s one of the great mysteries of my life,” said Mr. Donnelly, of the fate of his money. “A couple of years passed and I never got a single financial report, no money back. I’m not even sure if the paper I signed was real paperwork.”

Eventually, Mr. Donnelly confronted Mr. Deshmukh about the money, and Mr. Deshmukh showed up with a cashier’s check and no explanation. But after Mr. Deshmukh stopped working for him, Mr. Donnelly said he learned that Mr. Deshmukh had been touting himself as a co-founder of Hungry to drum up business for himself — at which point Mr. Donnelly sent Mr. Deshmukh a cease and desist letter.

One business Mr. Deshmukh attracted was Oatly, the cult oat milk brand, which contracted Mr. Deshmukh in 2019 to redesign its website. Without Mr. Donnelly’s knowledge, he claimed in his pitch that Mr. Donnelly would lead production and editorial strategy.

That Mr. Deshmukh got in the room in the first place, with no real experience, was somewhat astounding — Oatly was already generating $200 million in revenue by 2019. He was there largely because he was friends with an Oatly employee, who did not want to be named because she did not want to be publicly associated with possible fraud. But her story was confirmed by an Oatly spokesman, Brendan P. Lewis. According to the employee, she met Mr. Deshmukh in 2017, when she wandered into the Broome Street pizzeria and the two began chatting. They became close friends, and he was effusive in his praise for her.

“I love you a lot,” he wrote in a text message from early 2019 that she shared with The Times. “You have the energy and light that helps everyone around you. Your capacity to care and take care is astounding. I cannot wait to see how you impact the world in a way that everyone will know and talk about you. Your spirit cannot be replicated. You remain, my favorite.”

In the summer of 2019, the Oatly employee told Mr. Deshmukh — whom she believed to be the co-founder of Hungry — about the website redesign, and encouraged him to put himself forward. Mr. Deshmukh showed up at the Oatly office with an ambitious proposal that wowed the company’s creative director. Oatly awarded Mr. Deshmukh the contract, for $266,333, over a handful of established national agencies. In August, he traveled to Malmo, Sweden, for a victory lap at the company’s headquarters, where he met with Oatly’s then-chief executive, Toni Petersson.

The good feelings didn’t last. Mr. Deshmukh hired a few people for the project, including an old colleague from Hungry named Mark Lewis, who is unrelated to the Oatly spokesman. But Mr. Deshmukh went dark for days at a time, and Mr. Lewis began receiving emails from Oatly asking why they hadn’t produced anything. He felt awkward — Mr. Deshmukh wasn’t responding to the messages, and Mr. Lewis didn’t know where he was. Not to mention, Mr. Deshmukh still hadn’t fully compensated him for the trip to Malmo, which Mr. Lewis had paid for out of pocket.

“Everyone was very uncomfortable,” Mr. Lewis said.

Then, at a meeting with an increasingly concerned Oatly team later that fall, Mr. Deshmukh brought nothing to present except screenshots from his original, months-old pitch. Concerned, Mr. Lewis said he tracked down some of the flashy names Mr. Deshmukh had told Oatly would be involved in the project and asked them if they had ever heard from him. None had. He remembered realizing two things: Mr. Deshmukh was cheating Oatly, and he had no loyalty to him. He told Oatly.

According to Brendan P. Lewis, the Oatly spokesman, the company managed to claw back some of the money from Mr. Deshmukh and cancel the contract. But the Oatly employee who led Mr. Deshmukh into the company was devastated. How could he put her in such a terrible position? She said she made plans with him several times so she could confront him, but he kept canceling at the last minute. She had a feeling she would never see him again.

But she did, once. Six months later, early in the pandemic, she was biking downtown, when she saw Mr. Deshmukh outside Short Stories. She said he pulled down his face mask and mouthed, “I’m sorry.”

As the people who had given Mr. Deshmukh money found one another, largely thanks to Mr. Thypin, they marveled at the scope and interconnectedness of his hustles, as well as the sheer democratic quality of the deception: He played close friends and new acquaintances, the very rich and the middle class, large corporations and local bars.

They were left with an enormous number of questions, but one above all: What kind of person would do all of this? Almost all of them described Mr. Deshmukh as intelligent, charismatic, capable and hardworking. Surely this was a man who could have found success in any domain.

Mr. Deshmukh, the son of a cardiologist, arrived at N.Y.U. in the fall of 2003 from Sayre, Pa., a 5,000-person town on the New York border. One of his first friends in college was Roberto A. Felipe, a New Yorker who had grown up ***working class*** in Corona, Queens. Mr. Felipe said that Mr. Deshmukh had confided in him about his hangups with his weight and how to meet women. In retrospect, Mr. Felipe wasn’t sure if these confessions were genuine or part of Mr. Deshmukh’s manipulation.

“He relies on sympathy from people by disclosing things,” Mr. Felipe said.

By the time Mr. Deshmukh was a senior, he had cultivated a campus mystique. In 2007, he was featured as part of a package in the N.Y.U. student newspaper on “NYU’s 14 most influential students.” The writer introduces Mr. Deshmukh by stating, dramatically, that he had agreed to participate in the profile only at the last second.

“I’ve only heard a fraction of his history. But from what I’ve heard, it’s fascinating. Unfortunately, a fraction is really all that Deshmukh offers to anyone,” the article reads. “Most of what I offer here is second-hand, but that’s part of Deshmukh’s appeal. Though charismatic and personable, he never tells you the whole story — and therein lies his success.”

The profile goes on to note that while he was an undergrad, Mr. Deshmukh had “dabbled in New York real estate, steel industries and trading,” and that he had been hired by a hedge fund before graduation. Beneath the article’s text, Mr. Deshmukh appears in a dark suit jacket, with his arms crossed over his chest.

After college, Mr. Felipe and Mr. Deshmukh exchanged Facebook messages in which, Mr. Felipe said, Mr. Deshmukh told him that he was back and forth between Paris and New York, managing a hedge fund. Later, Mr. Deshmukh told him that he had moved home to Pennsylvania to take care of some health issues. But he would drive into the city once in a while and crash at Mr. Felipe’s apartment. Sometimes they talked about investment strategies, and Mr. Felipe started to introduce Mr. Deshmukh to his network: Mr. Thypin and Rich Abreu, the streetwear showroom owner with whom Mr. Felipe grew up in Corona.

When Mr. Felipe brought Mr. Deshmukh to the West 39th Street showroom, Mr. Abreu sized up Mr. Deshmukh, who was eager to nerd out about Supreme, as a “fanboy.”

“He was kind of a poseur type of guy: hedge fund but trying to dress streetwear,” Mr. Abreu said. “He didn’t seem very authentic to me.”

Whether Mr. Deshmukh ever worked for a hedge fund is unclear. Mr. Deshmukh told people that he worked on behalf of a family office in, variously, Paris, Switzerland and India, but he never offered specifics. People who knew him wondered whether he was too embarrassed to admit that he was living off a trust fund — not an uncommon phenomenon among young New Yorkers. But the fact that Mr. Deshmukh needed his father to pay off Mr. Kule suggests he may not have had any money of his own at all.

From 2016 to 2018, Mr. Deshmukh sublet a room to an N.Y.U. student named Marié Nobematsu-Le Gassic in an East Village apartment he rented. Upon moving in, she was surprised by the condition of the apartment, where Mr. Deshmukh would sometimes sleep. There were French fries stuck to the floor, she remembered, and paper advertisements for strippers littered throughout the unit. The wireless internet went out for months at a time, and Mr. Deshmukh asked her not to use air conditioning in the summer, because, she remembered him saying, he was down to his last dime. One day a process server came to the door, but she had no idea where Mr. Deshmukh was: She was unsure of where he stayed when he wasn’t there.

(Ms. Nobematsu-Le Gassic obtained a court order this year to force Mr. Deshmukh to pay her $7,250 for a security deposit he never returned — a somewhat more prosaic New York scenario. “I screwed you over,” Mr. Deshmukh wrote in a text to her that she shared with The Times, about the outstanding money.)

When Mr. Deshmukh was in the apartment, Ms. Nobematsu-Le Gassic said, he was often trying to figure out how to do viral brand collaborations with Williamsburg Pizza and Short Stories, or talking about his attempts to get attractive women to come to Williamsburg Pizza to take photos for Instagram. He spoke frequently about Caroline Calloway, the millennial influencer who became famous in the 2010s for lying extravagantly and then writing about it. (In a text message, Ms. Calloway confirmed that she was friendly with Mr. Deshmukh, whom she understood to have comped her 28th birthday party at Short Stories in 2018, a gesture she found “kind and generous.”)

“He wants to be seen and be important in New York,” Ms. Nobematsu-Le Gassic said. “But I didn’t know if he had any money.”

Mr. Thypin, who has spent a lot of time thinking about Mr. Deshmukh, believes Mr. Deshmukh is a chameleon, driven by insecurity, who has changed colors again and again in pursuit of status. At first he worked for a hedge fund, or at least he said he did. Then, in the early 2010s, he became a venture capitalist. Then he became a creative director — the ultimate cool-guy millennial pursuit — or tried to. And finally, as cultural energy in New York shifted back to the city’s downtown, he reinvented himself as a nightlife impresario, a scene-maker.

Along the way he has transformed his appearance from an eager, full-faced tech bro in a Supreme cap to an unsmiling club baron with downtown stubble, posing for Instagram in Isaia, Stone Island and Balenciaga.

A popular theory among the aggrieved is that Mr. Deshmukh’s manipulations are all leverage plays, similar to the efforts of Adam Sandler’s character in “Uncut Gems” — every dollar he takes goes toward his next move, with no safety net.

The lawsuits by June Kwan have been settled, but Superiority Burger was also sued in January by its builder, Bellwood, for nonpayment. Mr. Deshmukh is named as a defendant in the suit, which claims that he entered a $342,603 promissory note with the builder in November 2022 and failed to fulfill it. The suit asks for a mechanic’s lien foreclosure, which could, at least in theory, force a sale of the building whose storefront Superiority Burger rents.

But for the time being, Mr. Deshmukh is somebody in New York. His co-partner in the club and restaurant Jean’s is Max Chodorow, the son of Jeffrey Chodorow, the restaurateur.

In an email response to a question about Mr. Deshmukh’s legal troubles and history of misrepresenting himself to get money, Mr. Chodorow wrote, “His previous business projects prior to Jean’s are a story many entrepreneurs trying to own and operate a business in NYC may be familiar with.’’ He added, “Ash brings years of marketing talent which balances out my unique history of operations in the restaurant industry.”

Now, the people who feel used by Mr. Deshmukh watch his social media with a mix of horror, astonishment and something else, something closer to the mix of envy and judgment we all feel when we spend too long on Instagram.

In October, the oil heiress and socialite Ivy Getty threw a Halloween party at Jean’s; Anya Taylor-Joy showed up, as did Prince Achileas-Andreas of Greece and Denmark, dressed as a racecar driver. In November, Jean’s hosted a party celebrating a collaboration between Paco Rabanne and H&amp;M; Emily Ratajkowski and Chloë Sevigny crowded in a booth. In February, the men’s wear designer Willy Chavarria celebrated his fashion week show with a party at Jean’s. Julia Fox and Amanda Lepore were there.

Mr. Deshmukh spent much of the night in a back booth, getting up to fetch a bottle of Don Julio from the bar, and to take a video of the crowd. At one point, he posed for a photo with a lifestyle journalist and the creative director of Hugo Boss. He was looking off, away from the camera, as if his thoughts were somewhere else.

Callie Holtermann and Manasa Gudavalli contributed reporting.

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PHOTOS: Ashwin Deshmukh, downtown last month, has often been sued for owed funds. (PHOTOGRAPH BY DAVID X PRUTTING/BFA.COM, VIA SHUTTERSTOCK) (D1); Far left, Ashwin Deshmukh in 2022 at Jean’s, a nightclub where he is a partner. Above, the East Village restaurant Superiority Burger, at which Mr. Deshmukh is managing partner. Left, the bar Short Stories, where he handled promotion. Below, Jean’s. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY MATTEO PRANDONI/BFA.COM, VIA SHUTTERSTOCK; KARSTEN MORAN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES; JEENAH MOON FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES; MADISON VOELKEL/BFA.COM, VIA SHUTTERSTOCK) (D4-D5) This article appeared in print on page D1, D4, D5.

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**Body**

HIGH MINDSThe Victorians and the Birth of Modern BritainBy Simon Heffer

Writing during World War II, George Orwell remarked upon the contrast between the ''gentleness'' that characterized contemporary English civilization and the ''brutality'' that had distinguished English life a hundred years earlier. Although Orwell goes unmentioned in ''High Minds,'' the transformation he apprehended forms the focal point of this baggy but astute political and intellectual history of Britain, mostly England, from the 1830s to 1870.

The journalist and historian Simon Heffer begins his chronicle in 1838, the first year of what was almost certainly the most ferocious economic depression in British history (a fact he neither explicitly acknowledges nor sufficiently explores). He describes a society characterized by ''widespread inhumanity, primitiveness and barbarism'' and afflicted, owing to the shocks of industrialization and urbanization, ''by terrible, and destabilizing, social problems.'' By 1870, he says, ''although poverty, disease, ignorance, squalor and injustice were far from eliminated, they were beaten back more in those 40 or so years than at any previous time in the history of Britain.'' His is a story of a civilizing transformation, in which Britain moved ever closer to a humane and decent society.

The transformation that Heffer relates can be disputed; even if accepted, it can be variously interpreted and explained. For instance, some historians disposed to materialist explanations would argue that whatever social and civilizational progress Britain achieved in those years was largely a result of the smoothing out of the inevitable disruptions industrialization created, to changes in economic and political power and therefore in social attitudes, and to the growing and dispersed prosperity that a maturing industrialized economy engendered.

Heffer, in contrast, identifies ideas and sentiment as the driving force of this transformation. Here he is inspired by G. M. Young's elegant, allusive, impressionistic ''Portrait of an Age: Victorian Britain'' (which remains the most penetrating book ever written about the Victorians). Intellectuals, politicians and largely upper and upper-middle-class activists, he argues, moved by ''a sense of earnest, disinterested moral purpose,'' sought ''to improve the condition of the whole of society.'' This high-minded effort was made manifest in ''the measures enlightened government took,'' measures that unfolded in a series of landmark parliamentary acts and administrative innovations in the 40-odd years Heffer scrutinizes. These created and enhanced the regulation and oversight of working conditions in industry and mining, while improving child welfare, schools, housing, sanitation and public health. They also extended the franchise to all adult males and enlarged the legal protections and independence of women. Such policies and the frame of mind that generated them, Heffer asserts in celebration, ''laid the first foundations of a welfare state.''

Although the responses to industrialization propelled the transformation Heffer recounts, he wisely ignores the hoary debates surrounding that process. His focus isn't the reality of industrialization, but the ways his high-minded reformers perceived it. In any case, a scholarly consensus has long formed around the issues that concern him. Industrialization both accompanied and created an enormous and unparalleled rise in England's population and prompted a vast shift from the country to the city, producing an enormous pool of wage workers. In the north, where the new textile industries ballooned, industrialization extruded huge new urban agglomerations in which sanitation and housing conditions produced a demographic calamity. Life expectancy in the 1830s and 1840s in industrialized urban centers plummeted to levels not experienced since the Black Death; average life expectancy for laborers in Liverpool was 15, compared to 55 for the gentry in Bath.

These circumstances provoked interlocking anxieties both political and humanitarian that plagued the high minds Heffer examines. The years between the French Revolution and the Chartist demonstrations of 1848 were perhaps the most protracted period of social turmoil in British history, prompting a pervasive fear of revolution among the upper classes. The ever-expanding new working classes in the foul northern industrial cities seemed abandoned by the nation and its ruling elites, ''growing up as best they might,'' as Young wrote, ''unpoliced, ungoverned and unschooled.'' Surveying the squalor and dynamism of Manchester in 1835, Alexis de Tocqueville presciently offered the diagnosis and resolution of the deleterious effects of industrial capitalism: ''At every turn human liberty shows its capricious creative force. There is no trace of the slow continuous action of government.'' With astonishing rapidity the outlook of Britain's governing classes would come to align with this view, as they committed themselves to applying, as Prime Minister Lord John Russell wrote in 1841, ''system, method, science, regularity, and discipline'' to the machinery of the state to assess and ameliorate the social problems created by industrial capitalism. This amounted to a revolution in government (albeit, owing to inadequate taxation, a most partial one) and a new philosophy of the state (albeit a most unsystematic one).

In other words, virtually overnight the state had, in pursuit of social improvement and protection, radically expanded its domestic remit. The paternalistic role that the state had arrogated to itself was particularly clear in the plethora of commissions and inspectorates that informed and enforced legislation. These probed with Benthamite exactitude the condition of England -- its appalling slums, rampant sewage, inadequate schools, unsafe mines, adulterated food and unclean water -- with a zeal in keeping with the contemporary evangelical urge to relentless self-examination of one's moral state. No revolutionary could indict the British with charges they had not already made against themselves. Indeed, Frederick Engels drew his excoriating account of living and working conditions in Manchester from the reports of Parliamentary commissions investigating those conditions.

Apart from detailing the conditions that motivated this sudden turn toward high-mindedness, Heffer's history offers little explanation for it. His account would have been enriched by incorporating the Cambridge historian Boyd Hilton's scholarship, which demonstrates that the idea of the state as an instrument of social welfare cut across party and religious lines to unite paternalist High Tories, social interventionist Whigs, Benthamite utilitarians and premillenarian evangelicals. I wish that Heffer had explored how the British state's decades-long project to defeat Napoleon may have contributed to the notion that it could play a similarly creative role in social policy. I also wish he'd drawn a connection between the high-mindedness he describes and the state's new role in protecting animal welfare in this period.

Others will object that while Heffer says his book is in part a ''social history,'' it doesn't comport with the current sense of that term. In his examination of the interplay of high politics, policy and the opinions of social critics, the poor and the working classes are merely acted upon. But one needn't be a thoroughgoing Marxist, adhering to the doctrinaire formula that the economic base determines the political and intellectual superstructure, to believe that the ideas and policies of the ruling classes built the framework in which the poor and working classes acted.

On firmer ground are those who might discern that Heffer's paean to the elite betrays an interpretive lens distorted by a paternalistic conservatism. Clearly, the high-minded tradition that Heffer praises sought to improve and enlighten the emerging ***working class***, not to fundamentally redistribute economic and political power. Even those reforming paternalists most committed as a matter of moral principle to the welfare of the poor recognized that the policies they pursued safeguarded the middle and upper classes. Perhaps from some radical perspectives, all paternalism is merely hypocrisy.

Furthermore, the patrician reformers Heffer praises generally aspired to create and safeguard the conditions in which the ***working class*** could sustain the social value most prized by both the British middle and working classes: ''respectability'' -- an amalgam of industry, thrift, sobriety and a structured family life. Plainly, as countless critics have charged, a ***working class*** that shared these values with the bourgeoisie was hardly the material with which revolutions are made. Perhaps, again, this makes the high-minded guilty of hypocrisy, which, after all, has been the fault most often leveled against the Victorians. But maybe hypocrisy, as Orwell noted, ''is a check upon behavior whose value from a social point of view has been underrated.''Benjamin Schwarz is the former literary and national editor of The Atlantic.HIGH MINDSThe Victorians and the Birth of Modern BritainBy Simon HefferIllustrated. 896 pp. Pegasus. $39.95.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2022/04/08/books/review/high-minds-simon-heffer.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/04/08/books/review/high-minds-simon-heffer.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: Cotton manufacturing in Britain, 1845. (PHOTOGRAPH FROM ANN RONAN PICTURES/PRINT COLLECTOR/GETTY IMAGES)

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**End of Document**



[***Rediscovering the South's Radical Art***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69S6-NXN1-JBG3-61P6-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Section:** Section C; Column 0; Movies, Performing Arts/Weekend Desk; Pg. 14; CRITIC'S PICK

**Length:** 1750 words

**Byline:** By Walker Mimms

**Body**

In the first half of the 20th century, socially conscious artists in the South were great innovators, reflecting on race, progress and the disappearing plantocracy.

Of the many strengths of ''Southern/Modern,'' a daring and revisionist show about the American South at the Georgia Museum of Art in Athens, the one that follows you out to your car is the alternate history of modern art it proposes.

Southern art -- or food or literature, for that matter -- has long suffered a reputation of isolation. ''You cant understand it. You would have to be born there,'' says the tortured Quentin in William Faulkner's ''Absalom, Absalom!'' Ninety years later, Southern exceptionalism is over (mostly), and the area's artists and curators and chefs now go to great, overcorrective lengths to be global, to be modern. But the artists of Faulkner's day -- they were still responding to an ancient, haunted South. Their audience was stationary, and their language local. They were regionalists. Or so the story goes.

Not here. These 100 or so paintings and prints suggest an invigorating direction that was there all along: a pungent pairing of social history with artistic experiment during the first half of the 20th century. By bringing together professional artists who worked below the Mason-Dixon Line (exempting Florida) between 1913 and 1956, and as far west as Arkansas and Missouri, ''Southern/Modern'' surveys the riches of a stylistic evolution you will find at, say, the Museum of Modern Art in New York -- the Impressionism that loosened up the 1900s, the Cubism of the 1910s, the Surrealism of the '20s, the modeled social realism of the '30s, the feral abstractions of the '40s and '50s -- as told by a region often buried in the art history books.

Among its big, engrossing canvases by astute social observers like George Biddle (the architect of the New Deal's Federal Artist Project, which gave many of these artists work during the Depression) and Lamar Dodd (a founding father of art education in Georgia), we find a moving imitation of Monet by the Alabama painting teacher and leader of the Dixie Art Colony, John Kelly Fitzpatrick.

The lobes of cyan and mud-green in Fitzpatrick's ''Negro Baptising'' (1930) jelly into a sunny riverbend. Two parishioners are about to be dunked. In the distance, further stripes of paint indicate hundreds of Black spectators on the bank -- none personalized but each a person. Around them all, a tall bridge traces the inner margins of the canvas, with the piers of the bridge at right and its guard rail running along the top. It's a framing device George Bellows and other urbans employed to remind us where we, the viewers, stand -- that is, outside the action. But in Fitzpatrick's pastoral setting, the bridge illuminates our subject: A maligned community, in other words, will baptize wherever it must, even under the irksome wagon-clack of overhead traffic.

Curated by Martha R. Severens (formerly of the Greenville County Museum of Art in South Carolina) and Jonathan Stuhlman (of the Mint Museum in Charlotte, N.C.), ''Southern/Modern'' broadcasts the latest trends in the presentation of Southern art, such as you'll find in the richly contextualized American sections of the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts or the Georgia Museum's own permanent collection. In this telling, art is a global and porous affair. And far-flung provinces serve as entrepôts to and from the vanguard -- not just detours to be ''represented'' like Nashville hot chicken in the flavor portfolio of Pringles.

Black artists -- and not just subjects -- share half the stage, for instance. Take Hale Woodruff, a Nashville resident who studied Picasso in 1920s Paris and learned muralism under Diego Rivera in Mexico. Only the Depression could have brought the painter back stateside, reluctantly, where he taught in Georgia and, on a Rosenwald grant for Black students, studied soil degradation.

In ''Southland'' (1936), one fruit of this labor, Woodruff arranges a rural hillside into a stressful, almost Cubist pyramid: at top are the ruins of an old manor house, at right a wasted shack, with dead stumps and tree trunks lying around. After centuries of enslavement, and now sharecropping, King Cotton had sucked the land dry. But Woodruff renders the actual painted earth in tones of salmon and sherbet -- singing, iridescent hues that negate all the death. It's a Rorschach test: do you see a wasteland, or a vibrant painterly possibility?

By the 1930s, federal initiatives like the Tennessee Valley Authority promised development in the South. For locals, the question became how much new pavement and electricity could be borne by their culture, by their ''ma'ams'' and ''sirs,'' their gentility, their neighborly warmth. At Vanderbilt University a group of romantic-minded poets, calling themselves the Agrarians, protested ''the gospel of Progress'' in a 1930 manifesto called ''I'll Take My Stand.'' Robert Penn Warren, aged 25, wrote an essay for the book, suggesting Black people form their own agrarian state -- a defense of segregation he would spend the rest of his life atoning for.

Less famously, visual artists amplified this fear of advancement. See the sterilized surrealism of the Virginian painter Jewett Campbell, where skyscrapers spring from the natural environment. Or the watercolor satire of Homer Ellertson: in his suavely executed ''Dean House, Spartanburg, S.C.'' (circa 1932), a Goodyear service station has set up shop in the front yard of a plantation home. The sepia tone of this work feels retrofuturist, as if we're glimpsing some coming destiny from an even later date.

More than Agrarian conservatism, though, the painters in this show echo what the historian C. Vann Woodward later called the ''irony of Southern history'': the fact that, as America dominated the global stage from the Monroe Doctrine to World War II, the southeastern quadrant of the country persisted in a long line of self-destructive, embarrassing regressions, from a feudal regime to a secession attempt to an apartheid state.

Hatred of that history seems to have driven the Virginia-born painter Robert Gwathmey to adopt a style somewhere between primitivism and the illustrated wartime poster. In the ropy, segmented outlines and loud, flat colors of his ''Sunny South'' (1944), an angry piece of agitprop on loan from a private collection, workers hunch wearily with their sacks of cotton in an empty field. At left and right, an old plantation and a modern factory straddle the scene. It is an allegory of pre- and post-Emancipation, with little in visible difference for the ***working class***. At center, the sons and daughters of the Confederacy gather around a statue of their departed hero, Robert E. Lee.

Every exhibition argues something by virtue of its parameters, and the dates at play here remind us that the triumph of American art -- the seminal Armory show of 1913 to the death of Jackson Pollock in 1956 -- took place alongside the rise of civil rights in modern political discourse.

In ''When the Klan Passes By'' (circa 1939), the Howard University painter James A. Porter uses dark but thin brushloads to convey, through the averted eyes of the Black family in the foreground, the private consequences of race terrorism. (If the dumpy Klan cartoons in Philip Guston's current retrospective deserve a trigger warning, Porter's ice-bath of domestic fear needs a trigger embargo.) Unlike Porter, Gwathmey's allegory of race, with his setting like Monopoly houses, is an imagined, didactic one: His laborers come in all skin tones, arguing that the old plantocracy divided the classes for many years to come, dooming poor whites as well as Blacks.

This is a model exhibition: a targeted provincial study of the innovations we too often associate with Paris and New York. It will be relevant to the many Northern institutions that house these artists (several appear in the Met's current collection show on the Depression, ''Art for the Millions''). A few blue-chip artists (Zelda Fitzgerald, Thomas Hart Benton, Jacob Lawrence) fit comfortably among fascinating lesser-knowns. Last fall in Los Angeles, I saw (and loved) a similar survey of Korean art. Now I want one on the Rust Belt, Canada, North Africa, India. What did ''modern'' mean to the rest of the world?

In January, ''Southern/Modern'' will travel to Nashville (a city whose controversial gentrification will let these pictures really talk), then to Charlotte and Memphis. But no farther north. Which is a shame, because New York's influence on the South was not only direct and palpable, as the exhibition persuasively argues, but also reciprocal, which the show does less to explore: At Cooper Union in the late '40s, Gwathmey taught the future Pop star Alex Katz. From his new post at New York University in the 1950s, escaping the South once again, Woodruff became a rare Abstract Expressionist of African descent. To the Big Apple, graduates of Black Mountain College, in North Carolina, returned like winged pollinators to a hive. (Representing the Black Mountain contingent here is an early jigsaw-paned composition by one graduate, Elaine de Kooning, and a geometric abstraction by her instructor Josef Albers, a German refugee from fascism.)

The loosey-goosey 1950s close the show, and though Ms. de Kooning is name-brand avant-garde, it was a new abstractionist (new to this reviewer, at least) who really grabbed me. After the war, the printmaker Caroline Durieux, neighbor to Faulkner in New Orleans, sourced isotopes from the Oak Ridge National Laboratory in Tennessee, where the uranium was enriched to level Hiroshima. With scientists, Durieux developed radioactive inks that would stay active for 25,000 years.

One of Durieux's electron prints, ''Carnival, Circus, or Green Abstraction'' (1956), a beguiling centrifugal arrangement of ripples and flakes in hot primary colors, toured Berlin, India and Pakistan in a group show called ''The Peaceful Uses of Atomic Energy.'' If that exhibition was some big act of Cold War propaganda, I don't care. It came as welcome relief, after our summer of ''Oppenheimer,'' to find such invention and such buoyancy in yet another Southern darkness.

Southern/Modern

Through Dec. 10, Georgia Museum of Art, 90 Carlton Street, Athens, Ga., (706) 542-4662; georgiamuseum.org. The show will travel to the Frist Art Museum (Jan. 26, 2024, through April 28), 919 Broadway, Nashville, Tenn., (615) 244-3340; fristartmuseum.org.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/30/arts/design/southern-modern-georgia-museum.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/30/arts/design/southern-modern-georgia-museum.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Clockwise from top: Overtones of Monet in John Kelly Fitzpatrick's ''Negro Baptising'' (1930)

Caroline Durieux's ''Carnival, Circus, or Green Abstraction'' (1956)

Hale Woodruff's ''Southland'' (1936)

Robert Gwathmey's ''Sunny South'' (1944) vented his rage at the region's racism and classism

in Homer Ellertson's satire ''The Dean House, Spartanburg, S.C.'' (circa 1932), a service station has set up shop in a plantation home's yard

with its subjects' averted eyes, James A. Porter's ''When the Klan Passes By'' (1939) evokes the consequences of race terrorism. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY MONTGOMERY MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS

VIA MICHAEL ROSENFELD GALLERY, NEW YORK

JOHNSON COLLECTION, SPARTANBURG, S.C

UNC PRESS

ESTATE OF HALE WOODRUFF/LICENSED BY VAGA AT ARTISTS RIGHTS SOCIETY (ARS), NY

VIA AMISTAD RESEARCH CENTER, NEW ORLEANS, LA

LSU MUSEUM OF ART, BATON ROUGE) (C14-C15) This article appeared in print on page C14, C15.

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**End of Document**



[***A Democratic Governor in Mississippi? He Thinks It’s Possible.***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69JW-SSF1-DXY4-X3P9-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

November 6, 2023 Monday 11:05 EST

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**Section:** US

**Length:** 1602 words

**Byline:** Rick Rojas

**Highlight:** With a promise to expand Medicaid and a focus on turning out Black voters, Brandon Presley is confident he can do what no Democrat has done in 20 years.

**Body**

With a promise to expand Medicaid and a focus on turning out Black voters, Brandon Presley is confident he can do what no Democrat has done in 20 years.

[*Follow our live updates from Election Day 2023*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2023/11/07/us/election-day-2023).

After stopping by a meet-and-greet in Ridgeland, a porch festival in Vicksburg, the Great Delta Bear Affair in Rolling Fork and an event on a baseball diamond in Yazoo City, Brandon Presley entered a packed room in McComb, launching into the message he believes can get a Democrat — namely, himself — elected governor of Mississippi.

He would immediately move to expand Medicaid, which would help resuscitate rural hospitals and provide largely free government health insurance to most low-income adults. He would slash a hated tax on groceries. Above all, he assured the crowd, he would be a very different governor than Tate Reeves, the Republican incumbent, whom he denounced as ensconced in privilege and dented by scandal.

“The fight in politics in Mississippi is not right versus left,” Mr. Presley, an elected public utilities commissioner and a former mayor of Nettleton, his tiny hometown in northern Mississippi, said in McComb. “And sometimes, it’s not even Democrat versus Republican. It’s those of us on the outside versus those of them on the inside.”

Mr. Presley’s campaign has been a built on a bet that his human touch and populist platform can forge a coalition of Black and liberal-to-centrist white voters, some disaffected Republicans among them, that is robust enough for him to win. It is a test of a blueprint that Democrats have long relied on, but to diminishing effect in recent decades, as Republicans have tightened their grip on power in Mississippi and most of the South.

Yet Mr. Presley has gained decent momentum — and with it, the attention of Democrats outside Mississippi. He has raised more than $11 million since January, [*far outpacing Mr. Reeves*](https://mississippitoday.org/2023/10/31/brandon-presley-outraised-tate-reeves-election/), and has used the money to flood television and radio stations with campaign advertisements.

The nonpartisan Cook Political Report [*recently found that the election*](https://www.cookpolitical.com/analysis/governors/mississippi-governor/mississippi-governor-moves-likely-lean-republican) had “morphed into a competitive fight.” But it also classified the race as “lean Republican” — a splash of cold water underscoring that, no matter how much ground Mr. Presley gains or optimism he has inspired in Southern Democrats, he still faces difficult odds in a state that has not elected a Democratic governor in 24 years.

In the race for governor four years ago, Jim Hood, then the state attorney general and the last Democrat elected to statewide office, was seen [*as the most viable candidate*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/09/23/us/governors-democrats-trump.html) the party had fielded in Mississippi in more than a decade. Yet he lost to Mr. Reeves by about five percentage points.

Still, Mr. Presley sensed an opening. He believed that Mr. Reeves’s shaky popularity ratings, fury over a sprawling scandal involving welfare funds being directed to the pet projects of wealthy and connected Republicans, and dissatisfaction over the state’s eternal struggle for prosperity could allow him to accomplish what previous Democratic candidates could not.

If neither candidate wins a majority of the popular vote on Tuesday, the race will go to a runoff on Nov. 28.

Mr. Presley has invested enormous effort in mobilizing Black voters, [*a crucial bloc in a state*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/17/us/politics/mississippi-governor-race-black-voters.html) where nearly 40 percent of the population is Black. But turning out the rest of the coalition that Mr. Presley needs — for example, white ***working-class*** voters who might have voted for Mr. Reeves last time — will be instrumental.

“You can’t win if you don’t win white crossover votes,” said Byron D’Andra Orey, a political science professor at Jackson State University.

For months, Mr. Presley has had marathon days ping-ponging across Mississippi, stopping in all 82 counties. He has become a frequent presence at football games on historically Black college campuses, as well as at festivals and small gatherings in community centers.

In each place, he has made the same case: He is not a liberal — [*he opposes abortion rights*](https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/elections/brandon-presley-mississippi-governor-tate-reeves-abortion-rcna123430) — and he is certainly no elite. True, Elvis Presley was his second cousin, but a distant relative’s fame did nothing to boost his family’s fortunes. His mother was left to raise him and his siblings on her own after his father was killed when he was 8.

“I’m white, and I’m country — it ain’t nothing I can do about it,” Mr. Presley told a mostly Black audience at one campaign stop. “But I get up every day and go to bed every night trying to pull Mississippi together.”

The state fractures along racial and regional lines, creating a landscape that is anything but homogeneous, even as it tilts heavily in the Republican Party’s favor. The western flank, including the flat expanse of farmland in the Delta, votes for Democrats.

Mr. Presley has wagered that one of his goals in particular can unify Democrats and Republicans, Black and many white voters: joining the 40 other states that have expanded Medicaid under the Affordable Care Act. Researchers have forecast that doing so would make the coverage available to roughly 230,000 lower-income adults over six years.

Polls in Mississippi — where death rates are among the nation’s highest for heart disease, stroke, diabetes and cancer — [*have indicated overwhelming support*](https://mississippitoday.org/2023/09/01/hospital-crisis-medicaid-expansion-poll/).

Mr. Reeves has been adamant in his opposition to expanding Medicaid, pointing to the cost (most of which would be a federal responsibility) and dismissing it as “welfare.” In September, [*he proposed an alternative*](https://mississippitoday.org/2023/09/21/tate-reeves-11th-hour-plan-hospital-crisis/) that, if approved by federal officials, would increase funding for some hospitals but would not provide coverage for the uninsured.

Grant Dowdy, a dentist in Greenville who came to the festival in Rolling Fork, said he was prepared to break a consistent streak of voting for Republicans precisely because of Mr. Presley’s support for Medicaid expansion. Mississippi, he said, “needs to be like every other sensible state in the nation.”

But in such a polarized political climate, where party allegiance often outweighs all else, recruiting enough Republicans to tip the scale toward Mr. Presley may prove impossible.

In 2001, he became the youngest mayor in Mississippi when was elected to lead Nettleton, a city of some 1,900 people in the state’s northeast.

Since then, Mr. Presley, 46, has been elected four times to represent a vast swath of northern Mississippi on the state’s Public Service Commission, which regulates telecommunications, electric, gas, water and sewer utilities. Colleagues and supporters said the position — in a district filled with heavily conservative areas — helped him hone the solicitous approach he is bringing to the governor’s race.

Mr. Reeves has cast Mr. Presley as a liberal aligned with President Biden, and his campaign as orchestrated by the national Democratic Party. He has pointed out that most of Mr. Presley’s fund-raising haul has come from outside Mississippi.

“Ask yourself: Why are they dropping historic money on Mississippi to flip it blue?” Mr. Reeves said on social media in October. “It’s because they know Brandon Presley will govern like a liberal Democrat.”

Mr. Reeves is also emphasizing his conservative bona fides, including tax cuts he has signed and a promise to keep pursuing his ambition of eliminating the state income tax.

He has touted the state’s unemployment rate, which has fallen to just over 3 percent — the lowest it has been in decades. He has also campaigned on [*raises he approved last year for public schoolteachers*](https://www.pbs.org/newshour/education/mississippi-gov-tate-reeves-signs-largest-teacher-pay-raise-in-years) that were among the largest in state history, amounting to average increase of about $5,100 a year.

Mr. Reeves has also said that his administration is trying to claw back money misspent in the welfare scandal, in which more than $77 million was siphoned from the state’s poorest residents to fund projects like one championed by Brett Favre, the former N.F.L. player, to [*build a volleyball stadium*](https://www.hattiesburgamerican.com/story/sports/college/southern-miss/2022/10/02/what-5-million-in-welfare-dollars-bought-southern-miss-volleyball/69494814007/) at the University of Southern Mississippi. Mr. Reeves was the state’s lieutenant governor at the time.

Mr. Presley knows how to rouse a crowd, evoking a pastor in one moment and insult comic the next. He skewered Mr. Reeves at the candidate forum in McComb to cheers of approval and howling laughter, offering an almost cartoonish depiction of the governor as unfamiliar with and unsympathetic to the hardships facing the working poor.

“Like the pharaoh of old, his heart has turned to stone,” Mr. Presley said. He also took particular delight in roasting [*upgrades reportedly made*](https://www.thedailybeast.com/gop-guv-tate-reeves-spent-millions-in-tax-dollars-on-governors-mansion-upgrades) to the governor’s mansion, like a special shelter for lemon trees and a pricey ice maker (“It better make that good Sonic ice!”).

At various stops, he has told crowds about a promise to his wife, Katelyn, whom he married just three months ago: If he wins, they will feed the homeless out of the governor’s mansion. His concern for the needy, he says, grew out his own experience enduring the turmoil and indignities of poverty.

Some who came out to hear him speak recently said they were drawn to Mr. Presley because his early struggles sounded familiar — and simply because he was there, reaching out to them.

“Look where he is,” said Joseph M. Daughtry Sr., the police chief in Columbus, where Mr. Presley had navigated a maze of country highways to speak to a few dozen people at a community center in a poor, largely Black neighborhood.

“We have somebody who understands us,” Chief Daughtry said. “Somebody who cares about us. And somebody who is not ashamed of us.”

Mr. Presley walked over to shake his hand.

PHOTO: Brandon Presley, a gubernatorial candidate in Mississippi, believes he can do what no Democrat has done in decades: get elected. (PHOTOGRAPH BY EMILY KASK FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A18.

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**End of Document**



[***‘Southern/Modern’: Rediscovering the Radical Art Below the Mason-Dixon Line; Critic’s Pick***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69S1-3B91-DXY4-X007-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Section:** ARTS; design

**Length:** 1887 words

**Byline:** Walker Mimms

**Highlight:** In the first half of the 20th century, socially conscious artists in the South were great innovators, reflecting on race, progress and the disappearing plantocracy.

**Body**

In the first half of the 20th century, socially conscious artists in the South were great innovators, reflecting on race, progress and the disappearing plantocracy.

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Not here. These 100 or so paintings and prints suggest an invigorating direction that was there all along: a pungent pairing of social history with artistic experiment during the first half of the 20th century. By bringing together professional artists who worked below the Mason-Dixon Line (exempting Florida) between 1913 and 1956, and as far west as Arkansas and Missouri, “Southern/Modern” surveys the riches of a stylistic evolution you will find at, say, the Museum of Modern Art in New York — the Impressionism that loosened up the 1900s, the Cubism of the 1910s, the Surrealism of the ’20s, the modeled social realism of the ’30s, the feral abstractions of the ’40s and ’50s — as told by a region often buried in the art history books.

Among its big, engrossing canvases by astute social observers like [*George Biddle*](https://americanart.si.edu/artist/george-biddle-402) (the architect of the New Deal’s Federal Artist Project, which gave many of these artists work during the Depression) and [*Lamar Dodd*](https://www.nga.gov/collection/artist-info.1228.html) (a founding father of art education in Georgia), we find a moving imitation of Monet by the Alabama painting teacher and leader of the Dixie Art Colony, [*John Kelly Fitzpatrick.*](http://dixieartcolony.org/john-kelly-fitzpatrick/)

The lobes of cyan and mud-green in Fitzpatrick’s [*“Negro Baptising”*](https://encyclopediaofalabama.org/media/negro-baptising/) (1930) jelly into a sunny riverbend. Two parishioners are about to be dunked. In the distance, further stripes of paint indicate hundreds of Black spectators on the bank — none personalized but each a person. Around them all, a tall bridge traces the inner margins of the canvas, with the piers of the bridge at right and its guard rail running along the top. It’s a framing device [*George Bellows*](https://www.nga.gov/collection/art-object-page.46557.html) and other urbans employed to remind us where we, the viewers, stand — that is, outside the action. But in Fitzpatrick’s pastoral setting, the bridge illuminates our subject: A maligned community, in other words, will baptize wherever it must, even under the irksome wagon-clack of overhead traffic.

Curated by Martha R. Severens (formerly of the Greenville County Museum of Art in South Carolina) and Jonathan Stuhlman (of the Mint Museum in Charlotte, N.C.), “Southern/Modern” broadcasts the latest trends in the presentation of Southern art, such as you’ll find in the richly contextualized American sections of the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts or the Georgia Museum’s own permanent collection. In this telling, art is a global and porous affair. And far-flung provinces serve as entrepôts to and from the vanguard — not just detours to be “represented” like [*Nashville hot chicken*](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/voraciously/wp/2018/07/12/pringles-could-never-have-captured-nashvilles-hot-chicken-in-a-chip/) in the flavor portfolio of Pringles.

Black artists — and not just subjects — share half the stage, for instance. Take [*Hale Woodruff,*](https://americanart.si.edu/artist/hale-woodruff-5477) a Nashville resident who studied Picasso in 1920s Paris and learned muralism under Diego Rivera in Mexico. Only the Depression could have brought the painter back stateside, reluctantly, where he taught in Georgia and, on a Rosenwald grant for Black students, studied soil degradation.

In [*“Southland”*](https://www.bridgemanimages.com/en-US/woodruff/southland-c-1936-oil-on-canvas/oil-on-canvas/asset/7276998) (1936), one fruit of this labor, Woodruff arranges a rural hillside into a stressful, almost Cubist pyramid: at top are the ruins of an old manor house, at right a wasted shack, with dead stumps and tree trunks lying around. After centuries of enslavement, and now sharecropping, King Cotton had sucked the land dry. But Woodruff renders the actual painted earth in tones of salmon and sherbet — singing, iridescent hues that negate all the death. It’s a Rorschach test: do you see a wasteland, or a vibrant painterly possibility?

By the 1930s, federal initiatives like the Tennessee Valley Authority promised development in the South. For locals, the question became how much new pavement and electricity could be borne by their culture, by their “ma’ams” and “sirs,” their gentility, their neighborly warmth. At Vanderbilt University a group of romantic-minded poets, calling themselves the Agrarians, protested “the gospel of Progress” in a 1930 manifesto called [*“I’ll Take My Stand.”*](https://archive.org/details/illtakemystandso0000unse_h3t2) [*Robert Penn Warren, aged 25, wrote an essay for the book,*](https://www.newyorker.com/books/page-turner/some-kind-of-renewal-revisiting-robert-penn-warrens-civil-rights-interviews) suggesting Black people form their own agrarian state — a defense of segregation he would spend the rest of his life atoning for.

Less famously, visual artists amplified this fear of advancement. See the sterilized surrealism of the [*Virginian painter Jewett Campbell*](https://www.moma.org/collection/works/78963), where skyscrapers spring from the natural environment. Or the watercolor satire of Homer Ellertson: in his suavely executed [*“Dean House, Spartanburg, S.C.”*](https://thejohnsoncollection.org/homer-ellertson-dean-house-spartanburg-sc/) (circa 1932), a Goodyear service station has set up shop in the front yard of a plantation home. The sepia tone of this work feels retrofuturist, as if we’re glimpsing some coming destiny from an even later date.

More than Agrarian conservatism, though, the painters in this show echo what the historian C. Vann Woodward later called the [*“irony of Southern history”*](https://archive.org/details/burdenofsouthern00wood_0/page/186/mode/2up?view=theater): the fact that, as America dominated the global stage from the Monroe Doctrine to World War II, the southeastern quadrant of the country persisted in a long line of self-destructive, embarrassing regressions, from a feudal regime to a secession attempt to an apartheid state.

Hatred of that history seems to have driven the Virginia-born painter [*Robert Gwathmey*](https://americanart.si.edu/artist/robert-gwathmey-1998) to adopt a style somewhere between primitivism and the illustrated wartime poster. In the ropy, segmented outlines and loud, flat colors of his “Sunny South” (1944), an angry piece of agitprop on loan from a private collection, workers hunch wearily with their sacks of cotton in an empty field. At left and right, an old plantation and a modern factory straddle the scene. It is an allegory of pre- and post-Emancipation, with little in visible difference for the ***working class***. At center, the sons and daughters of the Confederacy gather around a statue of their departed hero, Robert E. Lee.

Every exhibition argues something by virtue of its parameters, and the dates at play here remind us that the triumph of American art — the seminal Armory show of 1913 to the death of Jackson Pollock in 1956 — took place alongside the rise of civil rights in modern political discourse.

In [*“When the Klan Passes By”*](https://www.michaelrosenfeldart.com/artists/james-a-porter-1905-1970) (circa 1939), the Howard University painter [*James A. Porter*](https://americanart.si.edu/artist/james-porter-3843) uses dark but thin brushloads to convey, through the averted eyes of the Black family in the foreground, the private consequences of race terrorism. (If the dumpy Klan cartoons in [*Philip Guston’s current retrospective*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/01/arts/philip-guston-show-debate.html#:~:text=The%20museums%20collaborating%20on%20the,hundreds%20of%20prominent%20artists%20signed) deserve a trigger warning, Porter’s ice-bath of domestic fear needs a trigger embargo.) Unlike Porter, Gwathmey’s allegory of race, with his setting like Monopoly houses, is an imagined, didactic one: His laborers come in all skin tones, arguing that the old plantocracy divided the classes for many years to come, dooming poor whites as well as Blacks.

This is a model exhibition: a targeted provincial study of the innovations we too often associate with Paris and New York. It will be relevant to the many Northern institutions that house these artists (several appear in the Met’s current collection show on the Depression, “Art for the Millions”). A few blue-chip artists (Zelda Fitzgerald, Thomas Hart Benton, Jacob Lawrence) fit comfortably among fascinating lesser-knowns. Last fall in Los Angeles, I saw (and loved) [*a similar survey of Korean art*](https://www.lacma.org/art/exhibition/space-between-modern-korean-art). Now I want one on the Rust Belt, Canada, North Africa, India. What did “modern” mean to the rest of the world?

In January, “Southern/Modern” will travel to Nashville (a city whose controversial gentrification will let these pictures really talk), then to Charlotte and Memphis. But no farther north. Which is a shame, because New York’s influence on the South was not only direct and palpable, as the exhibition persuasively argues, but also reciprocal, which the show does less to explore: At Cooper Union in the late ’40s, [*Gwathmey taught*](https://archive.org/details/sweeperupafterar0000sand/page/136/) the future Pop star [*Alex Katz*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/20/arts/design/alex-katz-guggenheim-museum-painter.html). From his new post at New York University in the 1950s, escaping the South once again, Woodruff became a rare Abstract Expressionist of African descent. To the Big Apple, graduates of [*Black Mountain College*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/07/07/t-magazine/black-mountain-college.html), in North Carolina, returned like winged pollinators to a hive. (Representing the Black Mountain contingent here is an early jigsaw-paned composition by one graduate, Elaine de Kooning, and a geometric abstraction by her instructor Josef Albers, a German refugee from fascism.)

The loosey-goosey 1950s close the show, and though Ms. de Kooning is name-brand avant-garde, it was a new abstractionist (new to this reviewer, at least) who really grabbed me. After the war, the printmaker [*Caroline Durieux*](https://www.lsumoa.org/louisiana-abstraction-labels), neighbor to Faulkner in New Orleans, sourced isotopes from the Oak Ridge National Laboratory in Tennessee, where the uranium was enriched to level Hiroshima. With scientists, [*Durieux developed radioactive inks*](https://archive.org/details/sim_modern-lithography_1959-12_27_12/page/48/mode/2up) that would stay active for 25,000 years.

One of Durieux’s electron prints, “Carnival, Circus, or Green Abstraction” (1956), a beguiling centrifugal arrangement of ripples and flakes in hot primary colors, toured Berlin, India and Pakistan in a group show called “The Peaceful Uses of Atomic Energy.” If that exhibition was some big act of Cold War propaganda, I don’t care. It came as welcome relief, after our summer of “Oppenheimer,” to find such invention and such buoyancy in yet another Southern darkness.

Southern/Modern

Through Dec. 10, Georgia Museum of Art, 90 Carlton Street, Athens, Ga., (706) 542-4662; [*georgiamuseum.org*](http://georgiamuseum.org/). The show will travel to the Frist Art Museum (Jan. 26, 2024, through April 28), 919 Broadway, Nashville, Tenn., (615) 244-3340; fristartmuseum.org.

PHOTOS: Clockwise from top: Overtones of Monet in John Kelly Fitzpatrick’s “Negro Baptising” (1930); Caroline Durieux’s “Carnival, Circus, or Green Abstraction” (1956); Hale Woodruff’s “Southland” (1936); Robert Gwathmey’s “Sunny South” (1944) vented his rage at the region’s racism and classism; in Homer Ellertson’s satire “The Dean House, Spartanburg, S.C.” (circa 1932), a service station has set up shop in a plantation home’s yard; with its subjects’ averted eyes, James A. Porter’s “When the Klan Passes By” (1939) evokes the consequences of race terrorism. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY MONTGOMERY MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS; VIA MICHAEL ROSENFELD GALLERY, NEW YORK; JOHNSON COLLECTION, SPARTANBURG, S.C; UNC PRESS; ESTATE OF HALE WOODRUFF/LICENSED BY VAGA AT ARTISTS RIGHTS SOCIETY (ARS), NY; VIA AMISTAD RESEARCH CENTER, NEW ORLEANS, LA; LSU MUSEUM OF ART, BATON ROUGE) (C14-C15) This article appeared in print on page C14, C15.

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[***Red and Blue America Will Never Be the Same; Guest Essay***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6619-66G1-DXY4-X2B1-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** Thomas B. Edsall

**Highlight:** There are long-term trends for both parties to be happy about.

**Body**

Donald Trump’s dominance of the political stage for the past seven years galvanized what had been a slow-burning realignment, creating a profound upheaval in the electorate and in both the Democratic and Republican parties.

The support Trump received in rural communities and the animosity he provoked among well-educated suburbanites accelerated the ongoing inversion — on measures of income, education and geographic region — of white Democratic and Republican voters. (White voters [*make up 67 percent*](https://www.cnn.com/election/2020/exit-polls/president/national-results) of the electorate.)

In 2018, according to [*ProximityOne*](http://proximityone.com/cd.htm#apiaccess), a website that analyzes the demographics of congressional districts, Democratic members of Congress represented 74 of the 100 most affluent districts, including 24 of the top 25. Conversely, Republican members of Congress represented 54 of the 100 districts with the lowest household income. The median household income in districts represented by Democrats was $66,829, which is $10,324 more than the median for districts represented by Republicans, at $56,505.

The 2018 data stands in contrast to the income pattern a half-century ago. In 1973, Republicans held 63 of the 100 highest-income districts and Democrats held 73 of the 100 lowest-income districts.

These trends prompted [*Nolan McCarty*](https://www.princeton.edu/~nmccarty/), a political scientist at Princeton, to comment in an email that the Democrats

are mostly the party of the master’s degree — modestly advantaged economically but not exactly elite. On the flip side, the Republicans are the party of the associate degree (a two-year college degree), less educated than the Democrats but not exactly the proletariat.

[*Richard Pildes*](https://its.law.nyu.edu/facultyprofiles/index.cfm?fuseaction=profile.overview&amp;personid=20200), a law professor at N.Y.U., argued that

politics throughout the Western democracies is in recent years in the midst of the most dramatic reconfiguration of the political parties and their bases of support in seventy or so years. Since the New Deal in the United States and WWII in Western Europe, the base of the dominant parties of the left was less affluent, less highly educated voters; the dominant parties of the right drew their primary support from higher income, more highly educated voters.

Now, Pildes continued, “we are witnessing the complete inversion of that pattern, and the question is whether this is a temporary or more enduring realignment of the political parties throughout the West.”

In his email, Pildes noted that in the 1940s

Democratic candidates received twenty-two points less support from voters in the top ten percent of the income bracket than from those in the bottom ninety percent. By 2012, that gap had dropped to only an eight-point difference and in 2016, voters in the top ten percent had become eight points more likely to vote for Democratic candidates. Similarly, in the 1940s, those with university degrees in the United States were twenty points less likely to vote for Democrats, while in 2000 there was no difference and by 2016, they were thirteen points more likely to vote for Democrats.

The ramifications of these developments, which predate Trump’s entry into presidential politics in 2015, “radiate throughout the electoral process in the United States,” Pildes argued:

Take the Electoral College: for most of the time from the 1950s until 2016, it was actually biased toward the Democrats. But in 2016, it suddenly became strongly biased toward the Republicans, and 2020 added even more to that bias.

At the same time, there are counter-developments more favorable to the left.

[*Nicholas Stephanopoulos*](https://hls.harvard.edu/faculty/directory/11787/Stephanopoulos), a law professor at Harvard who focuses on redistricting and demographic trends, argued in an email that “the country’s political geography is now less pro-Republican.” While “the conventional wisdom has it that Democrats are disadvantaged in redistricting because of their inefficient over-concentration in cities,” he continued, “the Trump era seems to have changed the country’s political geography in ways that are beneficial to Democrats.”

Trump, Stephanopoulos continued,

modestly reduced the enormous Democratic edge in cities, thus undoing some of this packing of Democratic voters. Trump also did significantly better in rural areas, to the point that some of them are about as red (and so as packed with Republicans) as cities are blue. And Trump bled support in the suburbs, so that the country’s most populous and competitive areas now lean toward the Democrats instead of the Republicans.

As a result, Stephanopoulos argued,

the U.S. House will likely be close to unbiased in partisan terms in 2022. A [*group of scholars*](https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=4027082) peg the likely bias at around 3 percent pro-Republican, while [*Nate Silver’s model*](https://projects.fivethirtyeight.com/2022-election-forecast/house/?cid=rrpromo), which incorporates additional variables like incumbency and polling, thinks the likely bias will be around 1 percent pro-Democratic.

Republicans won 234 seats in 2012 despite the fact that Democrats won, by 2 percent, a majority of votes cast in House elections, according to Stephanopoulos, “but Nate Silver now thinks that Republicans will win the national House vote by 5 percent in 2022, yet only pick up the same 234 seats they got in 2012.”

[*Robert M. Stein*](https://profiles.rice.edu/faculty/robert-m-stein), a political scientist at Rice University, agrees with Stephanopolous and cites trends in Texas to show the pro-Democratic shift:

Consider the Texas Republican Party’s redistricting plan in 2010 and its durability over the last decade. Beginning in 2010 Republicans held a 100 to 50 seat advantage in the Texas House of Representatives. By 2020, this margin had shrunk to 83-67. In each biennial election since 2010, Democrats picked up House seats, mostly in suburban and exurban areas of the state.

The shift, Stein continued,

was largely driven by the changing demography of the state. Another source of this shift can be laid at the feet of candidates like Donald Trump and Ted Cruz. The result, at least in Texas, is that some of the most competitive areas (districts) in the state are not the big cities, but exurban and suburban counties including Collin, Denton, Fort Bend and Williamson. Prior to 2016 voters in these counties were trending Republican; now they are leaning Democratic or tossups.

[*Brian Schaffner*](https://as.tufts.edu/politicalscience/people/faculty/brian-schaffner), a political scientist at Tufts, cited surveys conducted by the [*Cooperative Election Study*](https://cooperativeelectionstudy.shinyapps.io/CumulativeHouseVote/) from 2010 to 2020 showing that “one of the most significant shifts we see in our data is increasing Democratic strength in suburbs, especially since the early 2010s.”

Schaffner provided data from the study showing that the Democratic share of the two-party vote rose from 54.5 to 63.5 percent in urban areas over the decade and remained low — 35.2 to 36.1 percent — in rural America. The biggest shift, 12.5 points, was in suburban areas, which went from 41.8 percent Democratic in 2010 to 54.3 percent in 2020.

Nolan McCarty suggested that these trends may prove beneficial to the Democratic Party:

The natural tilt of our single-member district system has shifted away from the Republicans as the rural vote moves toward the Republicans and the suburbs move toward the Democrats. But it is not clear what the aggregate effects of those shifts will be. It should help the House Democrats in November but it is not clear how much.

The effects of these shifts on the Senate and Electoral College, McCarty continued, will be slower in the short term but could eventually become significant: “Once such changes push states like Georgia, Texas and North Carolina sufficiently toward the Democrats, they would be the party with the structural advantage in the Electoral College and Senate.”

[*Jonathan Rodden*](https://politicalscience.stanford.edu/people/jonathan-rodden), a political scientist at Stanford, noted in an email the possibility that very recent changes in suburban voting will hurt the future prospects of the Republican Party:

The most noteworthy change to political geography in 2020 was the success of Biden in pivotal suburban areas. In the most recent round of redistricting, when examining proposed districting plans — whether drawn by computer simulations or humans — the number of Democratic-leaning districts in a state was often greater if one added up the votes of Biden and Trump in 2020 than if one used past presidential results, Senate results, gubernatorial results, or some other down-ballot elections.

The geographic distribution of Biden votes, Rodden continued, “was more ‘efficient’ for the Democrats than that of other recent Democratic candidates.” But, he cautioned,

what is unclear is whether this was a specific reaction to Donald Trump as a candidate in relatively educated suburbs, or a lasting trend in political geography that will outlive the Trump era. The latter is at least plausible, especially in the wake of the Dobbs decision, but it is too early to tell. Even in 2020, a non-trivial number of these suburban Biden voters split their tickets and voted for Republican House candidates.

I asked Rodden what it means for statewide elections in contested states if these trends continue. He replied:

This really depends on the numbers in each state, but in sun-belt states that are gaining educated and/or minority in-migrants, like Georgia and Arizona, we already have evidence that this was a pretty good trade for statewide Democrats, but in other states where in-migration is limited, like those in the Upper Midwest, this trade might work out better for statewide Republicans.

Along similar lines, [*William Frey*](https://www.brookings.edu/experts/william-h-frey/), a demographer and a senior fellow at Brookings, emphasized in an email that “Biden won the suburbs in 2020, I believe largely due to his gains among minorities and college whites.” Even if Republicans and Trump made marginal gains among minority voters, the support of these voters for Democrats remained overwhelming.

In a 2021 Brookings paper, “[*Biden’s victory came from the suburbs*](https://www.brookings.edu/research/bidens-victory-came-from-the-suburbs/),” Frey pointed to Georgia, where

Demographic shifts — including brisk growth in the state’s Democratic-leaning Black population, gains in Latino/Hispanic, and Asian Americans voters, and an increase in white college graduates, especially in the Atlanta metropolitan area — served to make the state competitive for Democrats this year.

In a separate 2022 paper, “Today’s suburbs are symbolic of America’s rising diversity: [*A 2020 census portrait*](https://www.brookings.edu/research/todays-suburbs-are-symbolic-of-americas-rising-diversity-a-2020-census-portrait/),” Frey focuses on the continuing stream of minorities moving into the suburbs. From 1990 to 2020, Frey found, the percentage of Asian Americans living in suburbs grew from 53.4 to 63.1 percent, of Hispanics from 49.5 to 61.4 percent and of African Americans, from 36.6 to 54.3 percent, the largest increase.

Has geographic division, pitting a disproportionately rural Republican Party against an urban Democratic Party, added a new dimension to polarization making consensus and cooperation even more difficult?

I posed a series of questions to an eclectic group of political scholars.

[*Frances Lee*](https://politics.princeton.edu/people/frances-lee), a political scientist at Princeton, replied by email:

Rather than claiming that the G.O.P. is becoming the party of the ***working class***, what I see is a long-term trend away from a party system organized along class lines. Knowing that a person is wealthy (or low income) isn’t very predictive of what party that person will prefer. The parties are much better sorted by other factors — region, religion, race — than by social class.

This isn’t a new phenomenon, Lee noted, but Trump intensified these divisions: “Trump’s candidacy and presidency accelerated pre-existing trends undercutting the class basis of the parties. For a Republican, Trump had unusual appeal to ***working-class*** voters and was unusually alienating to well-off suburbanites.”

[*James Druckman*](https://polisci.northwestern.edu/people/core-faculty/james-druckman.html), a political scientist at Northwestern University, draws an interesting distinction: “I do think the perception in the country is that Republicans are ***working class*** but not necessarily for economic reasons directly but rather because of diffuse feelings of injustice translated into rhetoric about mistreatment, unfairness and immigrants taking jobs.”

At the same time, Druckman contended:

Democrats are vulnerable to charges of being the party of the elite for two reasons — one is that a small strain of the party is made up of extreme progressives who offer rhetoric that can be alienating when too wrapped up in politically correct language. Second, the growing anti-intellectualism in parts of the Republican Party reflects the significant degree of education polarization we observe.

[*Herbert Kitschelt*](https://scholars.duke.edu/person/h3738), a political scientist at Duke, rejects some recent attempts at classification:

Are the Democrats the party of the elites? Yes and no. It is the case that high-income high-education professionals in the last 20 years have moved increasingly to the Democratic Party but these are people most of whom are on the moderate wing of the party. That is to say, they embrace a mildly redistributive agenda on economic issues such as Social Security, universal health care, and support for families with children, and a mildly libertarian social agenda on questions of abortion, family relations, gender relations and ethnic relations.

These moderate, mainstream Democrats are

far removed from the more radical, progressive wing and its agenda on identity, diversity, equity, and social transformation. The real driving force of the progressive wing of the Democratic Party are occupational strata that are characterized by low- to middle-incomes and high education. These progressive voters primarily work in social and cultural services, in large urban areas.

This progressive constituency, Kitschelt argued, is

quantitatively more important for the Democratic electorate than the high-education high-income more moderate segment. By embracing the agenda of “defund the police” and cultural transformation of the schools, this progressive constituency puts itself at odds with many lower- and middle-income families across all ethnic groups.

Insofar as the Democratic Party adopts the progressive agenda, Kitschelt wrote, it endangers “its electoral rainbow coalition,” noting that both African American and Hispanic families “are highly concerned about improving the police, not dismantling the police” and about “the quality of basic school instruction.”

On the Republican side, Kitschelt argues that

the core element is not “***working class***” in any conventional sense of the phrase at all: It is low education, but relatively high-income people. These voters are overwhelmingly white, and many are of the evangelical religious conviction. In occupational terms, they are concentrated in small business, both owners and core employees, in sectors such as construction, crafts, real estate, small retail, personal services and agriculture.

Kitschelt continued: “Many of these citizens tend to live in suburban and rural areas. They are the true spearhead of Republican activism, and especially of the Trumpist persuasion.”

Pildes addressed these issues in his October 2021 paper, “[*Political Fragmentation in Democracies of the West*](https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3935012).”

“The domination of the parties of the left by the more highly educated,” he wrote, “in combination with these cultural conflicts and policy differences, are an important element in the shift of the less educated, less affluent voters away from the parties of the left.”

Pildes cites [*American National Elections Studies*](https://electionstudies.org/) data on white voters in the 2016 election showing that Trump won among all income categories of whites making less than $175,000, while Hillary Clinton won only among whites who made in excess of $175,000.

Pildes contended that defections from the Democratic Party among conservative and moderate minority voters pose a significant threat to the long-term viability of the party:

Democratic support plunged from 49 percent to 27 percent among Hispanic conservatives between 2012 and 2020 and from 69 percent to 65 percent among Hispanic moderates. These changes suggest that ideology, rather than identity, is beginning to provide more of a voting basis among some Hispanics. If a marginally greater number of ***working-class*** Latino or Black voters start to vote the way that white ***working-class*** voters do, the ability of the Democratic Party to win national elections will be severely weakened.

[*Bart Bonikowski*](https://as.nyu.edu/faculty/bart-bonikowski.html), a professor of sociology and politics at N.Y.U., noted in an email that “the claim that the Republicans are becoming a party of the ‘***working class***’ is mistaken.” Not only are a majority of ***working class*** African Americans and Hispanics Democratic, but, “more accurately, the Republicans have become a party of disaffected white voters, many of whom hold resentments against ethnoracial minorities and a waning commitment to liberal democratic values.” Given “the built-in biases of the Electoral College and Senate — along with gerrymandering and voter disenfranchisement — states with larger shares of noncollege whites will continue to exert outsized influence on U.S. politics, persistently disadvantaging Democrats even when their candidates and policies are broadly popular.”

[*Robert Saldin*](https://www.umt.edu/political-science/people/?ID=1169), a political scientist at the University of Montana, argued by email that “Geographic polarization, or the urban-rural divide, is arguably the most defining feature of American politics.” Over the past 20 years, he continued, “the Democratic Party has hemorrhaged support in the countryside. They’ve got a five-alarm fire in rural America, but much of the party’s elite doesn’t even see the smoke.”

For the Democrats, in Saldin’s view,

trading the countryside for the cities has come at a political cost even if the party routinely wins many more total votes than the G.O.P. nationally. That’s because geography plays an outsized role in our political system, particularly in the Electoral College and the Senate.

Consider the Dakotas, Saldin wrote:

It wasn’t that long ago that their congressional delegations were packed with Democrats, but that’s inconceivable now. And to the extent that the same thing is happening in other low-population states, this presents a real problem for Democrats in the Senate.

Saldin suggested:

Here’s another way of conceptualizing it. Idaho, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota and Wyoming have less than 2 percent of the national population, but their ten senators have the same collective power in the Senate as those representing the five most populous states, California, Texas, Florida, New York and Pennsylvania. If a party managed a clean sweep in those five big-box states in flyover country, that would comprise 20 percent of what you need for a Senate majority before you even look at the other 98 percent of the country. The G.O.P. is now very close to accomplishing that feat, with Montana’s Jon Tester the last Senate Democrat standing in those states.

Barring an extraordinary economic turnaround or still more explosive disclosures of criminal malfeasance by Trump, these demographic trends may have a modest effect on the outcome on Election Day in November. They do, however, suggest that the balance of political power is more fluid than widely recognized. It should undermine the confidence of those predicting victory for either the left or the right in 2024.

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[***The G.O.P. Is Getting It Wrong About DeSantis***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:679J-4BD1-JBG3-603Y-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; Editorial Desk; Pg. 20

**Length:** 999 words

**Byline:** By Lulu Garcia-Navarro

**Body**

Engulfed in turmoil in Washington, D.C., and the humiliation and setbacks of their party leaders, Republicans can be forgiven for looking elsewhere for a savior. Former President Donald Trump was, until those final minutes, largely ineffective in getting his ideological offspring to make Kevin McCarthy speaker, and so hopeful eyes have turned yet again to that other Floridian.

''Wanna know who looks good right now and focusing on his state, constituents and staying out of the chaos and mayhem?'' Meghan McCain tweeted. ''DeSantis. DeSantis looks good right now.''

''Ron DeSantis looks like a grown-up here, and an adult,'' a former Trump adviser, David Urban, said on CNN the night Mr. McCarthy finally got the votes, ''where the Washington Republicans are kind of in a quagmire.''

Being smart enough to stay out of the hot mess in the House is hardly the sign of political genius, but there is no doubt the newly re-elected governor of Florida has the wind at his back. After his commanding performance in the midterm elections, I informally polled my conservative family members in Miami, who all said they had dumped Mr. Trump and were on team DeSantis for '24. One colorfully called the former president she had voted for twice a ''whiny crybaby'' who could only talk about losing the last election. Ouch.

The case for Mr. DeSantis, according to them, isn't just that he looks comparatively sage next to Mr. Trump. It's also that he spoke out early against lockdowns and has overseen a growing economy. Florida now has the fastest-growing population in the country, a factoid that Mr. DeSantis's spokesman, Jeremy Redfern, immediately touted after it was announced. ''People vote with their feet,'' he said. ''We are proud to be a model for the nation, and an island of sanity in a sea of madness.''

Most criticism of Mr. DeSantis's national electability has been centered around his lack of charisma, which Mr. Trump crystallized by giving him the cumbersome nickname Ron DeSanctimonious. But focusing on personality and style obscures the governor's real failings: Florida is not a model for the nation, unless the nation wants to become unaffordable for everyone except rich snowbirds.

While my home state's popularity might indeed seem like good news for a governor with presidential ambitions, a closer look shows that Florida is underwater demographically. Most of those flocking there are aging boomers with deep pockets, adding to the demographic imbalance for what is already one of the grayest populations in the nation. This means that Florida won't have the younger workers needed to care for all those seniors. And while other places understand that immigrants, who often work in the service sector and agriculture, two of Florida's main industries, are vital to replenishing aging populations, Mr. DeSantis and the state G.O.P. are not exactly immigrant-friendly, enacting legislation to limit the ability of people with uncertain legal status to work in the state.

All of the new arrivals have contributed to a growing unaffordability crisis in Florida. You can see it everywhere, but I noticed it most distinctly on a recent visit to the waterfront in the popular neighborhood of Coconut Grove in South Florida. Over the holidays, I went to what had once been a beloved bar and casual restaurant called Scotty's Landing. It had been one of the few affordable places left to have a bite on Biscayne Bay, and it's where I had spent many Sundays listening to live music while sitting on white plastic chairs, eating fried fish sandwiches. It is now home to a vast complex centered on a high-end restaurant inspired by the motto ''vacation as a state of mind'' topped by an Instagramable sign flashing ''Miami'' in neon lights. Eighty-year-old wooden bungalows nearby now go for almost $2 million, and glitzy new projects have moved into historically Black neighborhoods like Little Haiti, pushing out local people.

While Mr. DeSantis has been busy limiting what can be taught in schools, flying immigrants to Northern states and punishing ''woke'' Disney, ***working-class*** Floridians are being priced out of many Florida cities. Miami now surpasses Los Angeles and New York City as the least-affordable city for housing in the United States, and joining it in the top five is the once ***working-class*** South Florida Cuban-American bastion of Hialeah. Miami is also second in income inequality, with levels roughly comparable with Colombia's and Panama's. Rents are soaring across many other parts of the state as well. And health care costs are unbearably high compared with those in other parts of the country because workers in the state have to shoulder a higher percentage of premiums.

The fact is, Florida is having many of the same problems as its liberal archnemesis California, and its Republican-led State Legislature is doing little to help less-affluent families thrive. More than 76 percent of Floridians live on the coasts, but in an era of fierce storms due to climate change and rising sea levels, many can't afford or even qualify for insurance for their homes, especially those who live in older buildings or in low-income areas. Lawmakers in Tallahassee ended the year giving insurance companies a huge bailout but doing little to reduce insurance costs for homeowners.

Of course, not all of this is Mr. DeSantis's fault. But those wanting to anoint him as the next great hope of the Republican Party should take a minute. Mr. DeSantis may look attractive now compared with the mess in Congress, but the Florida he has overseen is anything but paradise.

Lulu Garcia-Navarro is the host of the Opinion podcast ''First Person'' and grew up in Florida.

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[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/01/12/opinion/desantis-florida-income-inequality.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/01/12/opinion/desantis-florida-income-inequality.html)

**Graphic**

This article appeared in print on page A20.

**Load-Date:** January 13, 2023

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[***Sam Fender, a Songwriter Caught Between Stardom and His Hometown***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64DS-NYC1-DXY4-X1Y7-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

December 30, 2021 Thursday 16:27 EST

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**Section:** ARTS; music

**Length:** 1161 words

**Byline:** Alex Marshall

**Highlight:** The musician is fast becoming one of Britain’s biggest rock acts with tracks about ***working class*** life in North Shields. Can he let himself leave the town?

**Body**

The musician is fast becoming one of Britain’s biggest rock acts with tracks about ***working class*** life in North Shields. Can he let himself leave the town?

NORTH SHIELDS, England — Sam Fender, a singer-songwriter often labeled[*Britain’s answer to Bruce Springsteen*](https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/sam-fender-seventeen-going-under-a-deep-thinker-whos-the-boss-of-north-shields-rw790phfz), realized his life had changed for good on Halloween.

This year he bought “eight massive boxes” of chocolate for any children who might knock on his door in North Shields, a ***working class*** town that sits on the banks of the River Tyne in northeast England.

Fender expected the stash to last all night, but it went almost instantly.

“Everyone in the neighborhood was, like, ‘That’s Sam Fender’s house, let’s go knock!’” the musician recalled in a recent interview at his studio a short walk from the town center, in a nondescript building surrounded by car mechanics’ workshops. The trick or treaters’ parents were more keen on getting selfies with the star than candy, whether they knew his music or not. “That scared us a bit,” he said. “It was just nuts.”

Over the past year, Fender, 27, has become one of Britain’s biggest music stars, but said he still doesn’t want to be “that guy” who is too famous to answer his door on Halloween — a position that touches on a tension running through his newfound success: how to be a star while remaining part of the local community that defines his songwriting.

His second album of anthemic pop-rock, “Seventeen Going Under,” released in October, quickly hit the top of the British charts, just like his debut did, and since then he’s sold out arenas, announced a 45,000-capacity outdoor show in London and charmed the British public by [*appearing hung over on morning TV*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qRRUjM_goZY).

For a few weeks this fall, the album’s title track sparked a [*TikTok*](https://www.chroniclelive.co.uk/news/showbiz-news/sam-fender-song-tiktok-trend-22146441) trend because of lyrics — “I was far too scared to hit him, but I would hit him in a heartbeat now” — that speak to suffering at the hands of bullies and domestic abusers.

[Video: [*Watch on YouTube.*](http://youtube.com/embed/WAifgn2Cvo8)]

All that success had been built on the back of North Shields, a depressed town of some 30,000 people in a region where [*34 percent of children live in poverty*](https://www.nechildpoverty.org.uk/facts/), but is also home, Fender said, to some of “the funniest, most loving, caring people you’ve ever met.”

Fender sets most of his songs in the town, often referencing local pubs or fistfights on the nearby chilly beaches, and sings about his and his friends’ experiences, including [*troubled childhoods*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WAifgn2Cvo8), [*male suicides*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K4GYYt40bqU) and widespread [*political alienation*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o5p8dGHELOc).

Owain Davies, Fender’s manager who was also born locally, said Fender’s songs were “emotive and powerful,” but their subject matter allows them to “speak for a lot of people up here — a lot of us.”

Now Fender is in a sort of limbo, unable to have a normal life in North Shields or Newcastle, the nearest city, as he tries to navigate fame, even as he desperately wants to. “I’m bouncing between two complete opposites and I’m in a stage now where I don’t feel I belong in either of them,” Fender said, breaking eye contact only for bites of a chicken burger with copious mayonnaise he’d ordered from his local pub.

The thought of leaving home was difficult for an artist in the northeast in a way it wouldn’t necessarily be for someone from London, he explained: “We’re tribal. Anything from Newcastle that does good belongs to Newcastle.”

At a time when many British music stars attended performing arts schools and arrive primed for success, Fender’s route to fame is more illustrative of the barriers class can still present. Class has long animated music here, as a topic for songs and a badge of honor: The Clash made supporting workers’ rights part of its mission and the Sex Pistols sneered at the Queen; the [*Britpop battles of the 1990s*](https://archive.nytimes.com/query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage-940CE0D81139F931A15753C1A963958260.html) pitted the middle-class Blur against the ***working-class*** Oasis, as the arty Pulp sang about posh outsiders slumming it with common people.

After initially growing up on a middle class street in North Shields, things became difficult, Fender said, after his parents divorced when he was 8. As a teenager, he lived with his mother, a nurse who had to stop work because she suffered from [*fibromyalgia*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/well/patient-voices-fibromyalgia.html), a condition that causes pain and fatigue.

“We were always having to beg, borrow and steal off anyone who could help her,” Fender said.

At 18, Fender was working in a local pub to support them both when Davies, the manager, came in. At his boss’s encouragement, Fender played the Beatles song “Get Back” followed by one of his own tracks.

Davies, recalling that moment in a telephone interview, said he’d drunk several pints of beer by that point but was still “totally struck by this incredible voice.” He immediately got on the phone to book Fender some proper shows.

“It feels like a Disney story when you tell it,” Fender said, adding, “Davies saved my life.”

What followed was far from a fairy tale of overnight success, though. For the next few years, Fender kept playing gigs and writing songs, “trying to figure out who I was,” he said.

Then, age 20, he became seriously ill (he won’t discuss the condition’s specifics) and sat in the hospital thinking, “If I’m going to die young, I want to make sure I’ve wrote something worth listening to.” Soon, he was writing songs about his life in North Shields.

This local focus has won him fans far from Britain. Steven Van Zandt, a veteran member of Bruce Springsteen’s E Street Band who regularly plays Fender’s music on his radio show in the United States, said in a telephone interview that Fender “could have taken the easy route” thanks to his voice and looks. Instead, Fender chose to sing “these intensely personal songs of ***working class*** life that had no guarantee of success,” Van Zandt said, calling that decision “courageous.”

Fender seemed overjoyed some of his heroes, who include Springsteen, loved his music, but in an hourlong interview, he returned to talking about his hometown again and again. At one point, he mentioned a campaign he led last year to stop the local council from charging people money for calling its emergency help lines for the homeless. After [*Fender took to social media*](https://twitter.com/samfendermusic/status/1332337896930631680) to complain about the problem, the council promised to make the lines free.

“I sometimes feel like, ‘Am I really doing anything that good?’” Fender said. That was a rare moment when he felt he was, he said.

Fender insisted he would never leave North Shields behind and became visibly anxious when talking about the possibility. But Halloween night and other similar experiences had shown him it might be time to try living somewhere else for at least a few months. Somewhere that doesn’t feel like a “goldfish bowl,” he said, maybe New York, maybe London, somewhere that is “the opposite of where I’m from.” The only thing for certain was his songs wouldn’t change.

“You can take a lad out of Shields,” he said, “but you can’t take Shields out of the lad.”

PHOTO: In North Shields, England, which Sam Fender says is home to some of “the funniest, most loving, caring people you’ve ever met.” (PHOTOGRAPH BY MARY TURNER FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** December 31, 2021

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[***Republicans Are Getting It Wrong About DeSantis and Florida***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:679B-G1M1-DXY4-X04P-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

January 12, 2023 Thursday 10:30 EST

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 998 words

**Byline:** Lulu Garcia-Navarro

**Highlight:** Why the governor may not be the savior the GOP is hoping for.

**Body**

Engulfed in turmoil in Washington, D.C., and the humiliation and setbacks of their party leaders, Republicans can be forgiven for looking elsewhere for a savior. Former President Donald Trump was, until those final minutes, largely ineffective in getting his ideological offspring to make Kevin McCarthy speaker, and so hopeful eyes have turned yet again to that other Floridian.

“Wanna know who looks good right now and focusing on his state, constituents and staying out of the chaos and mayhem?” Meghan McCain [*tweeted*](https://twitter.com/MeghanMcCain/status/1610696266685595663). “DeSantis. DeSantis looks good right now.”

“Ron DeSantis looks like a grown-up here, and an adult,” a former Trump adviser, David Urban, said on CNN the night Mr. McCarthy finally got the votes, “where the Washington Republicans are kind of in a quagmire.”

Being smart enough to stay out of the hot mess in the House is hardly the sign of political genius, but there is no doubt the newly re-elected governor of Florida has the wind at his back. After his commanding performance in the midterm elections, I informally polled my conservative family members in Miami, who all said they had dumped Mr. Trump and were on team DeSantis for ’24. One colorfully called the former president she had voted for twice a “whiny crybaby” who could only talk about losing the last election. Ouch.

The case for Mr. DeSantis, according to them, isn’t just that he looks comparatively sage next to Mr. Trump. It’s also that he spoke out early against lockdowns and has overseen a growing economy. Florida now has the fastest-growing population in the country, a factoid that Mr. DeSantis’s spokesman, Jeremy Redfern, immediately touted after it was announced. “People vote with their feet,” he said. “We are proud to be a model for the nation, and an island of sanity in a sea of madness.”

Most criticism of Mr. DeSantis’s national electability has been centered around his [*lack of charisma*](https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2022/11/ron-desantis-awkward-trump-2024/672292/), which Mr. Trump crystallized by giving him the cumbersome nickname Ron DeSanctimonious. But focusing on personality and style obscures the governor’s real failings: Florida is not a model for the nation, unless the nation wants to become unaffordable for everyone except rich snowbirds.

While my home state’s popularity might indeed seem like good news for a governor with presidential ambitions, a closer look shows that Florida is underwater demographically. Most of those flocking there are aging boomers with deep pockets, adding to the demographic imbalance for what is already one of the grayest populations in the nation. This means that Florida won’t have the younger workers needed to care for all those seniors. And while [*other places*](https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/immigration/canada-us-increasing-immigration-labor-shortage-rcna64691) understand that immigrants, who often work in the service sector and agriculture, two of Florida’s main industries, are vital to replenishing aging populations, Mr. DeSantis and the state G.O.P. are not exactly immigrant-friendly, enacting legislation to limit the ability of people with uncertain legal status to work in the state.

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**Load-Date:** January 13, 2023

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[***It's Been a Tumultuous Week. What Does It Tell Us About 2024?***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:687J-BMS1-JBG3-64CB-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

May 15, 2023 Monday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; National Desk; Pg. 15; POLITICAL MEMO

**Length:** 1532 words

**Byline:** By Jonathan Weisman

**Body**

The presidential race has started to crystallize, with flawed standard-bearers, worried political parties and voters unhappy with their choices.

Eighteen months is an eternity in politics.

But rapid-fire and high-profile events over the past week have set the tone and clarified the stakes of a still nascent presidential race featuring an incumbent president and a Republican front-runner whom many Americans, according to polling, do not want as their choices -- but may feel resigned to accept.

The week began with a surprising poll -- probably an outlier -- that showed President Biden losing to both former President Donald J. Trump and his closest presumptive primary competitor, Gov. Ron DeSantis of Florida.

Then in quick succession came a jury's verdict holding Mr. Trump liable for sexual abuse, a raucous New Hampshire town hall that brought the former president's falsehoods and bluster back into the spotlight, the lifting of pandemic-era controls at the U.S.-Mexico border, and a raft of endorsements for Mr. DeSantis -- and an unscheduled visit to show up Mr. Trump -- in Iowa that showed many Republican leaders are open to a Trump alternative.

All of that left leaders, strategists and voters in both parties exceptionally anxious.

''We're in the midst of a primary that has yet to even really form, and meanwhile the opportunity to pound Biden into dirt with his incompetence is slipping,'' said Dave Carney, a longtime Republican consultant in New Hampshire, where the first Republican primary votes will be cast in February. ''It's scattershot right now.''

Democrats, who would be expected to rally around their standard-bearer, have spent the week expressing a divide on border security and questioning the president on key policy issues.

Strategists have begged Democratic voters to get over their discontent and accept the president as the best they're going to get.

''Live in the real world,'' Stuart Stevens, the longtime Republican political consultant who bolted from the party as Mr. Trump rose to power, exhorted after the New Hampshire town hall. ''If you saw Donald Trump tonight and aren't supporting Biden, you are helping elect Trump. It's not complicated.''

Representative Ro Khanna of California, a liberal Democrat often willing to say openly what other rank-and-file Democrats won't, laid out a vision for economic renewal in a Friday speech in New Hampshire that contrasted the president's more modest ambitions with his failure to secure the allegiance of white ***working-class*** voters whom Mr. Biden has said he is uniquely qualified to win back.

''People are so desperate for some healing, for leadership that can unify,'' Mr. Khanna told Democrats at a dinner in Nashua. ''We do not need to compromise who we are to find common cause.''

In an interview on Saturday, he said it was not meant to be a criticism. But it was ''an appeal for a bolder platform that captures the imagination of ***working-class*** Americans and inspires them.''

There's no question that political predictions this far from an election are unreliable. Mr. DeSantis has yet to declare his candidacy for the White House, though he and Mr. Trump have been circling each other and competing in a shadow contest in Iowa and New Hampshire, the first contests for the Republican presidential nomination. Even Iowa voters tend not to tune in to the race until later in the year, noted David Kochel, a longtime Iowa Republican consultant.

Still, the question of the moment remains: Where are we?

Simon Rosenberg, who correctly predicted that a surge of Democratic activism would blunt the promised ''red wave'' of the 2022 midterms, said the ''fear of MAGA'' that powered Democratic victories in 2018, 2020 and 2022 had not diminished ahead of 2024. If anything, abortion bans rolling from state to state across the country, a disheartening surge in mass shootings and a Republican assault on educational freedom will only sharpen those fears, he said.

Mr. Trump's performance at a CNN town hall on Wednesday evening -- in which the former president repeatedly lied about the 2020 election; mocked E. Jean Carroll, whose accusations of sexual abuse and defamation ended in a $5 million judgment against him; and promised a return to some of his least popular policies -- only reiterated why Democrats, independents and disaffected Republicans have turned away from the G.O.P. in the key states of Arizona, Georgia, Nevada, Michigan and Pennsylvania.

The Biden re-election campaign, now in full gear after his formal announcement last month, was making the case to reporters after the town hall, pointing to Mr. Trump's pride in the overturning of Roe v. Wade; his dismissive take on the economic catastrophe that could ensue if the federal government defaults on its outstanding debt; his referring to Jan. 6, 2021, as ''a beautiful day''; and his refusal to commit to accepting the 2024 election results.

One Biden campaign adviser suggested that Mr. Trump had supplied a trove of material for attack ads. The campaign began posting videos almost immediately. Mr. DeSantis's super PAC, Never Back Down, called the 70-minute performance ''over an hour of nonsense.''

The crucial question for both parties in 2024 is how to retain the voters they have and regain those they have lost.

''It's hard to understand how someone could vote for Joe Biden in 2020 and Trump in 2024, given that Trump is just going to get more Trumpy,'' Mr. Rosenberg said, adding, ''I'd still much rather be us than them.''

Mr. Rosenberg's assessment may be why 37 Republican officials in Iowa, including the State Senate president, Amy Sinclair, and the House majority leader, Matt Windschitl, endorsed Mr. DeSantis last week, as did the New Hampshire House majority leader, Jason Osborne.

Republican consultants in both states said Mr. Trump's universal name recognition and political persona might give him the highest floor for Republican support, but the same factors lower the ceiling of that support, giving Mr. DeSantis and other challengers a real chance to take him down, if they are willing to take it.

The Trump campaign seemed aware of that dynamic last week as it attacked would-be rivals, not only those clearly preparing to enter the race but also some far from it. On Saturday, Mr. Trump laid into Georgia's Republican governor, Brian Kemp, for being disloyal, just days after an article in The Atlanta Journal-Constitution suggested the governor was keeping his options open.

Mr. DeSantis has had his own stumbles out of the gate. His war with Disney has provided fodder for rivals who have questioned a Republican's intrusion into the free market. His signing of a six-week abortion ban and his state's aggressive censorship of school textbooks have raised questions among would-be Republican donors and swing voters alike. But the Florida governor also has plenty of time to make his case.

''There's a lot of game left to play, and I don't see anything gelling yet,'' Mr. Kochel said. ''There's still a lot of room for candidates not named Trump.''

What Republicans seem most amazed by is the docility of Democrats in the face of Mr. Biden's obvious weaknesses. Age and infirmity are real issues, not Republican talking points, consultants say.

A Washington Post-ABC News poll published on Monday showed Mr. Biden losing head-to-head races against Mr. Trump and Mr. DeSantis by between five and six percentage points. Democratic pollsters have dismissed those results, pointing to anomalies like the poll's showing Mr. Trump winning young voters outright while dramatically closing the gap with Mr. Biden for Black and Hispanic votes.

Even so, there was much in the poll to undermine Mr. Biden's claim that he, more than any other Democrat, can vanquish a Republican comeback just as he defeated Mr. Trump in 2020.

Republicans say that's just not possible.

Mr. Carney said the dynamic would get worse, not better, as the 2024 campaign took shape. Chaotic scenes from the southwestern border in the coming weeks will inflame Republican voters' fears of an ''invasion'' of illegal immigrants; the Republican National Committee on Friday held the president responsible for 1.4 million ''gotaway'' migrants that it said had crossed the border and disappeared into the interior since he took office.

More important, the situation at the border could crystallize a sense among swing voters that Mr. Biden is simply not in control. With erstwhile allies like New York's mayor, Eric Adams, and Chicago's outgoing mayor, Lori Lightfoot, pleading for assistance with a flood of migrants, that conclusion will not be contained to Republican voters.

The brewing showdown over how to raise the federal government's borrowing limit threatens to provoke a catastrophic financial crisis as soon as next month. And while voters might blame Republicans in Congress at first, economic turmoil eventually ends up in the president's lap.

Perhaps Mr. Biden's voters will not defect back to Mr. Trump, Republicans agree, but they could simply stay home on Election Day.

''Democrats keep saying, 'Oh, Trump's so bad it doesn't matter,''' Mr. Kochel said. ''I don't know. I think it matters.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/14/us/politics/trump-biden-election.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/14/us/politics/trump-biden-election.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: A raucous New Hampshire town hall on Wednesday brought Donald J. Trump's falsehoods and bluster back into the spotlight. (PHOTOGRAPH BY CNN)

A jury's verdict on Tuesday held Mr. Trump liable for the sexual abuse of E. Jean Carroll and imposed a $5 million judgment. (PHOTOGRAPH BY JOHN MINCHILLO/ASSOCIATED PRESS) This article appeared in print on page A15.

**Load-Date:** May 15, 2023

**End of Document**



[***Republicans Won Blue-Collar Votes. They’re Not Offering Much in Return.***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:624J-7401-JBG3-64CK-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Byline:** Trip Gabriel

**Highlight:** Party leaders want to capitalize on Donald Trump’s appeal to the white ***working class***. But in recent weeks, they’ve offered very little to advance working people’s economic interests.

**Body**

Party leaders want to capitalize on Donald Trump’s appeal to the white ***working class***. But in recent weeks, they’ve offered very little to advance working people’s economic interests.

As the election returns rolled in showing President Donald J. Trump winning strong support from blue-collar voters in November while suffering historic losses in suburbs across the country, Senator Josh Hawley of Missouri, a Republican, [*declared*](https://twitter.com/HawleyMO/status/1323835709753593858?s=20) on Twitter: “We are a ***working class*** party now. That’s the future.”

And with further results revealing that Mr. Trump had carried 40 percent of union households and made unexpected inroads with Latinos, other Republican leaders, including Senator Marco Rubio of Florida, trumpeted a political realignment. Republicans, they said, were accelerating their transformation into the party of Sam’s Club rather than the country club.

But since then, Republicans have offered very little to advance the economic interests of blue-collar workers. Two major opportunities for party leaders to showcase their priorities have unfolded recently without a nod to working Americans.

In Washington, where [*Democrats won a vote on Thursday to advance*](https://twitter.com/HawleyMO/status/1323835709753593858?s=20) a nearly $2 trillion economic stimulus bill to the Senate floor, they were facing universal opposition from congressional Republicans to the package, which is chock-full of measures to benefit struggling workers a full year into the coronavirus pandemic. The bill includes $1,400 checks to middle-income Americans and extended unemployment benefits, which are set to lapse on March 14.

And at a high-profile, high-decibel gathering of conservatives in Florida last weekend, potential 2024 presidential candidates, including Mr. Hawley and Senator Ted Cruz of Texas, scarcely mentioned a blue-collar agenda. They used their turns in the national spotlight to fan grievances about “cancel culture,” to bash the tech industry and to reinforce Mr. Trump’s false claims of a stolen election.

Inside and outside the party, critics see a familiar pattern: Republican officials, following Mr. Trump’s own example, are exploiting the cultural anger and racial resentment of a sizable segment of the white ***working class***, but have not made a concerted effort to help these Americans economically.

“This is the identity conundrum that Republicans have,” said Carlos Curbelo, a Republican former congressman from Florida, pointing to the universal opposition by House Republicans to the stimulus drawn up by President Biden and congressional Democrats. “This is a package that Donald Trump would have very likely supported as president.”

“Here is the question for the Rubios and the Hawleys and the Cruzes and anyone else who wants to capitalize on this potential new Republican coalition,” Mr. Curbelo added. “Eventually, if you don’t take action to improve people’s quality of life, they will abandon you.”

Some Republicans have sought to address the strategic problem. Senator Mitt Romney of Utah put forward one of the most ambitious G.O.P. initiatives aimed at struggling Americans, a measure to fight child poverty by sending parents up to $350 a month per child. But fellow Republicans [*rebuffed the plan*](https://twitter.com/HawleyMO/status/1323835709753593858?s=20) as “welfare.” Mr. Hawley has [*matched a Democratic proposal for a $15 minimum wage*](https://twitter.com/HawleyMO/status/1323835709753593858?s=20), but with the caveat that it applies only to businesses with annual revenues above $1 billion.

Whit Ayres, a Republican pollster whose clients have included Mr. Rubio, was critical of Democrats for not seeking a compromise on the stimulus after [*a group of G.O.P. senators*](https://twitter.com/HawleyMO/status/1323835709753593858?s=20) offered a smaller package. “Seven Republican senators voted to convict a president of their own party,” he said, referring to Mr. Trump’s impeachment. “If you can’t get any of them on a Covid program, you’re not trying real hard.”

As the Covid-19 relief package, which every House Republican voted down, makes its way through the Senate this week, Republicans are expected to offer further proposals aimed at struggling Americans.

Mr. Ayres said that the Conservative Political Action Conference in Orlando, Fla., last weekend, the first major party gathering since Mr. Trump left office, had been a spectacularly missed opportunity in its failure to include meaningful discussion of policies for blue-collar voters. Instead, the former president advanced an intraparty civil war by naming in his speech on Sunday [*a hit list of every Republican*](https://twitter.com/HawleyMO/status/1323835709753593858?s=20) who voted to impeach him.

“You’d better be spending a lot more time developing an economic agenda that benefits working people than re-litigating a lost presidential election,” Mr. Ayres said. “The question is, how long will it take the Republicans to figure out that driving out heretics rather than winning new converts is a losing strategy right now?”

Separately, one of the highest-profile efforts to lift blue-collar workers in the country was underway this week in Alabama, where nearly 6,000 workers at an Amazon warehouse [*are voting on whether to unionize*](https://twitter.com/HawleyMO/status/1323835709753593858?s=20). On Sunday, the pro-union workers [*got a boost*](https://twitter.com/HawleyMO/status/1323835709753593858?s=20) in a video from Mr. Biden. Representatives for Mr. Hawley — who has been [*one of the leading Republican champions of a* ***working-class*** *realignment*](https://twitter.com/HawleyMO/status/1323835709753593858?s=20) — did not respond to a request for comment about where he stands on the issue.

It’s possible that Republicans who are not prioritizing economic issues are accurately reading their base. A survey last month by the G.O.P. pollster Echelon Insights found that the top concerns of Republican voters were mainly cultural ones: illegal immigration, lack of support for the police, high taxes and “liberal bias in mainstream media.”

The 2020 election continued [*a long-term trend*](https://twitter.com/HawleyMO/status/1323835709753593858?s=20) in which the parties have essentially swapped voters, with Republicans gaining with white blue-collar workers, while white suburbanites with college degrees moved toward the Democrats. The idea of [*“Sam’s Club conservatives,”*](https://twitter.com/HawleyMO/status/1323835709753593858?s=20) which was floated about 15 years ago by former Gov. Tim Pawlenty of Minnesota, recognized a constituency of populist Republicans who favored a higher minimum wage and government help for struggling families.

Mr. Trump turned out historic levels of support for a Republican among white ***working-class*** voters. But once in office, his biggest legislative achievement was a tax cut in which [*most benefits*](https://twitter.com/HawleyMO/status/1323835709753593858?s=20) went to corporations and the wealthy.

Oceans of ink have been spilled over whether the white ***working class***’s devotion to Mr. Trump had more to do with economic anxiety or with anger toward “elites” and racial minorities, especially immigrants. For many analysts, the answer is that it had to do with both.

His advancement of policies to benefit ***working-class*** Americans was frequently chaotic and left unresolved. Manufacturing jobs, which had continued their slow recovery since the 2009 financial crisis, flatlined under Mr. Trump in the year before the pandemic hit. The former president’s bellicose trade war with China hit American farmers so hard economically that they received large bailouts from taxpayers.

“There was never a program to deal with the types of displacements going on,” said John Russo, a former co-director of the Center for ***Working-Class*** Studies at Youngstown State University in Ohio.

He projects that once the economy snaps back to pre-pandemic levels, blue-collar Americans will be worse off, because employers will have accelerated automation and will continue work-force reductions adopted during the pandemic. “Neither party is talking about that,” Mr. Russo said. “I think that by 2024, that’s going to be a key issue.”

Despite Mr. Biden’s campaign framing him as “middle-class Joe” from Scranton, Pa., as a candidate he made only slight inroads into Mr. Trump’s support with white voters without college degrees, which disappointed Democratic strategists and party activists. In [*exit polls*](https://twitter.com/HawleyMO/status/1323835709753593858?s=20), these voters preferred Mr. Trump over Mr. Biden by 35 percentage points.

Among voters of color without a college degree, Mr. Trump won one out of four votes, an improvement from 2016, when he won one in five of their votes.

His inroads with Latinos in South Florida and the Rio Grande Valley of Texas especially shocked many Democrats, and it spurred Mr. Rubio to [*tweet*](https://twitter.com/HawleyMO/status/1323835709753593858?s=20) that the future of the G.O.P. was “a party built on a multi-ethnic multi-racial coalition of working AMERICANS.”

After the Trump presidency, it is an open question whether any other Republican candidates can win the same intensity of blue-collar support. “Whatever your criticisms are of Trump — and I have a lot — clearly he was able to connect to those people and they voted for him,” said Representative Tim Ryan of Ohio, a Democrat from the Youngstown area.

Mr. Ryan is [*gearing up to run in 2022*](https://twitter.com/HawleyMO/status/1323835709753593858?s=20) for an open Senate seat in Ohio. He agrees with Mr. Trump about taking on China, but faults him for not following up his tough language with sustained policies. “I think there’s an opportunity to have a similar message but a real agenda,” he said.

As for Republican presidential candidates aspiring to inherit Mr. Trump’s ***working-class*** followers, Mr. Ryan saw only dim prospects for them, especially if they continued to reject the Biden stimulus package, which passed the House and is now before the Senate.

“The Covid-19 relief bill was directly aimed at the struggles of ***working-class*** people,” Mr. Ryan said, adding that Republicans voting against the package were “in for a rude awakening.”

Perhaps. A [*Monmouth University poll*](https://twitter.com/HawleyMO/status/1323835709753593858?s=20) on Wednesday found that six in 10 Americans supported the $1.9 trillion package in its current form, especially the $1,400 checks to people at certain income levels.

But Republicans who vote it down may not pay a political price, said Patrick Murray, the poll’s director. “They know that the checks will reach their base regardless, and they can continue to rail against Democratic excesses,” he said.

“There would only be a problem if they somehow managed to sink the bill,” he added.

PHOTO: President Donald J. Trump in October in Reading, Pa. He got historic levels of support from ***working-class*** whites for a Republican. (PHOTOGRAPH BY ANNA MONEYMAKER FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** March 5, 2021

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[***Inequality, Long Ignored by Economists, Is a Hot Topic***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69JF-B551-JBG3-61RJ-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** By Jennifer Szalai

**Body**

When the economist Angus Deaton moved to the United States in 1983, he was ''in awe,'' as he puts it in his new book, ''Economics in America.'' Born in Scotland and educated at the University of Cambridge, he remembers the swell of optimism he felt upon arriving at Princeton University. It was a ''splendid place to work,'' especially for someone who had been poor enough as a child to appreciate the measure of security provided by an ''American salary.''

But Deaton was immediately struck by the dark side of the American dream. Outside campus, the land of opportunity also turned out to be ''the land of inequality.'' The American safety net was meager to nonexistent. Having grown up in the early days of Britain's welfare state, Deaton ''saw the government as my friend.'' He recoiled when one of his new colleagues declared that ''government is theft.''

Deaton's arrival in the United States happened to coincide with what the British economist Anthony B. Atkinson called the ''Inequality Turn.'' The ''great compression'' of wages during the previous decades was coming to an end, buffeted in the 1970s by oil shocks and stagflation. By 1983, the Thatcher and Reagan governments were pursuing a neoliberal agenda of tax-cutting and deregulation. For the middle classes, consumer debt fueled a mirage of continued prosperity, but inequality was widening. The economics profession had yet to catch up.

And catch up it has. A spate of books detail a new understanding of inequality, showing how this intellectual transformation is a rich story in its own right. In ''Visions of Inequality,'' a history of the changing ways economists have broached the subject since the French Revolution, Branko Milanovic notes a ''long eclipse of inequality studies'' from the mid-1960s to around 1990. With some exceptions, including work by Latin American economists, declining inequality had lulled the discipline into a smug sense of complacency. Both sides in the Cold War wanted to pretend that their systems had solved the problem once and for all.

Milanovic, formerly the lead economist in the World Bank's research department and the author of several book about global inequality, describes how Western economists were in thrall to an unholy combination of extremely simplistic assumptions and extremely complex mathematical models: ''It was almost as if they wanted their model world to look as different as possible from the world where people lived.''

This idealized approach was eventually overwhelmed by the unruly reality, with the neoclassical economist cloistered in his ivory tower, contemplating his quaint abstractions, becoming the stuff of caricature. The financial crisis of 2008, Occupy Wall Street, the 2014 publication in English of ''Capital in the 21st Century,'' the 700-page best seller by the French economist Thomas Piketty: Milanovic shows how inequality went from a subject ''hovering in the background'' to a pressing issue at ''the forefront of people's consciousness.''

Deaton notes a similar turn. Among the bubbles that popped in the collapse of 2008 was the ''reckless enthusiasm for markets'' in his profession. Along with his wife, the economist Anne Case, he has written about the rise in ''deaths of despair'' -- increasing mortality rates among white American men without a college degree. When Deaton first arrived at Princeton 40 years ago, his interest in tax reform and resource redistribution made him a professional outlier; in 2015, he was awarded a Nobel Prize.

''Economics in America'' is an inviting and readable book, though it's perhaps a measure of how much inequality has permeated our cultural consciousness in the last decade that there's little in it that comes across as provocative or surprising. The ambivalence and estrangement that Deaton expresses about his adopted country (he identifies himself in his subtitle as ''an immigrant economist'') is not, I would wager, all that rare as Americans struggle to find common ground.

Yes, most of us agree that inequality is a problem -- even if we can't agree on what that actually means and what to do about it. Incomes have stagnated, except for the very rich, whose incomes have more than quadrupled since 1980. The left calls for higher taxes and solidarity; the right calls for slashed taxes and closed borders. Centrists try to tiptoe their way between the two poles, to nobody else's satisfaction. The epidemiologists Richard Wilkinson and Kate Pickett consider inequality a ''social poison'' that erodes the very things we need -- empathy, a sense of security, trust in one another -- to combat inequality in the first place.

Even the response to Deaton's own research has fractured along ideological lines. He notes how officials in the Trump administration used deaths of despair as an argument against lockdowns during the pandemic, suggesting that suicides would increase if people were forced to stay at home. Deaton says that the data doesn't support this contention, just as he rejects claims by conservatives like Charles Murray, who insist that the problem isn't a surfeit of despair but a lack of industriousness. Deaton, perhaps in a nod to some of his critics, also pulls back from his original focus on white men. In his new book, he speaks more generally about despair among the less educated, pointedly discussing the persistence of economic disparities between Black and white Americans.

As I was reading ''Economics in America,'' I recalled the argument briefly fashionable around the time of the 2016 election that ''economic anxiety'' among white Americans was driving support for Donald Trump. A year later, ''The Broken Ladder,'' by the psychologist Keith Payne, conceded that white Americans with a high-school degree continued to fare better economically than similarly educated Black Americans, but a ''history of privilege'' meant that ***working-class*** white people were ''dying of violated expectations.'' Such observations emphasized our shared vulnerabilities, though like so much in our zero-sum political discourse, the subject of inequality also got warped and weaponized. Trump spoke the language of populism, promising to deliver for the little guy while pushing through policies that favored the richest.

But inequality hurts the richest, too -- at least that's what the philosopher Ingrid Robeyns argues in ''Limitarianism,'' a book coming out early next year. She talks to wealthy people who are exhausted by ''the unending rat race provoked by status goods.'' Extreme wealth isn't just socially and ecologically destructive; it can be psychologically corrosive, as those who have it try to rationalize disparities to themselves.

Some become ''class traitors,'' giving away their riches and demanding to be taxed; others double down, insisting that they are merely reaping their just rewards. Robeyns allows that worrying about the emotional health of the 1 percent might be a hard sell, but, she points out, more money means more power, so whatever depletes the stores of empathy and compassion of the most powerful has implications for us all.

It's this notion of ''us all'' that some writers are trying to revive, including Piketty, in ''A Brief History of Equality,'' which was published in English last year. In ''Capital in the 21st Century,'' Piketty showed how the rate of return to capital historically exceeded economic growth, allowing the wealthiest to pull ever further away from the rest of the population. His latest book shifts the emphasis by widening the lens. Piketty states that while ''different inequalities have persisted at considerable and unjustified levels,'' we shouldn't get mired in pessimism: ''Since the end of the 18th century, there has been a real, long-term tendency toward equality, but it is nonetheless limited in scope.''

That ''but'' gives you a sense of the needle that Piketty is trying to thread, avoiding the twin seductions of triumphalism and hopelessness. He treats the concept of equality more expansively here, including not only income and property but also gender and race. By moving the focus from inequality to equality, he suggests that what's needed isn't only the harsh light of critique but also the remedy of repair.

The historian Darrin M. McMahon lauds Piketty for this ambition, even if he is more circumspect about its prospects in his fascinating new book, ''Equality: The History of an Elusive Idea.'' In a sweeping account that starts with cave paintings in the Spanish Levant and ends with ''cyborg-pharaohs'' made possible by A.I., McMahon explains how ideas about equality have been anything but consistent and straightforward. An equality that is universal, applicable to all humans, isn't the only kind. His surprising discussion of the far right conveys how the concept of equality has been used to bolster inequality. Even fascist movements promised to ''satisfy the egalitarian aspirations of the masses'' while also venerating hierarchy and domination.

The forces of right-wing reaction have specialized in this perverse approach, emphasizing ''equality in inequality,'' McMahon writes, drawing connections between nativist movements of the past and the ''populist-plutocrats'' of today. Which is why, he says, recognizing the reality of inequality is such ''vital work in a highly unequal age.''

If the public no longer clings to a blithe belief in the system, the trick is to keep such hard-won skepticism from sliding into easy cynicism. McMahon's book is less a call to action than a goad to thinking: ''Human beings often long to relate to one another more equally than they do, especially when the gaps between them are achingly apparent.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/03/books/review/inequality-economy-books.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/03/books/review/inequality-economy-books.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: A spate of books details the transformation of ideas about the causes and effects of economic inequality. This article appeared in print on page C6.

**Load-Date:** November 4, 2023

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[***Taylor and Travis Might Save Romance, but Posh and Becks Were Here All Along; Ross Douthat***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69N8-SGB1-JBG3-62FF-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

November 17, 2023 Friday 13:13 EST

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 1653 words

**Byline:** Ross Douthat

**Highlight:** Why a throwback celebrity couple could be the model for reviving marriage.

**Body**

Tell me if this tale sounds familiar: A handsome football star sets his cap for one of the world’s leading female pop stars when she’s at the peak of her global fame. He tells people that he fancies her, he manages to meet her, and soon she’s appearing at his games while he roves near and far to visit her while she’s on tour. Their combined brand — singing and sports, beauty and the baller — makes them a cultural sensation, a media obsession, a romance made in tabloid heaven.

Before this was the Taylor Swift-Travis Kelce story, it was the story of David Beckham and Victoria Adams, in the era when she was better known as Posh Spice, and her girl band, the Spice Girls, were becoming (as they remain, somewhat shockingly) the [*best-selling*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/04/28/arts/music/spice-girls-girl-power.html) female group in history.

I thought of myself as sports-savvy and pop-culturally-aware at the time of their romance, and I have some dim “Posh and Becks” associations somewhere in the drawers of memory. But I was just starting college, I was more focused on American football than soccer, and I wasn’t really a Spice Girls guy. So it’s been educational to watch the Netflix docuseries “Beckham,” in which the now late-40s former athlete looks back on his career and his courtship of Posh, who of course became and still remains his wife.

For instance, I barely recalled Beckham’s turn as a scapegoat for England’s World Cup loss to Argentina in 1998, and certainly I had no knowledge of how the Posh-Becks relationship interacted with the disastrous match. The defeat set off a brutal frenzy, complete with death threats and hangings in effigy, after a Beckham red card arguably cost his country the match. But the personal backstory was that they were recently engaged and Posh had called him just before the match from New York to tell him that they were having a baby — news that arguably revved him up just enough that he unwisely kicked an Argentine player who had knocked him to the ground.

Nor, more generally, did I remember much of anything about the intensity of their courtship, the rapid rush from their first meeting in the spring of 1997 to an engagement the following January, followed by the birth of their son, Brooklyn, in the spring of 1999 and [*their purple-clad wedding*](https://www.brides.com/victoria-david-beckham-purple-wedding-outfits-explained-8351290) that summer. Or how young they were at the time — they met as early-20-somethings, basically kids! Or, by the standards of celebrity romances, how un-stage-managed the courtship was, how palpably obsessed with her he was, certainly to the detriment of his relationship with his coaches.

Which makes it all the more striking that the relationship has lasted through their various reinventions — her transition from pop star to fashionista, his peregrinations from Manchester United to Real Madrid to America’s Major League Soccer, the evolution of their joint brand, the births of their four kids, their transformation into [*country-house-owning*](https://www.houseandgarden.co.uk/article/david-beckham-victoria-house-london-cotswolds) pillars of the establishment. With, yes, the cushioning of extreme wealth — but in spite of all the forces that unravel other A-list couples, the media maelstroms and the unique temptations of celebrity.

The romance of Taylor and Travis, at a time of political polarization and growing [*ideological alienation*](https://twitter.com/DKThomp/status/1722626613232517303) between the sexes, has inspired a lot of entertaining, kidding-not-kidding takes about how a Swift-Kelce marriage or a Swift-Kelce baby might revolutionize our culture. One noted reactionary social critic [*anticipates*](https://peachykeenan.substack.com/p/money-power-glory-love) “the greatest spike in weddings in American history,” as “mimetic desire will grip the hearts and minds of millions of millennial women,” followed by a baby boom “triggered by a tsunami of heterosexual romantic happy endings.” Others go further, with one social media observer [*envisioning*](https://twitter.com/uncledoomer/status/1723563087595266281) a Taylor-Travis “housing boom, a tremendous lifestyle shift for millions of newly minted families. a new golden era” for America.

And why not, I say? Why [*struggle*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/29/opinion/marriage-kearney.html) in the weeds of public policy and wrangle over cultural scripts and gender norms when you can just achieve a pro-matrimony vibe shift by delivering the world’s most famous avatar of disappointed female heterosexuality to romantic bliss with a rugged Super Bowl champion?

But watching “Beckham” made me wonder if a more ideal celebrity model for champions of romance and fecundity has actually been with us all along. Because as much as it would be delightful, for them and for us, if the burgeoning Swift-Kelce courtship went the distance, giving us a celebrity wedding and perhaps a royal baby, having two incredibly successful superstars pairing off in their mid-30s wouldn’t overthrow the current system of romance and dating that seems to be failing so many people. Instead, it would effectively validate it, because pairing off and procreating only after a long period of casual dating and a lot of professional achievement is what smart young Americans are told that responsible people do.

Whereas the strongest critique of this kind of sexual and romantic culture is that for lots of young people, waiting to commit until you’re secure and settled and filled with self-knowledge can be a way to miss opportunities for romantic happiness, to basically train yourself into singlehood, to make the transition to marriage and parenting seem like something that can happen only in a certain “just right” moment, which then might never come at all.

When this model works out, it works out well — as hopefully it will work out for Kelce and Swift and their many potential imitators. But it also creates a lot of paths to failure: long quasi-marital relationships that eventually curdle, upper-middle-class couples trying to squeeze their desired fertility into an extremely narrow window, ***working-class*** couples having kids together but postponing marriage because that seems like something you do only when you’re somehow financially set.

The alternative model is the one that Becks and Posh embodied. First, get together relatively young: Don’t marry as teenagers, but don’t be afraid to find the love of your life at 23 or 24. Second, unite the flush of initial romance and sexual attraction with engagement, marriage and kids rather than treating them as distinct life stages that might fall years apart from one another. Third, make your marriage a foundation for your professional advancement and self-finding, not a capstone to be dropped on top, so that both your work life and your personal maturation are bound together with the work and maturation of your spouse.

And the fact that the Beckhams weren’t “trads” following a conservative moral script — they had their first child just before the wedding rather than soon after — actually makes them an especially interesting case study, showing that you don’t always need religious rules to make life choices that treat sex and fertility and lifelong commitment as a package deal.

To be clear, I think a culture is more likely to unite those things when piety is more socially important, when religious commitments influence romantic scripts and pull people toward monogamy and wedlock even when they’re having sex before they’re married. Ideas matter, rules matter, and (as we see today) the differences between men and women can make it surprisingly hard for the sexes to successfully unite when norms of chastity and courtship are stripped away.

But if pairing off and having kids as a foundation for adult life rather than a later add-on is not an automatic thing for men and women, neither is it somehow unnatural, something that requires going against the flow of hormones or romantic inclinations or desires. And part of the appeal of looking back and watching Becks and Posh do it successfully is that when the chemistry is right, it should feel like the most natural thing in the world.

Breviary

[*Mary Harrington*](https://unherd.com/2023/11/nigel-farage-is-a-gameshow-king/) and [*Tom McTague*](https://unherd.com/2023/11/sunak-cant-kill-suellaism/) on the agonies of the Tories.

Damon Linker [*responds*](https://damonlinker.substack.com/p/what-can-a-thoughtful-right-wing) to me on right-wing intellectuals.

A saint [*complains*](https://publicdomainreview.org/essay/the-reluctant-levitator/) about her levitations.

Robin Hanson [*hails*](https://www.overcomingbias.com/p/bow-to-our-future-overlords) our new Amish overlords.

Pascal-Emmanuel Gobry [*contemplates*](https://accelerationist.substack.com/p/the-past-was-better-part-1-color) the decolorization of the West.

How Osama bin Laden [*appropriated*](https://www.anarchonomicon.com/p/short-take-bin-laden-was-a-shitlib) Western leftism.

This Week in Anti-Decadence

The deepest hole humanity has ever dug is the Kola Superdeep Borehole. Soviet scientists, hoping to learn about the composition and geophysics of the Earth’s crust and upper mantle, began drilling on the Kola Peninsula, in the country’s extreme northwest, in 1970. After more than two decades, they reached a depth of 12 kilometers: a slender borehole three times the length of Central Park, and 113 times the depth of the world’s deepest metro station (Arsenalna in Kyiv).

The hole is less than 0.2 percent of the way to Earth’s core, whose center is thought to be 5,200 degrees Celsius. That temperature isn’t far off being twice as hot as the temperature necessary to vaporize iron. Knowing this, the scientists expected the bottom of their 12-kilometer hole to be 100 degrees Celsius, hot enough to boil water. Instead, it was 180 degrees Celsius, the heat of an oven.

At those depths, the drilling was pushing the limits of technological possibility …. It became more and more challenging to drill, and the project ran out of money. In 1995, the nine-inch borehole was welded shut.

The borehole remains stoppered. But the promise remains that by digging deep under the Earth, deeper than the Kola Superdeep Borehole, clean, reliable energy could be brought to the surface in vast quantities. Nuclear fission, so far, has been kneecapped by regulators; renewables have made great progress, but due to their intermittency they cannot currently solve our energy requirements; fusion continues to elude us. Energy is still hugely important for human advancement, and a lack of it may help explain our society’s post-1970s relative economic stagnation. How might we not only meet our current demands for energy but exceed them? The answer is under our noses.

— Tom Ough, “[*Watt Lies Beneath*](https://worksinprogress.co/issue/watt-lies-beneath),” Works in Progress (Nov. 15)

PHOTO: (PHOTOGRAPH BY Alain Pilon FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

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[***Santos Was a Big Spender at Sephora and Spas; New York Today***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69N7-FT01-DXY4-X12F-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** NYREGION; newyorktoday

**Length:** 1629 words

**Byline:** James Barron

**Highlight:** A report by the House Ethics Committee detailed some of the ways the Long Island congressman spent donors’ money.

**Body**

A report by the House Ethics Committee detailed some of the ways the Long Island congressman spent donors’ money.

Good morning. It’s Friday. Today we’ll look at details of Representative George Santos’s spending that were laid out by the House Ethics Committee. We’ll also look at what Mayor Eric Adams’s budget cuts will mean for municipal services.

Just when it seemed there was nothing more to say about Representative George Santos, the House Ethics Committee added several attention-grabbing words: Ferragamo, Hermès, Sephora and Botox.

They were deep in the committee’s damning but dryly written report on Santos’s spending, which also mentioned thousands of dollars that Santos spent at spas. A footnote said “one former staffer” had told the committee that Santos “once brought him to a Botox appointment when there was a campaign event nearby.”

As my colleague Nicholas Fandos writes, [*Santos’s spending “would have been nothing”*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/16/nyregion/santos-botox-ferragamo-expenses.html) if he had been the wealthy financier he had presented himself as when he campaigned. But Santos had deceived voters as he flipped a district held by Democrats, helping Republicans win a majority in the House.

The ethics committee [*refrained from recommending punitive measures*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/15/nyregion/santos-ethics-expulsion.html) against Santos, but the report could shift the dynamic in the Republican-controlled House and give fresh momentum to efforts to expel or censure him. “Most of us have never seen anything like this — this extensive, this brazen, and this bold,” said Representative Glenn Ivey, a Democrat of Maryland who is a member of the Ethics Committee.

Santos, a Republican whose district stretches across parts of Long Island and Queens, is already facing [*a 23-count federal indictment*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/10/nyregion/george-santos-charges.html) that accuses him of stealing from campaign contributors and falsifying documents filed with the Federal Election Commission. He has pleaded not guilty.

Santos did not respond to a request for comment about the Ethics Committee report. But shortly after it was released, he [*announced on X*](https://twitter.com/MrSantosNY/status/1725182414769512783), the platform formerly known as Twitter, that he would not run for re-election in 2024. He had filed paperwork in March — little more than two months after he was sworn in — [*indicating that he would seek a second term*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/14/nyregion/george-santos-2024-candidate.html?smid=nytcore-ios-share&amp;referringSource=articleShare).

In his post on X, Santos blasted the committee, which spent months on its investigation. “If there was a single ounce of ETHICS in the ‘Ethics committee,’” he wrote, “they would have not released this biased report.” He added, “I’ve come to expect vitriol like this from political opposition but not from the hallowed halls of public service.”

The report filled in gaps in what had been known about Santos’s spending. Where the indictment mentioned only luxury goods, the committee mentioned brand names. The committee also detailed how Santos had submitted numerous expenditures that did not appear to have a campaign purpose, from travel and hotel stays in Las Vegas that corresponded to the time when he told staff members he was on his honeymoon to thousands of dollars at spas. At least two payments were described as being for Botox.

Some of the details in the report concerned a company called [*RedStone Strategies*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/01/12/nyregion/george-santos-donors-fund-raising.html#:~:text=The%20Mysterious%2C%20Unregistered%20Fund%20That,afoul%20of%20campaign%20finance%20rules.), which Santos used to raise money without being constrained by campaign contribution limits.

Investigators found that he had transferred at least $200,000 to himself from RedStone in transactions last year. Some of the money went to cover credit card bills and to make purchases at Hermès, Sephora and OnlyFans, a social media platform where some participants charge money for explicit content.

The findings appeared to undermine Santos’s underlying criminal defense strategy. He has repeatedly denied involvement in the finances of his campaign, saying that [*his treasurer had “gone rogue.”*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/05/nyregion/santos-accountant-nancy-marks-guilty.html) But investigators found that Santos was “heavily involved,” noting that he had received weekly finance reports and invoices. He also had login credentials to campaign bank accounts.

The treasurer, [*Nancy Marks*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/05/nyregion/santos-accountant-nancy-marks-guilty.html), pleaded guilty to federal charges last month. A second person with ties to Santos’s campaign — [*Samuel Miele*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/14/nyregion/sam-miele-plea-santos.html), a campaign aide — pleaded guilty on Tuesday to one count of wire fraud. He acknowledged impersonating a House staff member in connection with a fund-raising scheme that benefited him and Santos.

Expect a mostly sunny day, as a cold front moves closer to the coast, and high temperatures in the mid-60s. In the evening, rain is possible, and temperatures will dip into the mid-50s.

In effect until Nov. 23 (Thanksgiving Day).

The latest New York news

* Suing the F.B.I.: A former member of the Nation of Islam who was exonerated in the assassination of Malcolm X filed [*a federal lawsuit on Thursday over his conviction.*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/16/nyregion/malcolm-x-muhammad-aziz-exonerated-lawsuit.html)

1. Battling plastic bottles: The New York attorney general, Letitia James, sued PepsiCo, accusing the company of endangering the environment and [*misleading the public over plastic packaging.*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/15/business/pepsi-plastic-recycling-lawsuit.html)
2. Clean slate: Gov. Kathy Hochul signed legislation that could make as many as two million people [*eligible to have their criminal records sealed.*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/16/nyregion/clean-slate-act-ny.html)
3. Significant settlement: A man exonerated after spending more than two decades in prison for murders in Queens that he did not commit will receive [*a $17.5 million settlement.*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/16/nyregion/queens-murders-exonerated-settlement.html)

* Overworked workhorse: A New York City carriage driver was charged with animal cruelty in a case arising from [*the collapse of a horse on a Manhattan street.*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/15/nyregion/carriage-driver-horse-ryder-nyc.html)

1. What we’re watching: Ana Ley, a Metro reporter, discusses civility on the subway, and the former Mississippi poet laureate, Beth Ann Fennelly, talks about the real value of a humanities education on “The New York Times Close Up With Sam Roberts.” The show airs at 7:30 p.m. on Friday, Saturday and Sunday. [[*CUNY TV*](https://tv.cuny.edu/show/nytcloseup/PR2007858)].

Budget cuts, and libraries closed on Sundays

Mayor Eric Adams had warned that the migrant crisis would make budget cuts necessary, and on Thursday he announced [*plans to freeze police hiring and close libraries*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/16/nyregion/nyc-budget-cuts-schools-police-trash.html).

He said in a statement that he had to account for the costs of accommodating migrants from the southern border. He also said that declining tax revenues and the end of federal pandemic aid had figured in his decision.

Progressive Democrats criticized the reductions, saying they would hurt ***working-class*** families. Lincoln Restler, a chair of the City Council’s progressive caucus, called them “unnecessary, dangerous and draconian.”

The Council speaker, Adrienne Adams, said in a statement that some programs, like libraries and the City University of New York, should be spared from deep reductions.

But the city’s three library systems — the Brooklyn Public Library, the New York Public Library and the Queens Public Library — immediately announced that libraries would no longer be open seven days a week. Eighteen libraries that have had Sunday hours no longer will. For 10 libraries in Manhattan and Queens, the last Sunday will be Nov. 26. In Brooklyn, Dec. 17 will be the last Sunday for the central library and eight branches.

For the New York Public Library, the cuts came as it renamed its Center for Research in the Humanities after Vartan Gregorian, who as president of the library from 1981 to 1989 restored its standing among scholars.

“More and more, it feels like we find ourselves in a moment not dissimilar from the one in which Vartan led the library,” said Anthony Marx, the president of the library. “At a time when once again people are counting New York City out, we will take inspiration in what he was able to achieve and navigate these choppy waters together.”

The New York Public Library was weighed down by a sizable deficit when Gregorian arrived and was still showing the effects of cutbacks that had been imposed during the city’s financial crisis a few years earlier. Some branches were open only eight hours a week. Gregorian, who called the library “a sacred place,” charmed corporate and foundation officials and talked up the library at dinner parties with Brooke Astor, who made the library her primary philanthropic concern. ([*Astor died in 2007*](https://www.nytimes.com/2007/08/14/world/americas/14iht-14astor.7107491.html), [*Gregorian in 2021*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/04/16/nyregion/vartan-gregorian-dead.html).)

Then and now, the city covers the library’s operating expenses, including those at its branch libraries in the Bronx, Manhattan and Staten Island. The newly named [*Vartan Gregorian Center for Research in the Humanities*](https://nypl.org/gregoriancenter) — with space for up to 400 researchers, including 40 scholars on paid fellowships — is paid for by private donations, as was a recently completed $200 million renovation of the main library building on Fifth Avenue at 42nd Street.

Soft pretzels

Dear Diary:

My father and I were walking toward the Javits Center for a trade show. We were hungry because we hadn’t gotten breakfast, and we decided to get soft pretzels from a street vendor who was set up across from the center.

We paid $2 apiece for two pretzels, and they were the last things we ate that day. We worked straight through without stopping for lunch.

After the show closed and we were walking back to our car, we were hungry again, so we decided to stop at the same cart and buy two more pretzels.

“That will be $3,” the vendor said as he served the first one.

My father pointed out that he had us charged $2 each that morning for pretzels that were warm and fresh.

“Now they’re cold and stale and a dollar more?” my father said. “How? Why?”

“You hungry?” the vendor replied.

— Ed Cohen

Illustrated by Agnes Lee. [*Send submissions here*](https://www.nytimes.com/article/how-to-submit-to-metropolitan-diary.html) and [*read more Metropolitan Diary here*](https://www.nytimes.com/column/metropolitan-diary).

Glad we could get together here. See you tomorrow. — J.B.

P.S. Here’s today’s [*Mini Crossword*](https://www.nytimes.com/crosswords/game/mini) and [*Spelling Bee*](https://www.nytimes.com/puzzles/spelling-bee). [*You can find all our puzzles here*](https://www.nytimes.com/crosswords).

Kellina Moore, Nicholas Fandos and Ed Shanahan contributed to New York Today. You can reach the team at [*nytoday@nytimes.com*](mailto:nytoday@nytimes.com)

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Kellina Moore, Nicholas Fandos and Ed Shanahan contributed to New York Today. You can reach the team at [*nytoday@nytimes.com*](mailto:nytoday@nytimes.com)

PHOTO: (PHOTOGRAPH BY Kenny Holston/The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** November 17, 2023

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[***Even Most Biden Voters Don’t See a Thriving Economy***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69RJ-TK11-DXY4-X19N-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** BUSINESS; economy

**Length:** 1788 words

**Byline:** Lydia DePillis

**Highlight:** A majority of those who backed President Biden in 2020 say today’s economy is fair or poor, ordinarily a bad omen for incumbents seeking re-election.

**Body**

A majority of those who backed President Biden in 2020 say today’s economy is fair or poor, ordinarily a bad omen for incumbents seeking re-election.

Presidents seeking a second term have often found the public’s perception of the economy a pivotal issue. It was a boon to Ronald Reagan; it helped usher Jimmy Carter and George H.W. Bush out of the White House.

Now, as President Biden looks toward a re-election campaign, there are warning signals on that front: With overall consumer sentiment at a low ebb despite solid economic data, even Democrats who supported Mr. Biden in 2020 say they’re not impressed with the economy.

In a [*recent New York Times/Siena College poll*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/11/07/us/elections/times-siena-battlegrounds-registered-voters.html) of voters in six battleground states, 62 percent of those voters think the economy is only “fair” or “poor” (compared with 97 percent for those who voted for Donald J. Trump).

The demographics of Mr. Biden’s 2020 supporters may explain part of his challenge now: They were [*on balance*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/11/03/us/elections/exit-polls-president.html) younger, had lower incomes and were more racially diverse than Mr. Trump’s. Those groups tend to be hit hardest by inflation, which has yet to return to 2020 levels, and high interest rates, which have frustrated first-time home buyers and drained the finances of those dependent on credit.

But if the election were held today, and the options were Mr. Biden and Mr. Trump, it’s not clear whether voter perceptions of the economy would tip the balance.

“The last midterm was an abortion election,” said Joshua Doss, an analyst at the public opinion research firm HIT Strategies, referring to the 2022 voting that followed the Supreme Court’s decision to overturn the Roe v. Wade ruling. “Most of the time, elections are about ‘it’s the economy, stupid.’ Republicans lost that because of Roe. So we’re definitely in uncharted territory.”

There are things working in Mr. Biden’s favor. First, Mr. Doss said, the economic programs enacted under the Biden administration remain broadly popular, providing a political foundation for Mr. Biden to build on. And second, social issues — which lifted the Democrats in the midterms — remain a prominent concern.

Take Oscar Nuñez, 27, a server at a restaurant in Las Vegas. Foot traffic has been much slower than usual for this time of year, eating into his tips. He’d like to start his own business, but with the rising cost of living, he and his wife — who works at home answering questions from independent contractors for her employer — haven’t managed to save much money. It’s also a tough jump to make when the economy feels shaky.

Mr. Nuñez expected better from Mr. Biden when he voted blue in 2020, he said, but he wasn’t sure what specifically the president should have done better. And he is pretty sure another Trump term would be a disaster.

“I’d prefer another option, but it seems like it will once again be my only option again,” Mr. Nuñez said of Mr. Biden. For him, immigrants’ rights and foreign policy concerns are more important. “That’s why I was picking him over Trump in the first place — because this guy’s going to do something that’s real dangerous at some point.”

Mr. Nuñez isn’t alone in feeling dissatisfied with the economy but still bound to Mr. Biden by other priorities. Of those surveyed in the six battleground states who plan to vote for Mr. Biden in 2024, 47 percent say social issues are more important to them, while 42 percent say the economy is more important — but that’s a closer split than in the 2022 midterms, in which social issues decisively outweighed economic concerns among Democratic voters in several swing states. (Among likely Trump voters, 71 percent say they are most focused on the economy, while 15 percent favor social issues.)

Dour sentiment about the economy also isn’t limited to people who’ve been frustrated in their financial ambitions.

Mackenzie Kiser, 20, and Lawson Millwood, 21, students at the University of North Georgia, managed to buy a house this year. Mr. Millwood’s income as an information-technology systems administrator at the university was enough to qualify, and they worried that affordability would only worsen if they waited because of rising interest rates and prices. Still, the experience left a bitter taste.

“The housing market is absolutely insane,” said Ms. Kiser, who wasn’t old enough to vote in 2020 but leans progressive. “We paid the same for our one-story, one-bedroom cinder-block 1950s house as my mom paid for her three-story, four-bedroom house less than a decade ago.”

Ms. Kiser doesn’t think Mr. Biden has done much to help the economy, and she worries he’s too old to be effective. But Mr. Trump isn’t more appealing on that front.

“It’s not that I think that anybody of a different party could do better, but more that someone with their mental faculties who’s not retirement age could do a better job,” Ms. Kiser said. “Our choices are retirement age or retirement age, so it’s rock and a hard place right now.”

Generally, voters don’t think Republicans are fixing the economy, either. In a [*poll conducted this month*](https://navigatorresearch.org/battleground-constituents-identify-the-impacts-of-rising-costs-on-their-personal-economy-and-economic-outlook/) by the progressive-leaning Navigator Research, 70 percent of voters in battleground House districts, including a majority of Republicans, said they thought Republicans were more focused on issues other than the economy.

The health of the economy is still a major variable leading up to the election. A downturn could fray what the president cites as a signal accomplishment of Bidenomics: low unemployment. A [*study of the 2016 election*](https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/perspectives-on-politics/article/differential-effects-of-economic-conditions-and-racial-attitudes-in-the-election-of-donald-trump/BA444B3A13CC950E6FCA7CC16C33142F) found that higher localized unemployment made Black voters, an overwhelmingly Democratic constituency, less likely to vote at all.

“I think the likelihood that they would choose Trump is not the threat,” Mr. Doss said. “The threat is that they would choose the couch and stay home, and enough of them would stay home for an electoral college win for Trump.”

But in the absence of a competitive Democratic primary, the campaigning — and television spots — have yet to commence in earnest. When they do, Mr. Doss has some ideas.

So far, Mr. Biden’s messaging has focused on macroeconomic indicators like the unemployment rate and tackling inflation. “The truth is, that’s not the economy to most people,” Mr. Doss said. “The economy to most people is gas prices and food and whether or not they can afford to throw a birthday party for their kid.”

It’s difficult for presidents to directly control inflation in the short term. But the White House has addressed a few specific costs that matter for families, by releasing oil from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve to [*contain surging oil prices*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/25/business/economy/biden-oil-prices-middle-east.html?searchResultPosition=3) in late 2022, for example. The Inflation Reduction Act [*reduced*](https://www.cms.gov/newsroom/press-releases/inflation-reduction-act-continues-lower-out-pocket-prescription-drug-costs-drugs-price-increases-0#:~:text=Under%20the%20Inflation%20Reduction%20Act,%2C%20to%20December%2031%2C%202023.) prescription drug prices under Medicare and capped the cost of insulin for people with diabetes. The administration is also going after what it calls [*“junk fees,”*](https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2023/10/11/biden-harris-administration-announces-broad-new-actions-to-protect-consumers-from-billions-in-junk-fees/#:~:text=Today%2C%20the%20Biden%2DHarris%20Administration,the%20full%20price%20up%20front.) which inflate the prices of things like concert tickets, airline tickets and even birthday parties.

The more the administration talks about its concrete efforts to lower prices, the more Mr. Biden will benefit, Mr. Doss said. At the same time, Mr. Biden can lessen the blowback from persistent inflation by deflecting blame — an out-of-control pandemic was the original cause, he could plausibly argue, and most other wealthy countries are worse off.

That’s how it seems to Kendra McDowell, 44, an accountant and single mother of four in Harrisburg, Pa. She feels the sting of inflation every time she goes to the grocery store — she spent $1,000 on groceries this past month and didn’t even fill her deep freezer — and in the health of her clients’ balance sheets. Despite her judgment that the economy is poor, however, she still has enough confidence to start a business in home-based care, a field in greater demand since Covid-19 ripped through nursing homes.

“When I talk about the economy, it’s just inflation, and to me inflation is systemic and coming from the Trump administration,” Ms. McDowell said. If the pandemic had been contained quickly, she reasoned, supply chains and labor disruptions wouldn’t have sent prices soaring in the first place.

Moreover, she sees the situation healing itself, and thinks Mr. Biden is doing the best he can given the challenges of the wars in Ukraine and now Gaza. “People are shopping — you know why? Because they’ve got jobs,” Ms. McDowell said. “God forbid, today or tomorrow, if I had to go find a job, it’s easier than it was before.”

Ms. McDowell is what’s known in public opinion research as a high-information voter. [*Polls have shown*](https://navigatorresearch.org/lowering-drug-prices-and-investing-in-infrastructure-are-most-popular-and-known-biden-accomplishments/) that those less apt to stay up on the news tend to change their views when provided with more background on what the Biden administration has both accomplished and attempted.

The 15-month-old Inflation Reduction Act is [*still little known*](https://thehill.com/homenews/administration/4141303-7-in-10-say-theyve-heard-little-or-nothing-about-inflation-reduction-act-since-passage-survey/), for example. But this past March, the Yale Program on Climate Change Communication [*found*](https://climatecommunication.yale.edu/publications/who-is-most-supportive-of-the-ira/) that 68 percent of respondents supported it when filled in on its main components.

A frequent theme of conversations with Democratic voters who see the economy as poor is that large corporations have too much power and that the middle class is being squeezed.

Mr. Millwood, Ms. Kiser’s partner, said that he was concerned that society had grown more unequal in recent years, and that he didn’t see Mr. Biden doing much about it.

“From what I see, it really doesn’t look like the ***working class*** is benefiting from many things recently,” said Mr. Millwood, who supports a higher federal minimum wage and is impatient with the bickering and finger pointing he hears about in Washington.

After the phone conversation ended, Mr. Millwood texted to say that upon reflection, he would also like to see Mr. Biden push to lower taxes for low-income families and make it more difficult for the wealthiest to dodge them. After being sent news articles about Mr. Biden’s support for the extension of the [*now-expired Child Tax Credit*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/11/25/us/politics/child-tax-credit.html) and the appropriation of [*$80 billion for the Internal Revenue Service*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/04/06/business/economy/irs-tax-treasury.html), in part to pursue tax evaders, he seemed surprised.

“That is absolutely what I had in mind,” Mr. Millwood texted. “It’s been so noisy in the media lately I haven’t seen much that is covering things like that,” adding, “Biden doesn’t seem so bad after all haha.”

Ruth Igielnik contributed reporting.

Audio produced by Tally Abecassis.

Ruth Igielnik contributed reporting. Audio produced by Tally Abecassis.

PHOTOS: Kendra McDowell, a single mother of four, said she felt inflation’s sting every time she went to the grocery store but didn’t blame President Biden. (PHOTOGRAPH BY HANNAH YOON FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES); Lawson Millwood, 21, and Mackenzie Kiser, 20, bought a one-bedroom home. It cost the same as a four-bedroom house Ms. Kiser’s mother bought less than a decade ago. (PHOTOGRAPH BY AUDRA MELTON FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A16) This article appeared in print on page A1, A16.

**Load-Date:** November 29, 2023

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[***Candidate for ‘Mayah’ Proudly Leans Into Her Boston Sound***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:63T7-NRV1-JBG3-62H7-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Length:** 1626 words

**Byline:** Ellen Barry

**Highlight:** The mayoral candidate Annissa Essaibi George, the daughter of Polish and Tunisian immigrants, speaks with the accent of ***working-class*** Boston. And she’s having some fun with it.

**Body**

The mayoral candidate Annissa Essaibi George, the daughter of Polish and Tunisian immigrants, speaks with the accent of ***working-class*** Boston. And she’s having some fun with it.

BOSTON — The [*mayoral*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2021/11/02/us/elections/results-boston-mayor-city-council.html) candidate Annissa Essaibi George was amping up her supporters, who had gathered in an Italian restaurant on the waterfront, a little punchy after a long day of getting out the vote.

As she built toward the climax of her speech, a pledge to be “the teacher, the mother and the mayor” the city needs, her accent unfurled like a banner. Those in the crowd were in high spirits, so they chanted it together a second time, then a third.

“I will be the teachah!” they shouted, to raucous celebration. “The mothah!” (Cheers.) “And the mayah!” (sustained cheers) “to get it done!”

In that catch phrase, which she also [*featured in two television advertisements*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RU4B7Z2DlSM), Ms. Essaibi George [*makes several things clear*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CH3TK1EeIvk): that though she identifies as Arab American, she was born and bred in the heart of Irish American [*Boston*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2021/11/02/us/elections/results-boston-mayor-city-council.html). That amid an influx of affluent professionals, she would stand up for Boston’s ***working class*** — not just police officers and firefighters, but electricians and construction workers. That her neighborhood, Dorchester, is stamped on her DNA.

Boston is a city that cherishes its accent — one that ignores R’s in some places, inserts them in others, and prolongs its A sounds as if it were opening its mouth for a dentist.

In the second half of the 20th century, linguists say, New Yorkers began to look down on their own R-less accent, but Bostonians, like Philadelphians, continued to revel in theirs. They were not embarrassed by it; it conveyed toughness and good humor and authenticity. Candidates with pronounced accents have won the last 10 [*mayoral elections*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2021/11/02/us/elections/results-boston-mayor-city-council.html).

But this campaign comes at a moment of change, as growing populations — young professionals, Latinos, Asians — redraw Boston’s electoral map. Ms. Essaibi George’s opponent, [*Michelle Wu*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/03/us/michelle-wu-boston-progressives.html), who moved to the area to attend Harvard, speaks to the concerns of many of those new Bostonians. Slowly but steadily, like polar ice caps, the core of ***working-class*** [*Boston*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/02/us/elections/michelle-wu-boston-mayor.html) is diminishing.

When Ms. Essaibi George speaks, dropping references to her parish (St. Margaret’s), her favorite teacher (Sister Helen) and her football grudges (the trade of Jimmy Garoppolo), she effortlessly evokes that Boston.

“I will say we’ve had a little bit of fun with the accent,” she said in an interview. If you watch [*the first television ad to feature the phrase*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RU4B7Z2DlSM), she said, “you can see that I’m doing all I can to not crack up laughing.”

Asked whether it conveys a political advantage, she gives a verbal shrug.

“I don’t think about it at all,” she said. “It is how I think. It’s how I talk.”

The two candidates, both Democrats and at-large city councilors, differ most notably on issues of policing and development: Ms. Wu, who placed first in the preliminary election, [*has pushed for deeper cuts to the police budget*](https://www.wgbh.org/news/local-news/2020/06/23/city-councilor-michelle-wu-mayors-budget-cuts-not-a-real-change), while Ms. Essaibi George argues for [*adding hundreds more officers to the force*](https://www.bostonglobe.com/2021/08/30/metro/mayoral-candidate-essaibi-george-talks-bolstering-police-while-touring-bowdoin-geneva/). Ms. Wu [*supports rent stabilization*](https://www.bostonglobe.com/2021/08/01/metro/boston-mayoral-candidate-michelle-wu-is-an-island-alone-with-rent-control/) and [*the dissolution of the city’s main planning agency,*](https://www.michelleforboston.com/plans/abolish-bpda) which she says favors politically connected developers, while Ms. Essaibi George, who is married to a developer, warns that such measures could bring building “to almost a grinding halt,” cutting into the city budget and ***working-class*** jobs.

But it is Ms. Essaibi George’s accent-flexing that has sparked the most spirited discussions. A local filmmaker who recently celebrated a birthday received a card saying, “You’re my SISTAH, you’re a PRODUCAH, and now you’re OLDAH.”

Many of Ms. Wu’s supporters roll their eyes at this, saying Ms. Essaibi George has dialed up her Dorchesterese for the occasion. Anyway, they say, the solidarity conveyed by the Boston accent — really a white, ***working-class*** Boston accent — is one that excludes much of the city. [*Recent census data*](https://data.census.gov/cedsci/table?tid=ACSDT5Y2019.B05002&amp;g=1600000US2507000) found that only 43 percent of Boston’s population was born in Massachusetts.

“It’s a message of belonging,” said Mimi Turchinetz, a community activist who supports Ms. Wu. “That unless you’re from the neighborhood, you don’t have deep roots and can’t represent this city. It’s a statement of belonging, versus the other. That’s the quiet suggestion.”

Ms. Wu, the child of Taiwanese immigrants, was raised in a suburb of Chicago; her speech does not carry a strong regional flavor. If she is elected in November, she would be the first mayor since 1925 who had not been born in Boston.

Last week, when she was [*asked by Boston Public Radio whether Ms. Wu’s lack of Boston roots should be a factor in the race*](https://www.wgbh.org/news/local-news/2021/09/30/annissa-essaibi-george-ramps-up-criticism-of-wu-draws-distinction-from-progressive-rival-on-substance-and-style), Ms. Essaibi George said it was “relevant to me” and “relevant to a lot of voters.” This prompted a backlash on social media, including from Ms. Wu herself.

“Reminder,” Ms. Wu wrote on Twitter. “The [*Mayor of Boston*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/02/us/elections/donors-boston-mayoral-race.html) needs to lead for ALL of us. I’m ready to fight for every resident — whether you’ve been here since birth or chose to make Boston your home along the way.”

Ms. Essaibi George spent much of the next day trying to explain her comments, dismissing the perpetual contrast of old Boston and new Boston as “such a silly, silly debate.”

“This is not about being born and raised here,” she said. “So many Bostonians are not born and raised in the city. Both my parents immigrated to this country, never mind the city. And for me, it is what makes this city special.”

Accents have long been weaponized in Massachusetts politics, usually identifying their owner as the more authentic champion of the ***working class***. [*James Michael Curley*](https://www.nytimes.com/1958/11/16/archives/3urley-is-buried-in-boston-rites-crowds-jam-cathedral-and-streets.html?searchResultPosition=32), who served four terms as Boston’s mayor, beginning in 1914, once derided his opponent as having a “Harvard accent with a South Boston face.”

Senator Ed Markey leveraged his accent last year, when [*during a debate with then-Representative Joseph P. Kennedy III*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/31/us/markey-kennedy-massachusetts-senate.html?.?mc=aud_dev&amp;ad-keywords=auddevgate&amp;gclid=CjwKCAjw7--KBhAMEiwAxfpkWKyYTJUkZy9jRNWvA26vlYibY33VlsRGbMI-GrNDGOjxbNfcxe33ZBoCBrEQAvD_BwE&amp;gclsrc=aw.ds), he turned to Mr. Kennedy and said, “Tell your father right now that you don’t want money to go into a Super PAC that runs negative ads.” The jab was clear: Mr. Markey, a truck driver’s son, was drawing a contrast with the scion of a political dynasty.

Almost instantaneously, “Tell ya fatha” became a meme, for sale on T-shirts on Mr. Markey’s campaign websites. It was so popular that Robert DeLeo, then the speaker of the Massachusetts House, posed with a “Tell ya fatha” T-shirt without realizing what it meant, and then privately apologized to Mr. Kennedy, [*Politico reported*](https://www.politico.com/news/2020/09/02/joe-kennedy-senate-campaign-failed-408033).

It is an accent that can cut both ways, said Marjorie Feinstein-Whittaker, a speech therapist who has spent 20 years helping Massachusetts residents modify their accents.

Often, clients seek out her firm, the Whittaker Group, because they fear that in professional settings they’re seen as “***working-class***, or not so smart.” Sometimes they’re just tired of being asked to say “park the car in Harvard Yard” all the time, which makes them feel “like a circus act.”

But there is also something positive about the accent — something intangible, an emotional attachment. “It’s hard for me to answer because I’m not from here, but I think it’s, ‘I’ve got your back, you’ve got my back, we’ve got this bond no one can break,’” Ms. Feinstein-Whittaker said. “It’s like a family thing. It’s solidarity.”

Ms. Essaibi George’s history makes her both an insider and an outsider to this tradition. Her father, Ezzeddine, grew up in a Tunisian village and fell in love with her mother, a Polish immigrant, when they were studying in Paris. He followed her back to the Savin Hill section of Dorchester, which was then overwhelmingly white and Irish Catholic.

As an Arab and a Muslim, he never felt fully accepted, Ms. Essaibi George said, and scoffed at the idea his daughter could win office, telling her “an Arab girl, with an Arab name, will win nothing in this country.” That she has managed it — winning an at-large City Council seat three times — represents “my inner 15-year-old self” trying to prove him wrong, she said.

“I’m very proud of the neighborhood I grew up in,” she said, even though “I was sometimes seen as a little bit of a different kid, because I didn’t come from a traditional white Irish Catholic family.”

This combination of attributes — a booster of traditional Boston who also represents change — helped her place second in [*last month’s crowded preliminary*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/09/10/us/boston-mayoral-election.html).

“We need someone who has been in our shoes,” said Michael Buckman, 38, a janitor who fears the rising cost of living will force him out of South Boston, where his family has lived for nine generations since immigrating from Ireland.

“It stems all the way back into the roots of Boston,” he said. “It was a working city. It’s gone the direction of skyscrapers and hospitals and universities. I understand cities evolve. If anything, Boston has evolved a little too much.”

As for Ms. Essaibi George’s accent, it is an advantage, said Douglas Vinitsky, 45, a sheet-metal worker who was waiting to meet her at a campaign stop.

Though he “wasn’t raised uppity,” he said, his mother tried for years to train him to pronounce his Rs, warning that he would be seen as uneducated. Mr. Vinitsky disagreed so strongly that he leaned deeper into his accent just to make a point. And it has never cost him.

“Nobody else in the world cared how I spoke,” he said. “It didn’t even matter in Boston.”

PHOTOS: Annissa Essaibi George, in Hyde Park last month, is playing up her Boston roots in her mayoral run. (A1); Annissa Essaibi George has downplayed her accent as being political. “It’s how I talk,” she said..; Michelle Wu is trying to become the first mayor to not be Boston-born since 1925. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY M. SCOTT BRAUER FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES); Senator Ed Markey’s “Tell ya fatha” debate zinger to Repre- sentative Joseph P. Kennedy III became a meme of sorts. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY THE MARKEY COMMITTEE; DAVID DEGNER FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A17)

**Load-Date:** November 3, 2021

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[***Even Biden Voters Are Gloomy About Economy, Despite Data***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69RJ-SFT1-DXY4-X0RM-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; National Desk; Pg. 1

**Length:** 1717 words

**Byline:** By Lydia DePillis

**Body**

A majority of those who backed President Biden in 2020 say today's economy is fair or poor, ordinarily a bad omen for incumbents seeking re-election.

Presidents seeking a second term have often found the public's perception of the economy a pivotal issue. It was a boon to Ronald Reagan; it helped usher Jimmy Carter and George H.W. Bush out of the White House.

Now, as President Biden looks toward a re-election campaign, there are warning signals on that front: With overall consumer sentiment at a low ebb despite solid economic data, even Democrats who supported Mr. Biden in 2020 say they're not impressed with the economy.

In a recent New York Times/Siena College poll of voters in six battleground states, 62 percent of those voters think the economy is only ''fair'' or ''poor'' (compared with 97 percent for those who voted for Donald J. Trump).

The demographics of Mr. Biden's 2020 supporters may explain part of his challenge now: They were on balance younger, had lower incomes and were more racially diverse than Mr. Trump's. Those groups tend to be hit hardest by inflation, which has yet to return to 2020 levels, and high interest rates, which have frustrated first-time home buyers and drained the finances of those dependent on credit.

But if the election were held today, and the options were Mr. Biden and Mr. Trump, it's not clear whether voter perceptions of the economy would tip the balance.

''The last midterm was an abortion election,'' said Joshua Doss, an analyst at the public opinion research firm HIT Strategies, referring to the 2022 voting that followed the Supreme Court's decision to overturn the Roe v. Wade ruling. ''Most of the time, elections are about 'it's the economy, stupid.' Republicans lost that because of Roe. So we're definitely in uncharted territory.''

There are things working in Mr. Biden's favor. First, Mr. Doss said, the economic programs enacted under the Biden administration remain broadly popular, providing a political foundation for Mr. Biden to build on. And second, social issues -- which lifted the Democrats in the midterms -- remain a prominent concern.

Take Oscar Nuñez, 27, a server at a restaurant in Las Vegas. Foot traffic has been much slower than usual for this time of year, eating into his tips. He'd like to start his own business, but with the rising cost of living, he and his wife -- who works at home answering questions from independent contractors for her employer -- haven't managed to save much money. It's also a tough jump to make when the economy feels shaky.

Mr. Nuñez expected better from Mr. Biden when he voted blue in 2020, he said, but he wasn't sure what specifically the president should have done better. And he is pretty sure another Trump term would be a disaster.

''I'd prefer another option, but it seems like it will once again be my only option again,'' Mr. Nuñez said of Mr. Biden. For him, immigrants' rights and foreign policy concerns are more important. ''That's why I was picking him over Trump in the first place -- because this guy's going to do something that's real dangerous at some point.''

Mr. Nuñez isn't alone in feeling dissatisfied with the economy but still bound to Mr. Biden by other priorities. Of those surveyed in the six battleground states who plan to vote for Mr. Biden in 2024, 47 percent say social issues are more important to them, while 42 percent say the economy is more important -- but that's a closer split than in the 2022 midterms, in which social issues decisively outweighed economic concerns among Democratic voters in several swing states. (Among likely Trump voters, 71 percent say they are most focused on the economy, while 15 percent favor social issues.)

Dour sentiment about the economy also isn't limited to people who've been frustrated in their financial ambitions.

Mackenzie Kiser, 20, and Lawson Millwood, 21, students at the University of North Georgia, managed to buy a house this year. Mr. Millwood's income as an information-technology systems administrator at the university was enough to qualify, and they worried that affordability would only worsen if they waited because of rising interest rates and prices. Still, the experience left a bitter taste.

''The housing market is absolutely insane,'' said Ms. Kiser, who wasn't old enough to vote in 2020 but leans progressive. ''We paid the same for our one-story, one-bedroom cinder-block 1950s house as my mom paid for her three-story, four-bedroom house less than a decade ago.''

Ms. Kiser doesn't think Mr. Biden has done much to help the economy, and she worries he's too old to be effective. But Mr. Trump isn't more appealing on that front.

''It's not that I think that anybody of a different party could do better, but more that someone with their mental faculties who's not retirement age could do a better job,'' Ms. Kiser said. ''Our choices are retirement age or retirement age, so it's rock and a hard place right now.''

Generally, voters don't think Republicans are fixing the economy, either. In a poll conducted this month by the progressive-leaning Navigator Research, 70 percent of voters in battleground House districts, including a majority of Republicans, said they thought Republicans were more focused on issues other than the economy.

The health of the economy is still a major variable leading up to the election. A downturn could fray what the president cites as a signal accomplishment of Bidenomics: low unemployment. A study of the 2016 election found that higher localized unemployment made Black voters, an overwhelmingly Democratic constituency, less likely to vote at all.

''I think the likelihood that they would choose Trump is not the threat,'' Mr. Doss said. ''The threat is that they would choose the couch and stay home, and enough of them would stay home for an electoral college win for Trump.''

But in the absence of a competitive Democratic primary, the campaigning -- and television spots -- have yet to commence in earnest. When they do, Mr. Doss has some ideas.

So far, Mr. Biden's messaging has focused on macroeconomic indicators like the unemployment rate and tackling inflation. ''The truth is, that's not the economy to most people,'' Mr. Doss said. ''The economy to most people is gas prices and food and whether or not they can afford to throw a birthday party for their kid.''

It's difficult for presidents to directly control inflation in the short term. But the White House has addressed a few specific costs that matter for families, by releasing oil from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve to contain surging oil prices in late 2022, for example. The Inflation Reduction Act reduced prescription drug prices under Medicare and capped the cost of insulin for people with diabetes. The administration is also going after what it calls ''junk fees,'' which inflate the prices of things like concert tickets, airline tickets and even birthday parties.

The more the administration talks about its concrete efforts to lower prices, the more Mr. Biden will benefit, Mr. Doss said. At the same time, Mr. Biden can lessen the blowback from persistent inflation by deflecting blame -- an out-of-control pandemic was the original cause, he could plausibly argue, and most other wealthy countries are worse off.

That's how it seems to Kendra McDowell, 44, an accountant and single mother of four in Harrisburg, Pa. She feels the sting of inflation every time she goes to the grocery store -- she spent $1,000 on groceries this past month and didn't even fill her deep freezer -- and in the health of her clients' balance sheets. Despite her judgment that the economy is poor, however, she still has enough confidence to start a business in home-based care, a field in greater demand since Covid-19 ripped through nursing homes.

''When I talk about the economy, it's just inflation, and to me inflation is systemic and coming from the Trump administration,'' Ms. McDowell said. If the pandemic had been contained quickly, she reasoned, supply chains and labor disruptions wouldn't have sent prices soaring in the first place.

Moreover, she sees the situation healing itself, and thinks Mr. Biden is doing the best he can given the challenges of the wars in Ukraine and now Gaza. ''People are shopping -- you know why? Because they've got jobs,'' Ms. McDowell said. ''God forbid, today or tomorrow, if I had to go find a job, it's easier than it was before.''

Ms. McDowell is what's known in public opinion research as a high-information voter. Polls have shown that those less apt to stay up on the news tend to change their views when provided with more background on what the Biden administration has both accomplished and attempted.

The 15-month-old Inflation Reduction Act is still little known, for example. But this past March, the Yale Program on Climate Change Communication found that 68 percent of respondents supported it when filled in on its main components.

A frequent theme of conversations with Democratic voters who see the economy as poor is that large corporations have too much power and that the middle class is being squeezed.

Mr. Millwood, Ms. Kiser's partner, said that he was concerned that society had grown more unequal in recent years, and that he didn't see Mr. Biden doing much about it.

''From what I see, it really doesn't look like the ***working class*** is benefiting from many things recently,'' said Mr. Millwood, who supports a higher federal minimum wage and is impatient with the bickering and finger pointing he hears about in Washington.

After the phone conversation ended, Mr. Millwood texted to say that upon reflection, he would also like to see Mr. Biden push to lower taxes for low-income families and make it more difficult for the wealthiest to dodge them. After being sent news articles about Mr. Biden's support for the extension of the now-expired Child Tax Credit and the appropriation of $80 billion for the Internal Revenue Service, in part to pursue tax evaders, he seemed surprised.

''That is absolutely what I had in mind,'' Mr. Millwood texted. ''It's been so noisy in the media lately I haven't seen much that is covering things like that,'' adding, ''Biden doesn't seem so bad after all haha.''

Ruth Igielnik contributed reporting.Ruth Igielnik contributed reporting.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/28/business/economy/democrats-biden-economy.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/28/business/economy/democrats-biden-economy.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Kendra McDowell, a single mother of four, said she felt inflation's sting every time she went to the grocery store but didn't blame President Biden. (PHOTOGRAPH BY HANNAH YOON FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

Lawson Millwood, 21, and Mackenzie Kiser, 20, bought a one-bedroom home. It cost the same as a four-bedroom house Ms. Kiser's mother bought less than a decade ago. (PHOTOGRAPH BY AUDRA MELTON FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A16) This article appeared in print on page A1, A16.

**Load-Date:** November 28, 2023

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[***Economists Ignored Inequality for Years. Now They Can’t Stop Talking About It.; Critic’s Notebook***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69J7-PMF1-DXY4-X25Y-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** BOOKS; review

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**Byline:** Jennifer Szalai

**Highlight:** A flurry of new books highlights broad disagreements over how to address the problem.

**Body**

When the economist Angus Deaton moved to the United States in 1983, he was “in awe,” as he puts it in his new book, “[*Economics in America*](https://press.princeton.edu/books/hardcover/9780691247625/economics-in-america).” Born in Scotland and educated at the University of Cambridge, he remembers the swell of optimism he felt upon arriving at Princeton University. It was a “splendid place to work,” especially for someone who had been poor enough as a child to appreciate the measure of security provided by an “American salary.”

But Deaton was immediately struck by the dark side of the American dream. Outside campus, the land of opportunity also turned out to be “the land of inequality.” The American safety net was meager to nonexistent. Having grown up in the early days of Britain’s welfare state, Deaton “saw the government as my friend.” He recoiled when one of his new colleagues declared that “government is theft.”

Deaton’s arrival in the United States happened to coincide with what the British economist Anthony B. Atkinson called the “Inequality Turn.” The “[*great compression*](https://www.nber.org/papers/w3817)” of wages during the previous decades was coming to an end, buffeted in the 1970s by oil shocks and stagflation. By 1983, the Thatcher and Reagan governments were pursuing a neoliberal agenda of tax-cutting and deregulation. For the middle classes, consumer debt fueled a mirage of continued prosperity, but inequality was widening. The economics profession had yet to catch up.

And catch up it has. A spate of books detail a new understanding of inequality, showing how this intellectual transformation is a rich story in its own right. In “[*Visions of Inequality*](https://www.hup.harvard.edu/catalog.php?isbn=9780674264144),” a history of the changing ways economists have broached the subject since the French Revolution, Branko Milanovic notes a “long eclipse of inequality studies” from the mid-1960s to around 1990. With some exceptions, including work by Latin American economists, declining inequality had lulled the discipline into a smug sense of complacency. Both sides in the Cold War wanted to pretend that their systems had solved the problem once and for all.

Milanovic, formerly the lead economist in the World Bank’s research department and the author of several book about global inequality, describes how Western economists were in thrall to an unholy combination of extremely simplistic assumptions and extremely complex mathematical models: “It was almost as if they wanted their model world to look as different as possible from the world where people lived.”

This idealized approach was eventually overwhelmed by the unruly reality, with the neoclassical economist cloistered in his ivory tower, contemplating his quaint abstractions, becoming the stuff of caricature. The financial crisis of 2008, Occupy Wall Street, the 2014 publication in English of “[*Capital in the 21st Century*](https://www.nytimes.com/2014/04/19/books/thomas-piketty-tours-us-for-his-new-book.html?searchResultPosition=19),” the 700-page best seller by the French economist Thomas Piketty: Milanovic shows how inequality went from a subject “hovering in the background” to a pressing issue at “the forefront of people’s consciousness.”

Deaton notes a similar turn. Among the bubbles that popped in the collapse of 2008 was the “reckless enthusiasm for markets” in his profession. Along with his wife, the economist Anne Case, he has written about the rise in [*“deaths of despair”*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/17/books/review/deaths-of-despair-and-the-future-of-capitalism-anne-case-angus-deaton.html) — increasing mortality rates among white American men without a college degree. When Deaton first arrived at Princeton 40 years ago, his interest in tax reform and resource redistribution made him a professional outlier; in 2015, he was [*awarded*](https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/economic-sciences/2015/deaton/facts/) a Nobel Prize.

“Economics in America” is an inviting and readable book, though it’s perhaps a measure of how much inequality has permeated our cultural consciousness in the last decade that there’s little in it that comes across as provocative or surprising. The ambivalence and estrangement that Deaton expresses about his adopted country (he identifies himself in his subtitle as “an immigrant economist”) is not, I would wager, all that rare as Americans struggle to find common ground.

Yes, [*most of us agree*](https://www.pewresearch.org/social-trends/2020/01/09/most-americans-say-there-is-too-much-economic-inequality-in-the-u-s-but-fewer-than-half-call-it-a-top-priority/) that inequality is a problem — even if we can’t agree on what that actually means and what to do about it. Incomes have [*stagnated*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/04/10/opinion/coronavirus-us-economy-inequality.html), except for the very rich, whose incomes have more than quadrupled since 1980. The left calls for higher taxes and solidarity; the right calls for slashed taxes and closed borders. Centrists try to tiptoe their way between the two poles, to nobody else’s satisfaction. The epidemiologists Richard Wilkinson and Kate Pickett consider inequality a [*“social poison”*](https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2012/aug/05/riots-inequality-poverty-self-esteem) that erodes the very things we need — empathy, a sense of security, trust in one another — to combat inequality in the first place.

Even the response to Deaton’s own research has fractured along ideological lines. He notes how officials in the Trump administration used deaths of despair as an argument against lockdowns during the pandemic, suggesting that suicides would increase if people were forced to stay at home. Deaton says that the data doesn’t support this contention, just as he rejects claims by conservatives like Charles Murray, who insist that the problem isn’t a surfeit of despair but a lack of industriousness. Deaton, perhaps in a nod to [*some of his critics*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/18/opinion/beyond-deaths-of-despair.html), also pulls back from his original focus on white men. In his new book, he speaks more generally about despair among the less educated, pointedly discussing the persistence of economic disparities between Black and white Americans.

As I was reading “Economics in America,” I recalled the argument briefly fashionable around the time of the 2016 election that [*“economic anxiety”*](https://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2016/08/donald-trump-and-economic-anxiety/496385/) among white Americans was driving support for Donald Trump. A year later, [*“The Broken Ladder,”*](https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/318941/the-broken-ladder-by-keith-payne/) by the psychologist Keith Payne, conceded that white Americans with a high-school degree continued to fare better economically than similarly educated Black Americans, but a “history of privilege” meant that ***working-class*** white people were “dying of violated expectations.” Such observations emphasized our shared vulnerabilities, though like so much in our zero-sum political discourse, the subject of inequality also got warped and weaponized. Trump spoke the language of populism, promising to deliver for the [*little guy*](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/12/17/us/politics/trump-working-class.html) while pushing through policies that favored [*the richest*](https://inequality.org/research/trump-income-inequality/).

But inequality hurts the richest, too — at least that’s what the philosopher Ingrid Robeyns argues in [*“Limitarianism,”*](https://astrapublishinghouse.com/product/limitarianism-9781662601842/) a book coming out early next year. She talks to wealthy people who are exhausted by “the unending rat race provoked by status goods.” Extreme wealth isn’t just socially and ecologically destructive; it can be psychologically corrosive, as those who have it try to rationalize disparities to themselves.

Some become “class traitors,” giving away their riches and demanding to be taxed; others double down, insisting that they are merely reaping their just rewards. Robeyns allows that worrying about the emotional health of the 1 percent might be a hard sell, but, she points out, more money means more power, so whatever depletes the stores of empathy and compassion of the most powerful has implications for us all.

It’s this notion of “us all” that some writers are trying to revive, including Piketty, in [*“A Brief History of Equality,”*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/04/19/books/review/a-brief-history-of-equality-thomas-piketty.html) which was published in English last year. In “Capital in the 21st Century,” Piketty showed how the rate of return to capital historically exceeded economic growth, allowing the wealthiest to pull ever further away from the rest of the population. His latest book shifts the emphasis by widening the lens. Piketty states that while “different inequalities have persisted at considerable and unjustified levels,” we shouldn’t get mired in pessimism: “Since the end of the 18th century, there has been a real, long-term tendency toward equality, but it is nonetheless limited in scope.”

That “but” gives you a sense of the needle that Piketty is trying to thread, avoiding the twin seductions of triumphalism and hopelessness. He treats the concept of equality more expansively here, including not only income and property but also gender and race. By moving the focus from inequality to equality, he suggests that what’s needed isn’t only the harsh light of critique but also the remedy of repair.

The historian Darrin M. McMahon lauds Piketty for this ambition, even if he is more circumspect about its prospects in his fascinating new book, “[*Equality: The History of an Elusive Idea*](https://www.hachettebookgroup.com/titles/darrin-m-mcmahon/equality/9780465093939/).” In a sweeping account that starts with cave paintings in the Spanish Levant and ends with “cyborg-pharaohs” made possible by A.I., McMahon explains how ideas about equality have been anything but consistent and straightforward. An equality that is universal, applicable to all humans, isn’t the only kind. His surprising discussion of the far right conveys how the concept of equality has been used to bolster inequality. Even fascist movements promised to “satisfy the egalitarian aspirations of the masses” while also venerating hierarchy and domination.

The forces of right-wing reaction have specialized in this perverse approach, emphasizing “equality in inequality,” McMahon writes, drawing connections between nativist movements of the past and the “populist-plutocrats” of today. Which is why, he says, recognizing the reality of inequality is such “vital work in a highly unequal age.”

If the public no longer clings to a blithe belief in the system, the trick is to keep such hard-won skepticism from sliding into easy cynicism. McMahon’s book is less a call to action than a goad to thinking: “Human beings often long to relate to one another more equally than they do, especially when the gaps between them are achingly apparent.”

PHOTO: A spate of books details the transformation of ideas about the causes and effects of economic inequality. This article appeared in print on page C6.

**Load-Date:** November 3, 2023

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[***It’s Been a Week. What Does It Tell Us About 2024?; Political Memo***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:687C-7KC1-DXY4-X45H-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** US; politics

**Length:** 1575 words

**Byline:** Jonathan Weisman

**Highlight:** The presidential race has started to crystallize, with flawed standard-bearers, worried political parties and voters unhappy with their choices.

**Body**

The presidential race has started to crystallize, with flawed standard-bearers, worried political parties and voters unhappy with their choices.

Eighteen months is an eternity in politics.

But rapid-fire and high-profile events over the past week have set the tone and clarified the stakes of a still nascent presidential race featuring an incumbent president and a Republican front-runner whom many Americans, according to polling, do not want as their choices — but may feel resigned to accept.

The week began with [*a surprising poll*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/07/us/politics/biden-approval-numbers-re-election.html) — [*probably an outlier*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/10/upshot/trump-biden-poll-2024.html) — that showed President Biden losing to both former President Donald J. Trump and his closest presumptive primary competitor, Gov. Ron DeSantis of Florida.

Then in quick succession came [*a jury’s verdict holding Mr. Trump liable*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2023/05/09/nyregion/trump-carroll-rape-trial-verdict) for sexual abuse, a [*raucous New Hampshire town hall*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2023/05/10/us/trump-cnn-town-hall) that brought the former president’s falsehoods and bluster back into the spotlight, the lifting of [*pandemic-era controls at the U.S.-Mexico border*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/11/us/title-42-border-migrants.html), and a [*raft of endorsements for Mr. DeSantis*](https://www.politico.com/news/2023/05/12/desantis-iowa-endorsements-00096770) — and an [*unscheduled visit to show up Mr. Trump*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/14/us/desantis-impresses-in-iowa-showing-up-an-absent-trump.html) — in Iowa that showed many Republican leaders are open to a Trump alternative.

All of that left leaders, strategists and voters in both parties exceptionally anxious.

“We’re in the midst of a primary that has yet to even really form, and meanwhile the opportunity to pound Biden into dirt with his incompetence is slipping,” said Dave Carney, a longtime Republican consultant in New Hampshire, where the first Republican primary votes will be cast in February. “It’s scattershot right now.”

Democrats, who would be expected to rally around their standard-bearer, have spent the week [*expressing a divide on border security*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/13/us/politics/democrats-immigration-title-42.html) and questioning the president on key policy issues.

Strategists have begged Democratic voters to get over their discontent and accept the president as the best they’re going to get.

“Live in the real world,” Stuart Stevens, the longtime Republican political consultant who bolted from the party as Mr. Trump rose to power, exhorted after the New Hampshire town hall. “If you saw Donald Trump tonight and aren’t supporting Biden, you are helping elect Trump. It’s not complicated.”

Representative Ro Khanna of California, a liberal Democrat often willing to say openly what other rank-and-file Democrats won’t, laid out a vision for economic renewal in a Friday speech in New Hampshire that contrasted the president’s more modest ambitions with his failure to secure the allegiance of white ***working-class*** voters whom Mr. Biden has said he is uniquely qualified to win back.

“People are so desperate for some healing, for leadership that can unify,” Mr. Khanna told Democrats at a dinner in Nashua. “We do not need to compromise who we are to find common cause.”

In an interview on Saturday, he said it was not meant to be a criticism. But it was “an appeal for a bolder platform that captures the imagination of ***working-class*** Americans and inspires them.”

There’s no question that political predictions this far from an election are unreliable. Mr. DeSantis has yet to declare his candidacy for the White House, though he and Mr. Trump have been circling each other and competing in a shadow contest in Iowa and New Hampshire, the first contests for the Republican presidential nomination. Even Iowa voters tend not to tune in to the race until later in the year, noted David Kochel, a longtime Iowa Republican consultant.

Still, the question of the moment remains: Where are we?

Simon Rosenberg, who correctly predicted that a surge of Democratic activism would blunt the [*promised “red wave”*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/11/09/us/politics/republican-election-results.html) of the 2022 midterms, said the “fear of MAGA” that powered Democratic victories in 2018, 2020 and 2022 had not diminished ahead of 2024. If anything, abortion bans rolling from state to state across the country, a disheartening surge in mass shootings and a Republican assault on educational freedom will only sharpen those fears, he said.

[*Mr. Trump’s performance at a CNN town hall*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/11/us/politics/trump-cnn-town-hall-takeaways.html) on Wednesday evening — in which the former president repeatedly lied about the 2020 election; mocked E. Jean Carroll, whose accusations of sexual abuse and defamation ended in a $5 million judgment against him; and promised a return to some of his least popular policies — only reiterated why Democrats, independents and disaffected Republicans [*have turned away from the G.O.P.*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/12/08/upshot/georgia-voter-turnout-republicans.html) in the key states of Arizona, Georgia, Nevada, Michigan and Pennsylvania.

The Biden re-election campaign, now in full gear after his formal announcement last month, was making the case to reporters after the town hall, pointing to Mr. Trump’s pride in the overturning of Roe v. Wade; his dismissive take on the economic catastrophe that could ensue if the federal government defaults on its outstanding debt; his referring to Jan. 6, 2021, as “a beautiful day”; and his refusal to commit to accepting the 2024 election results.

One Biden campaign adviser suggested that Mr. Trump had supplied a trove of material for attack ads. The campaign began [*posting*](https://twitter.com/JoeBiden/status/1656784988765863936) [*videos*](https://twitter.com/JoeBiden/status/1656474139316695040) almost immediately. Mr. DeSantis’s super PAC, Never Back Down, called the 70-minute performance “over an hour of nonsense.”

The crucial question for both parties in 2024 is how to retain the voters they have and regain those they have lost.

“It’s hard to understand how someone could vote for Joe Biden in 2020 and Trump in 2024, given that Trump is just going to get more Trumpy,” Mr. Rosenberg said, adding, “I’d still much rather be us than them.”

Mr. Rosenberg’s assessment may be why 37 Republican officials in Iowa, [*including the State Senate president, Amy Sinclair, and the House majority leader, Matt Windschitl*](https://www.desmoinesregister.com/story/news/elections/presidential/caucus/2023/05/11/two-high-profile-republicans-endorse-ron-desantis-in-2024-iowa-caucuses/70199417007/), endorsed Mr. DeSantis last week, as did the [*New Hampshire House majority leader, Jason Osborne*](https://twitter.com/ShelbyTalcott/status/1654172847030272001/photo/1).

Republican consultants in both states said Mr. Trump’s universal name recognition and political persona might give him the highest floor for Republican support, but the same factors lower the ceiling of that support, giving Mr. DeSantis and other challengers a real chance to take him down, if they are willing to take it.

The Trump campaign seemed aware of that dynamic last week as it attacked would-be rivals, not only those clearly preparing to enter the race but also some far from it. On Saturday, Mr. Trump [*laid into Georgia’s Republican governor, Brian Kemp*](https://truthsocial.com/@realDonaldTrump/posts/110355937674453641), for being disloyal, just days after [*an article in The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*](https://www.ajc.com/politics/why-brian-kemp-isnt-shutting-the-door-on-2024/M5UGRYFA5BE67FDPIZ44ETVXBE/) suggested the governor was keeping his options open.

Mr. DeSantis has had his own [*stumbles out of the gate*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/13/us/politics/desantis-trump-2024.html). His [*war with Disney*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/04/26/us/politics/desantis-disney-republicans.html) has provided fodder for rivals who have questioned a Republican’s intrusion into the free market. His signing of a [*six-week abortion ban*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/04/13/us/florida-six-week-abortion-ban.html) and [*his state’s aggressive censorship*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/09/us/desantis-florida-social-studies-textbooks.html) of school textbooks have raised questions among would-be Republican donors and swing voters alike. But the Florida governor also has plenty of time to make his case.

“There’s a lot of game left to play, and I don’t see anything gelling yet,” Mr. Kochel said. “There’s still a lot of room for candidates not named Trump.”

What Republicans seem most amazed by is the docility of Democrats in the face of Mr. Biden’s obvious weaknesses. Age and infirmity are real issues, not Republican talking points, consultants say.

A [*Washington Post-ABC News poll*](https://www.washingtonpost.com/tablet/2023/05/05/april-28-may-3-2023-washington-post-abc-news-poll/) published on Monday showed Mr. Biden losing head-to-head races against Mr. Trump and Mr. DeSantis by between five and six percentage points. Democratic pollsters have dismissed those results, pointing to anomalies like the poll’s showing Mr. Trump winning young voters outright while dramatically closing the gap with Mr. Biden for Black and Hispanic votes.

Even so, there was much in the poll to undermine Mr. Biden’s claim that he, more than any other Democrat, can vanquish a Republican comeback just as he defeated Mr. Trump in 2020.

Republicans say that’s just not possible.

Mr. Carney said the dynamic would get worse, not better, as the 2024 campaign took shape. Chaotic scenes from the southwestern border in the coming weeks will inflame Republican voters’ fears of an “invasion” of illegal immigrants; the Republican National Committee on Friday held the president responsible for 1.4 million “gotaway” migrants that it said had crossed the border and disappeared into the interior since he took office.

More important, the situation at the border could crystallize a sense among swing voters that Mr. Biden is simply not in control. With erstwhile allies like [*New York’s mayor, Eric Adams*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/04/19/nyregion/adams-biden-migrants.html), and [*Chicago’s outgoing mayor, Lori Lightfoot*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/10/us/chicago-migrants-title-42.html), pleading for assistance with a flood of migrants, that conclusion will not be contained to Republican voters.

The brewing showdown over how to raise the [*federal government’s borrowing limit*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/05/08/us/debt-limit-congress-yellen.html) threatens to provoke a catastrophic financial crisis as soon as next month. And while voters might blame Republicans in Congress at first, economic turmoil eventually ends up in the president’s lap.

Perhaps Mr. Biden’s voters will not defect back to Mr. Trump, Republicans agree, but they could simply stay home on Election Day.

“Democrats keep saying, ‘Oh, Trump’s so bad it doesn’t matter,’” Mr. Kochel said. “I don’t know. I think it matters.”

PHOTOS: A raucous New Hampshire town hall on Wednesday brought Donald J. Trump’s falsehoods and bluster back into the spotlight. (PHOTOGRAPH BY CNN); A jury’s verdict on Tuesday held Mr. Trump liable for the sexual abuse of E. Jean Carroll and imposed a $5 million judgment. (PHOTOGRAPH BY JOHN MINCHILLO/ASSOCIATED PRESS) This article appeared in print on page A15.

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[***Will the Economy Help or Hurt Biden '24?***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B0T-SWD1-JBG3-625H-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; Editorial Desk; Pg. 19; PAUL KRUGMAN AND PETER COY

**Length:** 2232 words

**Byline:** By Paul Krugman and Peter Coy

**Body**

Peter Coy: Paul, I think the economy is going to be a huge problem for President Biden in 2024. Voters are unhappy about the state of the economy, even though, by most measures, it's doing great. Imagine how much unhappier they'll be if things get worse heading into the election -- which I, for one, think is quite likely to be the case.

Paul Krugman: I'm not sure about the politics. We can get into that later. But first, can we acknowledge just how good the current state of the economy is?

Peter: Absolutely. Unemployment is close to its lowest point since the 1960s, and inflation has come way down. That's the big story of 2023. But 2024 is a whole 'nother thing. I think there will be two big stories in 2024. One, whether the good news continues and, two, how voters will react to whatever the economy looks like around election time.

Paul: Right now many analysts, including some who were very pessimistic about inflation last year, are declaring that the soft landing has arrived. Over the past six months, the core personal consumption expenditures deflator -- a mouthful, but that's what the Federal Reserve targets -- rose at an annual rate of 1.9 percent, slightly below the Fed's 2 percent target. Unemployment is 3.7 percent. The eagle has landed.

Peter: I question whether we've stuck the soft landing. I do agree that right at this moment, things look really good. While everyone talks about the cost of living going up, pay is up lately, too. Lael Brainard, Biden's national economic adviser, points out that inflation-adjusted wages for production and nonsupervisory workers are higher now than they were before the Covid pandemic.

So let's talk about why voters aren't feeling it. Is it just because Biden is a bad salesman?

Paul: Lots of us have been worrying about the disconnect between good numbers and bad vibes. I may have been one of the first people to more or less sound the alarm that something strange was happening -- in January 2022! But we're all more or less making this up as we go along.

The most informative stuff I've seen recently is from Briefing Book, a blog run by former White House staff members. They've tried to put numbers to two effects that may be dragging consumer sentiment down.

One effect is partisanship. People in both parties tend to be more negative when the other party controls the presidency, but the Briefing Book folks find that the effect is much stronger for Republicans. So part of the reason consumer sentiment is poor is that Republicans talk as if we're in a depression when a Democrat is president, never mind reality.

Peter: That is so true. And I think the effect is even stronger now than it used to be because we're more polarized.

Paul: The other effect affecting consumer sentiment is that while economists tend to focus on relatively recent inflation, people tend to compare prices with what they were some time in the past. The Briefing Book estimates suggest that it takes something like two years or more for lower inflation to show up in improved consumer sentiment.

This is one reason the economy may be better for Democrats than many think. If inflation really has been defeated, many people haven't noticed it yet -- but they may think differently a little over 10 months from now, even if the fundamentals are no better than they are currently.

I might add that the latest numbers on consumer sentiment from several surveys have shown surprising improvement. Not enough to eliminate the gap between the sentiment and what you might have expected from the macroeconomic numbers, but some movement in a positive direction.

Peter: That makes sense. Ten months from now, people may finally be getting over the trauma of high inflation. On the other hand, and I admit I'm not an economist, I'm still worried we could have a recession in 2024. Manufacturing is soft. The big interest rate increases by the Fed since March 2022 are hitting the economy with a lag. The extra savings from the pandemic have been depleted. The day after Christmas, the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis said the share of Americans in financial distress over credit cards and auto loans is back to where it was in the depths of the recession of 2007-9.

Plus, I'd say the labor market is weaker than it looked from the November jobs report. (For example, temp-agency employment shrank, which is an early warning of weak demand for labor.)

Also, small business confidence remains weak.

Paul: Glad you brought up small business confidence -- I wrote about that the other week. Hard indicators like hiring plans are pretty strong. Soft indicators like what businesses say about future conditions are terrible. So small businesses are in effect saying, ''I'm doing OK and expanding, but the economy is terrible'' -- just like consumers.

I'm not at all sure when the Fed will start cutting, although it's almost certain that it eventually will, but markets are already effectively pricing in substantial cuts -- and that's what matters for the real economy. As I write this, the 10-year real interest rate is 1.69 percent, down from 2.46 percent around six weeks prior. Still high compared with prepandemic levels, but financial conditions have loosened a lot.

Could there be a recession already baked in? Sure. But I'm less convinced than I was even a month ago.

Peter: The big drop in interest rates can be read two ways. The positive spin is that it'll be good for economic growth, eventually. That's how the stock market is interpreting it. The negative spin is that the bond market is expecting a slowdown next year that will pull rates down. Also, what if the economy slows down a lot but the Fed doesn't want to cut rates sharply because Fed officials are afraid of being accused by Donald Trump of trying to help Biden?

Paul: I guess I think better of the Fed than that. And always worth remembering that the interest rates that matter for the economy tend to be driven by expectations of future Fed policy: The Fed hasn't cut yet, but mortgage rates are already down substantially.

Peter: Yes.

Paul: OK, about the election. The big mystery is why people are so down on the economy despite what look like very good numbers. At least part of that is that people look not at short-term inflation but at prices compared with what they used to be some time ago -- but people's memories don't stretch back indefinitely. As I said, the guys at Briefing Book estimate that the most recent year's inflation rate is only about half of what consumers look at, with a lot of weight on earlier inflation. But here's the thing: Inflation has come way down, and this will gradually filter into long-term averages. Right now the average inflation rate over the past 2 years was 5 percent, still very high; but if future inflation runs at the 2.4 percent the Fed is now projecting, which I think is a bit high, by next November the two-year average will be down to 2.7 percent. So if the economy stays where it is now, consumers will probably start to feel better about inflation.

Peter: Except that perceptions of inflation are filtered through politics. Food and gasoline are more expensive for Trump supporters than Biden supporters, if you believe what people tell pollsters. That's not going to change between now and November.

The Obama-Biden ticket beat the McCain-Palin ticket in 2008 because voters blamed Republicans for the 2007-9 recession. Obama-Biden had a narrower win in 2012 against Romney-Ryan, and I think one factor was the so-called jobless recovery from that recession. That's why Biden is supersensitive about who gets credit and blame for turns in the economy.

For the record, Trump might be president right now if it hadn't been for the Covid pandemic, which sent the unemployment rate to 14.7 percent in April 2020. The economy was doing quite well before that happened. A lot of Republicans are nostalgic for Trumponomics, although I think the economy prospered more in spite of him than because of him. Thoughts?

Paul: Most of the time, presidents have far less effect on the economy than people imagine. Big stimulus packages like Barack Obama's in 2009 and Biden's in 2021 can matter. But aside from pandemic relief, which was bipartisan, nothing Trump did had more than marginal effects. His 2017 tax cut didn't have much visible effect on investment; his tariffs probably on net cost a few hundred thousand jobs, but in an economy as big as America's, nobody noticed.

Peter: Just speculating, but I wonder if when people say they trust Trump more than Biden on the economy, they're feeling vibes more than parsing statistics. You know, ''We need a tough guy in the White House!''

Paul: People definitely aren't parsing statistics. Only pathetic nerds like us do that. And while Trump wasn't actually a tough economic leader, he literally did play one on TV.

But we don't really know if that matters or whether people are still reacting to the shock of inflation and high interest rates, which they hadn't seen in a long time. Again, the best case for Biden pulling this out is that voters get over that shock, with both inflation and interest rates rapidly declining.

Oh, and falling interest rates mean higher bond prices and often translate into higher stock prices, too -- which has also been happening lately.

Peter: True, Paul. But cold comfort for people who don't own stocks and bonds. Or who do own stocks and bonds in their retirement plans but don't think of themselves as part of the capitalist class. To win in November, Biden and his team are going to need to be perceived as doing something for the ***working class*** and the middle class. That's why you see the White House talking about eliminating junk fees and capping insulin prices.

Paul: For what it's worth, I think a lot of people judge the economy in part by the stock market, even if they don't have a personal stake. That's why Trump boasted about it so much and has lately been trying to say that Biden's strong stock market is somehow a bad thing.

Finally, there are some indications that Democrats in particular are feeling better about the Biden economy. The Michigan survey tracks sentiment by partisanship. The numbers are noisy, but over the past few months Democratic sentiment has been slightly more positive than in the months just before the pandemic struck.

Peter: Paul, how important do you think the economy will be to voters compared with other issues, such as Trump's fitness for office, Biden's age, abortion access, et cetera? I mean, if it's not important, why are we even having this conversation?

Paul: The economy surely matters less than it did when Republicans and Democrats lived in more or less the same intellectual universe -- everyone agreed that the economy was bad in 1980 or 2008; now, Dems are fairly positive, while Republicans claim to believe that we're in a severe downturn. But there are still voters on the margin and weak Democratic supporters who will turn out if they have a sense that things are improving.

Peter: Democratic strategists think the election might come down to Pennsylvania and Wisconsin, assuming that Biden holds Michigan and New Hampshire and loses Arizona and Georgia. Any thoughts about the economic outlook for Pennsylvania and Wisconsin?

Paul: No strong sense about either state. But one little-noticed fact about the current economy is how uniform conditions are. In 2008, so-called sand states that had big housing bubbles were doing much worse than states that didn't; now unemployment is low almost everywhere.

Of course, all political bets are off if we have a recession. But there's a reasonable case that the economy will be much less of a drag on Democrats by November, as the reality of a soft landing sinks in.

Oh, and my subjective sense is that for whatever reason, media coverage of the economy has turned much more positive lately. I have to think this matters, otherwise, what are we even doing? And until recently, media reports tended to emphasize the downsides; ''Great jobs numbers, and here's why that's bad for Biden'' has become a sort of running joke among people I follow. These days, however, we're starting to see reports acknowledging that we've had an almost miraculous combination of strong employment and falling inflation.

Peter: Paul, what economic indicators will you be paying the most attention to in the next few months with regard to the election? I'll nominate inflation and unemployment, although those are kind of obvious.

Paul: Unemployment, for sure. On inflation, I'll be watching longer-term measures: Will inflation be low enough to bring down two- or three-year averages? And especially highly visible stuff, like groceries. Thanksgiving dinner was actually cheaper in 2023 than in 2022. Will grocery prices be subdued enough to reduce the amount of complaining?

Oh, and I'll be looking at consumer sentiment, which as we've seen can be pretty disconnected from the economy but will matter for the election.

Peter: Happy New Year!

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**Graphic**

PHOTOS (PHOTOGRAPHS BY CAROLINE PURSER AND ANAGRAMM/GETTY IMAGES) This article appeared in print on page A19.

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[***Kate Winslet Pushes Her Characters, and Herself, to the Edge***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BHJ-GR61-DXY4-X064-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Length:** 4530 words

**Byline:** By Susan Dominus

**Body**

Kate Winslet was standing in front of a microphone, breathing hard. Sometimes she did it fast; sometimes she slowed it down. Sometimes the breathing sounded anxious; other times, it was clearly the gasping of someone who was winded. Before beginning a new take, Winslet stood stock still, hands opening and closing at her sides; she looked like a gymnast about to bound into a floor routine. Every breath seemed high-stakes, even though she was well into a long day of recording in a dim, windowless studio in London.

Winslet was adding grace notes to scenes of herself in ''The Regime,'' a dark satire created by Will Tracy, a writer and producer on ''Succession,'' that began airing on Max in early March. Winslet plays Elena Vernham, a dictator ruling precariously over an imaginary Central European country, and she was in the studio rerecording (as is common practice) lines that needed improving, including snippets of Elena's propaganda: ''Even if the protests happening in Westgate were real, which they are not'' and ''He's still out there, working with the global elite to destroy everything we've built.'' Sometimes Winslet laughed out loud after delivering a line, and sometimes she fell completely silent, absorbed in watching a scene of herself with her new recording looped in. ''God, she's such an awful, awful cow,'' she said at one point, sounding appalled but also a little awed.

The part of Elena, a despot on the verge of a nervous breakdown, is a departure for Winslet, who has chosen, over the course of her career, a wide range of characters who have in common an intrinsic power. Elena is erratic and grasping, with a facade of strength that covers up a sinkhole of oozing insecurity. Winslet gave a lot of thought to how Elena would sound: She chose a high, tight voice, the sound of someone disconnected from the feelings that reside deep in the body. Elena has the slightest of speech impediments, a strange move she makes with her mouth, a hand that flies to her cheek when she is under real stress -- those tells are her answer to King Richard's hump, the body politic deformed.

Onscreen, as Elena, Winslet is coifed and practically corseted into form-fitting skirt suits, with lacquered fake nails. The day she was recording, in early January, Winslet might have been any woman at the office: blond hair, a hint of roots starting to show, jeans of no particular timely style that she occasionally tugged up from the waist, a black V-neck sweater she occasionally pulled down at the hem. It's only when you look directly at her, face to face, that you see the extraordinary -- the dark blue eyes, the beauty marks (not one, but two), the elaborately curved mouth.

As Winslet recorded, Stephen Frears, one of the show's two directors, guided Winslet with considerable understatement from his seat across the room: a half-nod here, a thumbs-up there. ''Was that all right, Stephen?'' Winslet called over after one take; she peered over in his direction, expectant, obedient, professional. Frears, who directed ''The Queen'' and ''Dangerous Liaisons,'' among others, was silent, with his eyes closed, his head back. Winslet and a few members of the production team waited for his approval. As the moment stretched on, it seemed that Frears was not deep in thought but deep in sleep. Winslet appeared to register a brief moment of surprise, then smiled and moved on -- all right, no problem.

Winslet is not precious or easily rattled; on set, over the years, she has broken a toe, suffered hypothermia and fainted, but very little slows her down when she's shooting. She's not a fan of a lunch break. Her sturdiness works its way into her performances onscreen: Even in many a period drama, Winslet, for all her femininity, conveys the impression of someone who could hold her own in a street fight. On one occasion when she actually found herself in peril, during a house fire at Richard Branson's home in the British Virgin Islands, Winslet, efficiently assisting the evacuation, picked up Branson's nearly-90-year-old mother and carried her down several stairs. (Winslet is married to Branson's nephew, Edward Abel Smith.)

Winslet's practicality makes her eminently relatable, but it comes with a forceful energy. A friend commented to me that Winslet's patent resilience makes watching her -- even in a film about a shipwreck or the Holocaust -- an experience in which the viewer's stress level never interferes with an appreciation of the work. ''I don't worry about her,'' she says. ''She will turn up OK. Even if she has to eat acorns all winter.''

The day after her dubbing session in London, Winslet and I met near her home on the coast of England; she had decided we would visit a local beach. When I entered her car, I noticed on the floor of the back seat a bowl of half-eaten oatmeal that had clearly been there for some time, a sight that made my heart leap -- I somehow felt immediately absolved of all my own car-food sins. ''There's just stuff rolling around the back of the car, clink, clink, all the time,'' Winslet said. ''Sometimes I look in the back, and I'll see, like, three apples.'' At least, she would console herself, the intention was that apples be eaten. The procurer of those apples would be her husband, who goes by Ned, and their would-be consumer the couple's 10-year-old son, Bear. (Winslet has two other children: a 23-year-old daughter from her first marriage, to Jim Threapleton; and a 20-year-old son from her second marriage, to the director Sam Mendes.)

The sky was cloud-covered, the air wet and chilled. The temperature hovered around 38 degrees, so we loaded our arms with blankets and traipsed in the direction of a white weathered beach hut a short sprint away from the water. Winslet's hut is just one of thousands along the shores of the United Kingdom -- on many beaches, they go on for miles -- some of which have been passed down within families for upward of a century. (This one once belonged to Ned's grandmother.) Winslet pulled on a lock, and the door swung open to reveal a mostly empty, unheated room with a few beach chairs, a skim board hanging on the wall and a bench in back, which is where we would sit and talk for the next several hours, covered in blankets and eating pastries Winslet bought that morning. Winslet also had her bathing suit with her. ''I might go in for a swim later,'' she told me.

Winslet is a devotee of cold-water swimming, which she has enjoyed not just near her home but also in Alaska and Norway, where, she told me, the water was dotted with ice. Cold-water swimming is popular in Britain, but it seems especially well suited to Winslet, who prides herself on stamina: For the 2022 movie ''Avatar: The Way of Water,'' Winslet, after considerable training, managed to hold her breath underwater for an astonishing seven minutes and 15 seconds (some Navy Seals never break three minutes). On set, she has little interest in the creature comforts that some stars expect: During the filming of ''Mare of Easttown,'' an HBO limited series from 2021, Winslet's only real ask of Mark Roybal, one of the show's executive producers, was that he replace the extra-large trailer he had intended for her with one the same size as those of her colleagues. ''I've seen her literally pulling cables, moving props,'' Roybal says. ''It's crazy. She's not far from who she was when she grew up. That's who she is.''

Winslet was raised in Reading, an hour west of London, in a ***working-class*** neighborhood where, she has said, many of her friends were aspiring to be flight attendants and hairstylists. Unhappy at her local school, she enrolled at age 11 in a private performing-arts school, offsetting some of the cost with voice-over work and a role as a teenage sleuth on a television series. Her father, an aspiring but ultimately unsuccessful actor, worked for the postal service and sold Christmas trees; when Winslet's performing-arts school ended for her at age 16, she took a job slicing deli meat until her former principal suggested that she audition for a part in a movie based on the true story of two young girls who colluded in murder. Why did the principal think of Winslet? ''I looked like the girl,'' she told me. Winslet was desperate to win the part. ''I wrote letters to the character,'' she said. ''You chant. You pray.'' It turned out that the resemblance was important to the director, Peter Jackson, who wanted an unknown in the role. ''That's the lucky-break moment,'' Winslet said.

The movie, ''Heavenly Creatures,'' set her career in motion, but she was still a fledgling actor. When she was brought in to audition for a small part in the 1995 adaptation of Jane Austen's ''Sense and Sensibility,'' Winslet pretended she thought she was there to read for the more significant role of Marianne, younger sister to Elinor, played by Emma Thompson. Thompson, who also wrote the screenplay, ultimately championed Winslet's casting. ''It was immediately apparent to me that Kate would absolutely capture the quintessence of Marianne,'' Thompson says. ''She came in -- 19 years old, I think -- and had all the passion and the wide gaze of a youthful and optimistic spirit, a soul that believed the best in people. I rushed past her in the corridor, needing a pee, and she said as I came rushing back, 'I know I can do this,' and I think I might have said, 'I know you can.''' The two women grew so close that Winslet kept, for many years, a souvenir of the last day of shooting -- the box of an apple strudel that they feasted on for consolation as they tearfully prepared to part ways. (When Thompson turned 40, Winslet gave her the box for her birthday.)

In late 1995, Winslet was passed a long treatment for a film called ''Titanic,'' the printout of which she recently found in storage, discovering that she had written on the front page, ''I love this.'' The part of Rose in ''Titanic'' catapulted her into the realm of the 20th century's great cinematic heroines. More endearing than Scarlett O'Hara, less thorny than Erin Brockovich, Rose is a Juliet-like figure in love with love who subverts the plot, surviving tragedy instead of succumbing to it. Since then, Winslet's best performances are of imperfect women who persevere, who are flawed enough to do real damage but still evoke from the viewer deep, sometimes uncomfortable sympathy. In her role as Hanna, a former Nazi prison guard in ''The Reader,'' for which she won an Oscar, Winslet employs a forceful physicality that the viewer eventually understands as the unyielding rigidity of a woman who can't make sense of complexity. She pulls off a more exuberant high-wire act in her portrayal of Clementine in ''Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind,'' a character whose fervent soul spills all over the place. When she meets Joel, the halting figure played by Jim Carrey, Clementine is careering as fast as the train on which they're talking; she veers dangerously close, emotionally, to going off the rails altogether, with just enough charm and smarts to pull herself to safety, to keep Joel, and viewers, more intrigued than alarmed.

Winslet seems to relish pushing her characters -- and herself -- to the edge. Todd Haynes, who directed Winslet in ''Mildred Pierce,'' an HBO limited series about a divorced mother during the Great Depression, recalled one scene she shot in an evening gown on a rainy, frigid night in Queens. After the first take, Winslet, drenched and chilled, screamed out, elated, ''This is what we get to do with our lives!'' Winslet's response did not surprise Haynes, given the roles she'd chosen in the past. ''I think the pain that she sometimes endures is part of the thrill and excitement that she fully embraces in her work,'' he says. ''Kate wants to be put in places she's never been before and be fearless about it.''

Moments like that, Winslet said, do thrill her: ''It is living at the absolute edges of the physical lengths to which one can go to feel the most exhilarated and alive,'' she said. Women who take risks interest her. In an upcoming biopic, ''Lee,'' which Winslet produced, she embodies Lee Miller, a onetime model who emerged from a traumatized youth to become a significant World War II photographer. But Winslet also clearly sees the discomfort she experiences on set as an inevitable part of moviemaking, something she has chosen to embrace rather than bemoan. ''Still never to this day would I say: 'I'm cold. I have to stop,''' Winslet said.

I'm cold, I thought to myself. I have to stop. We'd been sitting in that unheated shack, the ocean waves growing louder as the tide rolled in, for almost three hours, as if Winslet, in this instance too, would never be the one to suggest a break. Every so often, labradoodles, cocker spaniels, retrievers, dachshunds and their owners trotted by the aperture of the shack's open door. The number of people walking their dogs seemed to have picked up, even as the day got colder; Winslet theorized, without resentment, that maybe word had gotten out. Finally, we agreed it was time to go, but by then it was too late for Winslet, who had plans to visit a new godchild, to go swimming.

If only I'd brought a bathing suit, we could have both gone, I said as we left, meaning not a word of it. Winslet brightened at the thought: We'd go tomorrow, she assured me -- she could lend me a bathing suit!

Some measure of Winslet's fame is tied to her beauty, but she seems intent on deflating its importance, using her influence to convey the message that women have value beyond their looks. In ''Mare of Easttown,'' Winslet, who played Marianne (Mare) Sheehan, a small-town detective grieving a dead son, refused to let editors retouch so much as a wrinkle. A ''global ambassador'' for L'Oréal Paris, she appears in an ad in full hair and makeup, then pins up her blond strands and starts wiping her makeup off, all the while speaking to the viewer with the urgency and focus she would give to any climactic monologue. ''To believe that you are worth it is something we can all help each other to do,'' she says. ''And perhaps as we all walk through the world, we can show up for each other without judgment.''

Winslet came of age in the era of waif-chic, which has made her all too expert in the subject of harsh objectification. After her role in ''Titanic,'' public scrutiny of her body was so chronic and exacting that it threatened to consume her. The British tabloids tracked her weight as if it were a matter of national security; Joan Rivers cracked wise about Winslet sinking the Titanic. In a 1998 Rolling Stone article, Winslet said that she was a heavyset teenager who ''sensibly lost the weight doing Weight Watchers. End of story.'' She now openly acknowledges that at one brief point in her life, she struggled with an eating disorder. ''I never told anyone about it,'' she said of that time. ''Because guess what -- people in the world around you go: 'Hey, you look great! You lost weight!''' For that last bit, Winslet slipped into a pitch-perfect American accent -- Los Angeles, maybe a film executive. ''So even the compliment about looking good is connected to weight. And that is one thing I will not let people talk about. If they do, I pull them up straight away.'' (For the sake of simplicity, I will direct the reader to assume that curses have been edited out of any Winslet quote on the subject of weight, celebrity or tabloids.)

In the hut, I had wondered aloud to Winslet about the impact of Ozempic on all this. ''I actually don't know what Ozempic is,'' Winslet said. ''All I know is that it's some pill that people are taking or something like that.'' I told her that Ozempic -- which apparently has not yet saturated English culture as it has in the United States -- was a very in-demand diabetes drug now commonly taken off-label for weight loss.

''But what is it?'' Winslet said, her mouth full of pastry. I went on: It was a shot people took that dampened their interest in food. Winslet looked appalled -- as if I'd just told her that millions of Americans were voluntarily injecting themselves with something that made them feel dead inside when they looked at a sunset. ''Oh, my God,'' she said. ''This sounds terrible. Let's eat some more things!'' She made a show of eating more of her pastry, crumbs tumbling onto the blankets.

Together we watched a short video highlighting Winslet's early career; at one moment, seeing red carpet shots of herself the year after she won the Oscar for ''The Reader,'' Winslet commented sharply, ''Look how thin I was.'' This was not Winslet yearning for that moment; it was Winslet feeling sadness for that former self, a young woman who was separating from her second husband and could barely eat from stress, watching her private life become the subject of entertainment-news headlines.

What Winslet accepted as the norm back then she now understands as small cruelties that she is relieved her younger counterparts no longer have to endure in quite the same way. Although a few actors of Winslet's age have scoffed at what they perceive as the preciousness of intimacy coordinators, Winslet thought her entire experience as a young actor might have been different had they been available to her. ''I would have benefited from an intimacy coordinator every single time I had to do a love scene or be partially naked or even a kissing scene,'' she said. ''It would have been nice to have had someone in my corner, because I always had to stand up for myself.'' And often, she didn't -- she felt that whatever was being asked of her was simply part of the job. She has a litany of unspoken objections she wished she had felt empowered to make: ''I don't like that camera angle. I don't want to stand here full-frontal nude. I don't want this many people in the room. I want my dressing gown to be closer. Just little things like that. When you're young, you're so afraid of pissing people off or coming across as rude or pathetic because you might need those things. So learning to have a voice for oneself in those environments was very, very hard.''

On set, she rarely felt empowered to complain, even when the conditions were difficult. In a 1997 Los Angeles Times article, Winslet, still exhausted from the seven-month shoot of ''Titanic,'' described the experience as an ''ordeal,'' recalling two moments of filming in the water that sounded distressing in her telling (though she emphasized to me that she was never in danger). When I spoke to the film's director, James Cameron, he said that although the set was extremely safe, he might have given Winslet more space to raise whatever subjective concerns about the work she was feeling at the time. ''You have to sort of be given permission before the fact,'' he said. ''I can't say, sitting here today, that I made that abundantly clear.'' He described Winslet as ''a force of nature,'' adding that ''when someone projects that kind of energy and that kind of power to the people around her, it's difficult to see when they're in trouble emotionally.''

Like many of her characters, Winslet considers herself a survivor: She survived two public divorces, and she survived the paparazzi, packs of men who chased her in cars or staked out her house. (When she was a new mother, she would put on a hat and sunglasses, hand her baby over a wall to the next-door neighbor, climb over the wall herself, then take the baby through the backyard gate and get on a city bus, where, she swears, no one ever recognized her.)

It's clear that some of the strength Winslet projects -- her nothing-stops-me attitude on set -- is a defense she built up, by necessity, years ago. ''I was already experiencing huge amounts of judgment, persecution, all this bullying,'' she said. ''People can call me fat. They can call me what they want. But they certainly cannot say that I complained and I behaved badly. Over my dead body.'' To object, especially for young women, was to risk a ruined reputation. ''I would not have known how to do that without people in power turning around and saying, 'Oh, Jesus Christ, you know, her again, that complainer,''' Winslet said. ''I would rather suffer in silence than ever let that happen to me, even still today.''

To Winslet, as a mother, it's a particular horror that the public body-shaming once reserved for celebrities is now a trial that any young woman with a phone might go through. For British television, she recently made an improvised film, ''I Am Ruth,'' with her daughter, Mia Threapleton, about a mother trying to understand the unraveling of her teenager; behind the closed door of her bedroom, amid the privacy of the world of her phone, Threapleton's character is enduring bullying on social media in response to revealing images she has posted of herself. With ''I Am Ruth,'' Winslet became an Everymom, opening her up to interactions of a different kind. ''I'll go to the grocery store, I'll go anywhere, like walking down the street, and people will stop me,'' she said. A parking attendant put her hand on Winslet's arm and started to weep; Winslet knew intuitively it was about ''I Am Ruth.''

In her roles, and in her own life, Winslet has moved, sure-footed, from the role of ingénue to the role of the fierce protector. Roybal described Winslet as an advocate for the crew on ''Mare of Easttown,'' someone who would personally call the executives if she felt there was some inequity on their part. While shooting ''Mare,'' Winslet sat in the trunk of a car where the then-19-year-old Angourie Rice would be filming a kissing scene, so Winslet -- a safe, big-sister figure -- could personally pass on notes from the director coming in through a radio.

By the time she filmed ''Mare,'' Winslet had decades worth of emotional experiences she could readily access. ''In the beginning,'' she said, ''I would rummage around my emotional toolbox and pull out something that had actually happened to me. But that stopped working for me at a certain point. I don't know why. As you get older, you live more life; you have more real experiences that you add to the emotional toolbox without realizing that you're doing it. And so sometimes, as you get older, quite honestly, emotions are easier to access because they just simmer below the surface all the time -- because there's just so damn many of them.'' Winslet's scripts are heavily covered in notes laying out the emotional marks she would need to hit.

The hazard of watching Winslet as Mare is that her acting is so nuanced that you suddenly see others' elsewhere as telegraphed semaphore (the bitter wife, her arms folded across her chest; the disappointed teacher, mouth tugged downward). In a scene from ''Mare'' in which Winslet tries to tell her grandson's pediatrician about her travails with her son, Kevin, who died by suicide, she is reflecting not any one thing but instead the several conversations her character seems to be having simultaneously: one with the pediatrician, one with her past self, as she drifts in and out of being present, and another with her current self, as she struggles to control the frustration she feels at how little the doctor can grasp of this painful history. Watching Winslet, we don't see a protective mother; we see our own mothering, the depth of our own complicated feelings about the mistakes we've made, the gap between all that we feel and all that can't be easily said.

Winslet seemed uncomfortable talking about her process, not so much because she feared it would sound pretentious, but because it was personal. Long after ''Mare'' was finished shooting, Winslet wept in interviews when talking about the character's loss of a son; she couldn't stop reverting to those emotions she so carefully internalized, any more than she could clear out all the lines of dialogue that have lodged themselves in her consciousness, no matter how much she would like to forget them.

''I finally realized I needed a bit of therapy'' to move on from playing Mare, she said. ''You actually change something in your brain chemistry about how you think -- you know, it's very, very strange.'' She would be at the store buying jeans and realize that she was buying the jeans that Mare would wear -- awful-looking jeans, in fact. Her children would sidle up next to her at the house, on days after filming that had left her depleted. ''Kevin's not real,'' they would whisper, as if letting her in on a secret. ''And neither is Mare. It's just pretend.'' Being an actor, of course, entails coming all too close to the knowledge that for someone in the world, that suffering, that pain, is real. Winslet's empathy -- a protective instinct that extends to her characters -- is part of what makes her performances so powerful.

The day after our talk in the hut, Winslet and I headed back to the beach in her car. On our way over, Ned, already waiting there with Bear, called to check in. ''The sun is shining,'' he told his wife. ''It's really special. But I think everybody got the memo. So -- quite a few people.'' Ned's subtext was clear: She would not have a lot of privacy. ''Great!'' Winslet said, then laughed, not quite a nervous laugh but a sendup of one.

At the beach, Bear was kicking around a soccer ball with his dad. Chatty, funny, smiley, he told a story about the time his dog peed on his favorite soccer ball -- he cocked his leg just so, a bit of brilliant and spontaneous mimicry, which I observed again when he put on the voice of his older brother, urging him on in a bit of daredevilry.

I changed quickly into a suit that Winslet lent me and put on a long fleece-lined coat made just for this winter-swimming business, and then there was no more avoiding it: I joined Winslet at the shore. We hesitated briefly, and suddenly a pack of young men were walking by. ''Oh, there really are a lot of people,'' she said, and for a moment I thought I saw a look of real distress on her face. I remembered she told me that she left New York in 2010, after living there for many happy years, in part because the paparazzi seemed to be picking up their focus on her: She noticed herself looking over her shoulder too often and decided it was time to get away.

Winslet quickly whipped her head around and trained her eyes back toward the ocean. It would clearly be better to move forward than stand paralyzed and exposed on the shore, so in we went. A step, then another -- she jog-walked her way into the water, and I had no choice but to follow.

''You have to commit, Susan!'' she called out. I managed to pull my focus away from the daggers of cold and look up in the direction of her voice. Fifteen feet away, she was submerged up to her chin. Her eyes were closed. She was far enough out from the shore to be unrecognizable to the public. The water hid her. She breathed in and out slowly, meditatively. A minute passed, then a few more. And then she was up, cursing, cursing the water, cursing the whole idea, laughing, heading toward shore.

Jack Davison is a British photographer known for his black-and-white portraiture. He last photographed Cate Blanchett for the magazine.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/03/magazine/kate-winslet-the-regime.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/03/magazine/kate-winslet-the-regime.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS (PHOTOGRAPH BY JACK DAVISON FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (MM21)

Kate Winslet and Matthias Schoenaerts in ''The Regime.'' (PHOTOGRAPH BY MIYA MIZUNO/HBO.) (MM23)

(PHOTOGRAPH BY JACK DAVISON FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (MM24, MM25)

Winslet and Andy Samberg in ''Lee.'' (PHOTOGRAPH BY KIMBERLEY FRENCH) (MM26)

(PHOTOGRAPH BY JACK DAVISON FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (MM28-MM29) This article appeared in print on page MM20 MM21, MM22, MM23, MM24, MM25, MM26, MM27, MM28, MM29.

**Load-Date:** March 10, 2024

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[***The Developer Whose Fingerprints Are on the Menendez Indictment***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69DK-V571-DXY4-X015-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; National Desk; Pg. 16

**Length:** 1332 words

**Byline:** By Elise Young and Tracey Tully

**Body**

Fred Daibes, a New Jersey builder, was accused of defrauding a bank that he had founded. Prosecutors say he turned to Senator Robert Menendez for help.

Fred Daibes, the New Jersey real estate tycoon at the center of an international scandal threatening the career of Senator Robert Menendez, has found his way out of more than one tough spot over the course of his tumultuous life.

He spent his first 10 years in a Palestinian refugee camp before emigrating to New Jersey, court records show. At 20, after his father died, he dropped out of college to support four younger siblings, a decision that paved the way to a wildly successful career building luxury housing in Edgewater, N.J. In 2013, he survived a vicious beating inside his penthouse apartment there.

But in 2018, he faced a challenge that was far different. A 14-count federal indictment accusing him of scheming to defraud a bank he had founded threatened to upend his real estate empire and carried the risk of a lengthy prison term.

It was then, prosecutors say, that he turned to a longtime ally for help: Senator Menendez.

What followed would form the basis for federal charges that Mr. Daibes, Mr. Menendez and his wife, Nadine, and two other businessmen are now facing. All five have pleaded not guilty.

Mr. Daibes, 66, was accused of giving the Menendezes bribes in exchange for the Democratic senator's efforts to help him in the bank fraud case by installing a U.S. attorney inclined to ease up on the prosecution. Envelopes stuffed with cash bearing Mr. Daibes's fingerprints and nine bars of gold bullion with serial numbers tracked to him were seized during a search of Mr. Menendez's home, according to federal prosecutors in Manhattan.

Still, the senator's effort to meddle in the bank-fraud case failed, prosecutors said.

''I don't want him to be upset over it,'' Mr. Daibes wrote in a text message to Ms. Menendez as his case proceeded toward trial. ''This is not his fault he was amazing in all he did he's an amazing friend and as loyal as they come.''

In the end, there was no trial. Mr. Daibes pleaded guilty to a single count of making false entries in connection with a $1.8 million loan document as part of an agreement, approved by the U.S. attorney's office in New Jersey, that required no prison time.

Last week, however, a judge rejected that plea agreement, scuttling the original deal altogether and complicating an already sprawling web of allegations that poses new threats to Mr. Daibes's real estate empire.

On Friday, his lawyer in the New Jersey federal case, Lawrence S. Lustberg, formally withdrew Mr. Daibes's guilty plea.

Both cases -- the accusations of bank fraud and bribery -- have tainted Mr. Daibes's legacy as the chief architect of Edgewater's rebirth.

Forty years ago, the borough of Edgewater was struggling. The narrow ribbon of land adjacent to the Hudson River, facing Manhattan, was once home to factories where Ford manufactured cars, Alcoa made toothpaste tubes and Quanta Resources produced roofing tar. But the companies had shut down, leaving environmental contamination in their wake.

In the 1980s, Mr. Daibes, a mason's son, hopped on a wave of postindustrial redevelopment already taking place downriver, in Hoboken and Jersey City. While taxpayers financed much of Edgewater's environmental cleanup, Daibes Enterprises built thousands of residential units, plus office suites, retail complexes and a golf range. Its ***working-class*** bars long gone, Edgewater's bustling business district today includes Whole Foods and Trader Joe's, multiple fine restaurants and a seven-story day spa with a rooftop pool.

As Mr. Daibes's high-rises went up, the population roughly tripled -- to 14,600 -- over three decades.

Robert D'Angelo, the owner of Roberto's II, a family-run restaurant in business since 1962 in Edgewater, said Mr. Daibes put the borough on the map yet never forgot his humble roots.

After Hurricane Sandy, Mr. D'Angelo said Mr. Daibes was one of the first people to arrive at the restaurant once the roads reopened. Mr. Daibes helped him clean up and put him in touch with electricians, plumbers and carpenters.

''Without him, it would have taken me months to reopen,'' Mr. D'Angelo, 63, said.

''He took himself up from the bottom and he never forgot anyone on the way up,'' he added.

A local media fixture, Mr. Daibes was featured in a magazine spread about his classic and exotic car collection, including a red 1957 Jaguar XK140, a silver 2005 Bentley Continental GT with a turbocharged W-12 engine and a pair of Mercedes-Benz SLR McLarens.

His high profile, though, came at a cost. Two days before Thanksgiving, in 2013, four people broke into his penthouse at the St. Moritz, one of his buildings, tied a bag over his head and beat him, breaking his ribs, dislocating a shoulder and bruising his face. They left with at least $2 million in cash, gold and jewelry. When they were arrested, one turned out to be a confidant of Mr. Daibes living in the same building. The four struck plea agreements to serve 12 to 18 years in prison.

Last month, prosecutors in Manhattan unsealed a 39-page indictment against Mr. Daibes, the Menendezes and the two other businessmen, Wael Hana and Jose Uribe.

It said that Mr. Daibes provided financial backing to Mr. Hana, an Egyptian-American businessman who was later awarded a lucrative contract giving his company, IS EG Halal, the sole rights to certify that products imported to Egypt had been prepared according to Islamic law. IS EG Halal operates from a building in Edgewater owned by a company run by Mr. Daibes, who also has offices there.

In turn, Mr. Menendez, as chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, helped direct aid and weapons to Egypt, prosecutors said.

Mr. Daibes's lawyer in the Manhattan criminal case, Tim Donohue, said his client's financial link to Mr. Hana was limited to an ''arms-length loan.''

''Mr. Daibes is not an owner or investor in that business,'' Mr. Donohue said about IS EG Halal.

By then, Mr. Daibes was a major fund-raiser for Mr. Menendez, a Democratic power broker who has represented the region since he was appointed to the Senate in 2006, prosecutors and federal election records show.

Similar generosity had helped earn Mr. Daibes a role as kingmaker in Edgewater, at the expense of taxpayers, according to a recent state investigation.

Mr. Daibes provided Edgewater officials free or reduced rents in apartment buildings he owned and awarded a flooring job to a councilman's company in exchange for favorable treatment in business deals, state investigators found.

''Daibes's power and influence within Edgewater were so strong he even held sway in local political decisions and other municipal concerns,'' New Jersey's Commission of Investigation found.

''Municipal officers who took official actions unsupportive of the developer faced political and professional retribution,'' investigators added. Mr. Daibes, through his lawyer, has rebutted the allegations and said that the rental benefits were gifts provided to longtime friends.

At least one of the subpoenas issued, before the three-count indictment was announced last month in Manhattan, requested information about legislation pending in New Jersey that could have derailed a major high-rise residential project Mr. Daibes was planning at 115 River Road in Edgewater.

The project had lost its financing after getting bogged down in a delayed environmental cleanup, court records show. But late last year, Mr. Daibes traveled to London and Qatar to meet with potential new lenders.

In January, he finalized a $45-million shared-ownership agreement for the Edgewater project with a company founded by a member of Qatar's royal family, Bergen County deed records show. It is unclear how his new legal challenges might affect that project.

A judge has scheduled trial on the bribery-related charges for May 2024, in a courthouse in Lower Manhattan, 10 miles from Edgewater.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/16/nyregion/menendez-bribery-nj-real-estate.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/16/nyregion/menendez-bribery-nj-real-estate.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: New Jersey real estate tycoon Fred Daibes faces federal bribery charges. He has pleaded not guilty. (PHOTOGRAPH BY DAVE SANDERS FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

Former Gov. Christine Todd Whitman of New Jersey and Mr. Daibes at a 1998 bill-signing event for economic incentives. At right, the former Alcoa plant in Edgewater, N.J., seen in 1997. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY RUBY WASHINGTON/THE NEW YORK TIMES

DITH PRAN/THE NEW YORK TIMES)

Prosecutors have said that Mr. Daibes's fingerprints were found among gold bars and almost $500,000 in cash seized from the home of Senator Robert Menendez of New Jersey, left. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY MAANSI SRIVASTAVA/THE NEW YORK TIMES

PMONTELEONI/U.S. ATTORNEY SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF N.Y., VIA ASSOCIATED PRESS) This article appeared in print on page A16.

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[***Rat-Infested, Will Canada’s Most Famous Fixer-Upper Be Replaced?***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:694H-G5N1-JBG3-642X-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** WORLD; canada

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**Byline:** Ian Austen

**Highlight:** Leaked information suggests that security concerns may force officials to build a new house to replace 24 Sussex Drive, the derelict and abandoned official residence of Canada’s prime ministers.

**Body**

Leaked information suggests that security concerns may force officials to build a new house to replace 24 Sussex Drive, the derelict and abandoned official residence of Canada’s prime ministers.

The saga of 24 Sussex Drive, the derelict onetime official residence of Canada’s prime ministers, took a new turn last week after a news leak signaled that the fate of the home — Canada’s most famous fixer-upper — could soon be decided.

Citing an unnamed official, [*Radio-Canada reported*](https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/24-sussex-prime-minister-trudeau-ottawa-1.6949710) last week that a government group in charge of figuring out what to do with the uninhabitable and rodent- and asbestos-infested house — which has been abandoned since 2015 — is now leaning toward giving up on it. Instead, the group favors starting over by building a new house at one of two other locations. Alternatively, the group is looking at making Rideau Cottage, where Justin Trudeau moved after becoming prime minister, the permanent home of Canada’s head of government.

While 24 Sussex only became the prime minister’s official home in 1951, the idea of permanently abandoning it was swiftly condemned by some building heritage experts. But political calculations may ultimately decide the proposal’s fate.

Despite 24 Sussex’s symbolic importance, its fall into near ruin has been going on for decades, [*as I wrote almost five years ago*](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/11/15/world/canada/justin-trudeau-ottawa-prime-minister-residence.html?unlocked_article_code=erIyPdwKKnDhM6Du-fOhRJcak8NgClKJiVdBBE3fGXzRvCxkrpJnW_j1JuFEBUlM2LarF31JCBJa-ihqm-Odc4ZeV9-R9u-C0BJDHLLs_9tzqZlUDTP3RuCq6CewMauuIhKoidCDWWXqeJ8hVLHTSWrQlAcS0YGaScmj0eu5INVBvbuhvX1dTAU5MUeWJW9d3FNh6u78JZqpnFQpbCuTI4pYXvnYXMMncXCRm1BLtVj3fvAmyjLYl4Phungie1QE9FFw3lS2pMC4GP-3R3wqGhSLGwOuFNm9PcFzbhJX3cCSQRpgansQvTewD_lBXbAw6IIYobGVaEKnxMgVXfyqKAF2iBx3bvvtMfPYePWVd0NNjVhd8h59qclWfmz3-g). And the lack of will to reverse its decline comes from a fear of political backlash. As Mr. Trudeau, who lived in the house as a child when his father was prime minister, [*once said*](https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/24-sussex-drive-trudeau-not-living-1.4511732): “No prime minister wants to spend a penny of taxpayer dollars on upkeeping that house.”

[Read: [*Justin Trudeau’s Official Home: Unfit for a Leader or Anyone Else*](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/11/15/world/canada/justin-trudeau-ottawa-prime-minister-residence.html?unlocked_article_code=erIyPdwKKnDhM6Du-fOhRJcak8NgClKJiVdBBE3fGXzRvCxkrpJnW_j1JuFEBUlM2LarF31JCBJa-ihqm-Odc4ZeV9-R9u-C0BJDHLLs_9tzqZlUDTP3RuCq6CewMauuIhKoidCDWWXqeJ8hVLHTSWrQlAcS0YGaScmj0eu5INVBvbuhvX1dTAU5MUeWJW9d3FNh6u78JZqpnFQpbCuTI4pYXvnYXMMncXCRm1BLtVj3fvAmyjLYl4Phungie1QE9FFw3lS2pMC4GP-3R3wqGhSLGwOuFNm9PcFzbhJX3cCSQRpgansQvTewD_lBXbAw6IIYobGVaEKnxMgVXfyqKAF2iBx3bvvtMfPYePWVd0NNjVhd8h59qclWfmz3-g)]

While 24 Sussex was in a dismal state when I wrote that article, with an estimated restoration cost of 38 million Canadian dollars at the time, the situation has become even worse. In 2021, the National Capital Commission, the federal agency whose duties include looking after Canada’s six official residences, rated its condition as “critical” in a report.

“The building systems at 24 Sussex Drive have reached the point of imminent or actual failure and require replacement,” [*that report warned*](https://ncc-website-2.s3.amazonaws.com/documents/ACR_2021_V15_April-28_2021-EN-1.pdf), adding, “the age and condition of the electrical systems poses a fire hazard, and the plumbing systems have failures on a regular basis.”

In April, The National Post obtained government documents that revealed there was a rodent infestation in the house. [*So many dead rodents*](https://nationalpost.com/news/prime-minister-official-residence-rodent-infestation?utm_medium=Social&amp;utm_source=Twitter#Echobox=1680543039) and so much rodent excrement had piled up in its walls, attic and basement, a memo said, that there were “real concerns with air quality.”

After Mr. Trudeau moved into Rideau Cottage in the backyard of Rideau Hall, the governor general’s official home, some of his staff remained working in the kitchen at 24 Sussex, which is across the street. The household kitchen in Rideau Cottage is much smaller and not up to workplace safety standards, so Mr. Trudeau’s meals were ferried across Sussex Drive. But even the cooks were moved out of 24 Sussex [*last November*](https://globalnews.ca/news/9290656/prime-minister-official-residence/) and the building was officially closed.

The National Capital Commission did not directly answer my questions about the possibility of a new prime minister’s residence at a new location. But in an email, Valérie Dufour, a spokeswoman, said that contractors had been at 24 Sussex since May and that “pre-construction site preparation is complete.” This month, a variety of tasks will begin, including ripping out the “mechanical and electrical systems” there.

She added: “The current project will carry out the work that must be addressed regardless of any decision taken by the government on the future of the residence.”

The Radio-Canada report suggests that the biggest factor in favor of building a new official residence is security. Recent years have seen Parliament surrounded by the rowdy [*trucker convoy*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/02/21/world/americas/canada-protest.html) and a gunman [*kill a soldier on guard*](https://www.nytimes.com/2014/10/25/world/americas/ottawa-canada-gunmans-radicalism-deepened-as-life-crumbled.html) at the National War Memorial before then going on a shooting rampage in Parliament. In 2020, a military reservist from Manitoba smashed [*through the gates of Rideau Hall*](https://www.ctvnews.ca/canada/military-reservist-who-rammed-rideau-hall-gate-with-truck-sentenced-to-six-years-1.5340945?cache=yes) with a pickup truck before heading on foot toward Rideau Cottage with a revolver, a pistol, a rifle and two shotguns to, he said, arrest Mr. Trudeau. The prime minister was not home.

Among its many security problems, 24 Sussex is just steps from the street, making protection from a car or truck bomb infeasible without turning the residence into a bunker. (Closing the road, which is a major route with no obvious alternative, is not possible.) Retrofitting the house’s roof for protection from drone attacks, it appears, poses similar difficulties.

Even without an official announcement, the suggestion of abandoning 24 Sussex has swiftly met resistance. At a [*news conference*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ltT_9Jeh09Q) on Friday, a group of heritage experts argued the case for renovating the house instead. Residents near the park that is one of the proposed sites for a new residence have also raised concerns about the loss of public space.

But ultimately the political dynamic that has long stalled dealing with the house may continue to keep its future in limbo.

“We don’t need a new home for the prime minister, we need a new home for ***working-class*** Canadians,” Pierre Poilievre, the Conservative leader who lives in a government-funded official residence, told reporters. He added that dealing with 24 Sussex would be the last item on his agenda if he becomes prime minister and that Mr. Trudeau was focused on “building mansions for himself.”

Trans Canada

* After three weeks of evacuation, the [*residents of Yellowknife*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/06/world/canada/wildfire-yellowknife-evacuation-return.html) headed back to a city that avoided wildfire damage but at a high cost to its surrounding forests.

1. The first trial of organizers of the trucker convoy that [*took over and paralyzed downtown Ottawa last year*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/05/world/canada/trucker-protest-trial-ottawa.html) is underway with competing narratives from prosecutors and defense lawyers.
2. In the Opinion section of The Times, the columnist Ross Douthat writes that he believes “forms of progressivism that originated in the United States, under specific American conditions, [*can seem more potent among our English-speaking friends*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/06/opinion/columnists/james-bond-woke-uk-progressive.html) and neighbors than they do in America itself.”
3. In her new book, “Doppelganger,” Naomi Klein, the Montreal-born author who now lives in British Columbia, looks into the [*online underworld of conspiracies and misinformation*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/07/books/review/doppelganger-naomi-klein.html) and shows how its rise has inadvertently been fueled by political progressives, Katie Roiphe writes in The New York Times Book Review.
4. The latest graphic novel by Jillian Tamaki, who was raised in Calgary, and her cousin Mariko Tamaki, who grew up in Toronto, is [*an ode to New York City,*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/30/books/jillian-tamaki-mariko-tamaki-roaming.html) a place that captivated them in their youth.
5. Elaine Glusac, the Frugal Traveler columnist, went for a stroll on [*Prince Edward Island’s 700-kilometer Island Walk*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/08/travel/prince-edward-island-hike.html).

A native of Windsor, Ontario, Ian Austen was educated in Toronto, lives in Ottawa and has reported about Canada for The New York Times for two decades.

How are we doing?

We’re eager to have your thoughts about this newsletter and events in Canada in general. Please send them to [*nytcanada@nytimes.com*](mailto:nytcanada@nytimes.com?%20subject=Canada%20Letter%20Newsletter%20Feedback).

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PHOTO: Justin Trudeau did not move back to 24 Sussex Drive, his childhood home, when he became prime minister. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Dave Chan for The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** September 9, 2023

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[***In Michigan, Tlaib Is Hailed And Resented***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69MK-6711-JBG3-64B4-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; National Desk; Pg. 1

**Length:** 1699 words

**Byline:** By Charles Homans

**Body**

The Democratic congresswoman from the Detroit area and the only Palestinian American in the House faces a complicated landscape in her district.

For more than a month, the suburbs of Detroit have played host to vigils where victims of the war between Israel and Hamas are commemorated with prayers, candles and tearful speeches.

But those vigils have told starkly differing stories about the war, and also about Rashida Tlaib, who represents the area and is the only Palestinian American in Congress.

At a gathering in solidarity with Israeli hostages last week at Adat Shalom synagogue, Jeremy Moss, a Democratic state senator from Southfield, a suburb with a large Jewish population in Ms. Tlaib's district, spoke with concerned constituents. ''I had so many people coming up to me saying that they don't feel seen, heard, represented,'' he said.

The following night, in the majority Arab American enclave of Dearborn, at a memorial for Palestinian casualties of the Israeli invasion of Gaza, speakers denounced the censure of Ms. Tlaib in Congress for her statements on the conflict.

Khalid Turaani, a Palestinian American activist, compared Ms. Tlaib's censure to that of Joshua Reed Giddings, a congressman and abolitionist who was censured by his House colleagues in 1842 for introducing resolutions opposing the slave trade.

''I guess history is repeating itself,'' Mr. Turaani, who leads the Michigan Task Force for Palestine, told the crowd.

Since Hamas' surprise attack on Israel on Oct. 7, no American politician save for President Biden has featured more centrally in arguments over the Israel-Hamas war than Ms. Tlaib. Since her election in 2018, the congresswoman, who has family living in the West Bank, has been the leading voice for Palestinian rights in Congress.

This year, thanks to a redistricting shake-up, she began representing one of the largest Arab American communities in the country, as well as parts of the largest Jewish community in the Detroit area. The war has put her in the increasingly difficult position of representing both constituencies, whose views of the conflict are both deeply personal and often extraordinarily difficult to reconcile.

Interviews in Ms. Tlaib's district revealed a split-screen view of the war in Gaza and laid bare the grievances that have shaped it. It is a particularly acute version of the national debate over the conflict, rooted in family histories of the Holocaust and personal experiences of lost lives and land since the advent of Israeli statehood.

The divide would pose a formidable challenge for any politician. But for Ms. Tlaib, who has staked out a position that alienates many of those constituents, it could be unbridgeable.

After the Oct. 7 attack, in which Hamas attackers killed about 1,200 people and took about 240 hostages, Ms. Tlaib was one of 10 House members who voted against a resolution to condemn Hamas and reaffirm $3.3 billion a year in U.S. military assistance to Israel.

On Nov. 3, she posted a video on social media accusing President Biden of supporting the ''genocide of the Palestinian people'' and including footage of demonstrators chanting ''from the river to the sea,'' a pro-Palestinian slogan that many see as calling for not only the restoration of Palestinian land claims but also the eradication of Israel.

Ms. Tlaib has said she saw it as ''an aspirational call for freedom, human rights and peaceful coexistence, not death, destruction or hate.'' In a statement released shortly before the censure vote, she vowed to ''continue to work for a just and lasting peace that upholds the human rights and dignity of all people, centers peaceful coexistence between Israelis and Palestinians, and ensures that no person, no child has to suffer or live in fear of violence.''

Ms. Tlaib's defense of the slogan drew condemnation from the Biden administration, as well as criticism from Michigan's attorney general, Dana Nessel, and disavowal from Gov. Gretchen Whitmer, both Democrats.

On Tuesday, 22 of Ms. Tlaib's Democratic colleagues joined House Republicans in passing a resolution to censure her and accusing her of ''calling for the destruction of the state of Israel.'' Democratic Majority for Israel, a group led by the Democratic pollster Mark Mellman, is running television ads in the Detroit area criticizing Ms. Tlaib.

''I think Congresswoman Tlaib is radically out of step with her colleagues in Congress, radically out of step with the Democratic Party, and radically out of step with Democrats in Michigan,'' Mr. Mellman said. ''We hope she will change her views, and if not, perhaps somebody might be interested in running against her.''

Pro-Israel groups like Mr. Mellman's have in recent elections spent millions targeting pro-Palestinian House candidates in Democratic primaries, though Ms. Tlaib has easily won her two re-election bids. But shifts in Michigan's political geography have sharpened both support for and resentment of her foreign policy views among her constituents.

After the state's redistricting commission redrew Michigan's congressional map two years ago, Ms. Tlaib decided to shift from the state's Detroit-centered 13th Congressional District to the neighboring 12th, which on the new map spans western Detroit and a dozen outlying suburbs.

The new 12th District -- which, like the 13th, is overwhelmingly Democratic -- includes many of the same constituents. It also includes communities that have been uniquely polarized by the war. In the southeastern corner of the district is Dearborn, a ***working-class*** city whose population of nearly 110,000 is over half Arab American. It has long been a hub for pro-Palestinian activism.

''We're very angry here,'' said Amer Zahr, a local lawyer and activist. ''If Biden walked into Dearborn right now, he would be persona non grata.''

The district also encompasses several affluent communities in Oakland County, a sprawling suburban area north of Detroit that is home to most of the region's Jewish population.

Two days after the Hamas attack, more than 2,000 people gathered at Congregation Shaarey Zedek, a prominent Conservative synagogue in Ms. Tlaib's district, for a fund-raiser organized by the Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Detroit that raised $1.5 million for humanitarian aid to Israel. Ms. Whitmer and Ms. Nessel attended, as did Senator Gary Peters, and Representatives Haley Stevens and Shri Thanedar, who now represents Ms. Tlaib's former district. Ms. Tlaib did not attend.

In an email, Aaron Starr, the congregation's rabbi, said Ms. Tlaib ''has chosen not to reach out, and she has responded to my efforts to communicate with her with misleading form letters.'' He accused her of ''siding with the terrorist organization Hamas.''

To her detractors, it was the first of many slights.

''I was hopeful that she was going to represent the whole district,'' said Pamela Lippitt, a communications coach in Southfield, who is Jewish and active in pro-Israel causes. ''But she just -- she doesn't represent me.''

Mr. Moss noted that even some of Ms. Tlaib's most reliable congressional allies on Palestinian concerns, such as Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and Ilhan Omar of Minnesota, clearly condemned Hamas quickly after the attack. Ms. Tlaib did not, though in an interview with the Detroit Free Press four days later she described the attack as ''a war crime just like the collective punishment of Palestinians right now is a war crime.''

''I think what's happening to children in Gaza is a travesty. Jewish pain doesn't negate Palestinian pain,'' Mr. Moss said. ''But Jews are also in pain, and acknowledgment of that is what's been missing.''

Since the start of the Israeli counterattack that according to the Gaza Health Ministry has killed over 10,000 people, more than 4,100 of them children, those with a personal stake on the other side of the conflict have levied the same complaint against Ms. Tlaib's critics.

''People are losing focus about what's important here,'' said Emad Shehada, a Palestinian American physician in West Bloomfield, who said that 20 members of his extended family had been killed in Gaza since the Israeli campaign began. ''People are being killed. And the most important thing is to stop that.''

In Dearborn, Ms. Tlaib has been hailed as a hero by many of her constituents. ''She's sticking up for human rights,'' said Abe Bachir, a 59-year-old mechanic.

To Mr. Bachir, who is Lebanese American, Ms. Tlaib's censure called attention to how little voice Arab Americans have in Congress.

''She's the only Palestinian there, so it's one-sided, you know?'' he said. But ''she's got the backing of the world.''

Over the past decade, the cause of Palestinian rights and statehood has gained traction across the Democratic electorate's left wing, and Mr. Turaani and other activists say they intend to wield the issue in the 2024 election against a party that they believe has broadly deserted them.

It has already jolted local Democratic politics. This month, planned appearances by Ms. Whitmer and Jocelyn Benson, the secretary of state, at events in the Detroit area were canceled shortly after Mr. Zahr and others organized demonstrations against them.

An Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research poll conducted early this month found a majority of Democrats skeptical about the war in Gaza, with 58 percent saying they viewed Israel's counterattack as excessive.

Neither Dearborn nor the Oakland County suburbs are demographically representative of Ms. Tlaib's district, which is more than 43 percent Black and remains rooted in Detroit, with most household incomes below the national median and the second-highest poverty rate of any district in the state.

Ulysses Nash, a recently laid-off auto assembly line worker from Inkster, a suburb west of Detroit, said he was sympathetic to the Israelis in the conflict and did not support a cease-fire. But he also questioned the American funding for the war, when that money could be spent at home.

''I'm not saying it's not important,'' Mr. Nash said. Still, he said, ''we need to send billions here to save our own people. People are on the streets right now.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/13/us/politics/rashida-tlaib-palestine-israel.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/13/us/politics/rashida-tlaib-palestine-israel.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: At vigils and marches in the Detroit area, support for the Palestinian cause is strong. A national survey found that 58 percent of Democrats view Israel's counterattack in Gaza as excessive. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY VALAURIAN WALLER FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

JEFF KOWALSKY/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE -- GETTY IMAGES

SARAH RICE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

Representative Rashida Tlaib, the only Palestinian American in the House, serves large Jewish and Arab American populations. (PHOTOGRAPH BY JOSE LUIS MAGANA/ASSOCIATED PRESS) (A15) This article appeared in print on page A1, A15.

**Load-Date:** November 14, 2023

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[***The Real Estate Tycoon Whose Fingerprints Are on the Menendez Indictment***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69DC-X5P1-JBG3-638Y-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Highlight:** Fred Daibes, a New Jersey builder, was accused of defrauding a bank that he had founded. Prosecutors say he turned to Senator Robert Menendez for help.

**Body**

Fred Daibes, a New Jersey builder, was accused of defrauding a bank that he had founded. Prosecutors say he turned to Senator Robert Menendez for help.

Fred Daibes, the New Jersey real estate tycoon at the center of an international scandal threatening the career of Senator Robert Menendez, has found his way out of more than one tough spot over the course of his tumultuous life.

He spent his first 10 years in a Palestinian refugee camp before emigrating to New Jersey, court records show. At 20, after his father died, he dropped out of college to support four younger siblings, a decision that paved the way to a wildly successful career building luxury housing in Edgewater, N.J. In 2013, he survived a vicious beating inside his penthouse apartment there.

But in 2018, he faced a challenge that was far different. A [*14-count federal indictment*](https://www.justice.gov/usao-nj/press-release/file/1106446/download) accusing him of scheming to defraud a bank he had founded threatened to upend his real estate empire and carried the risk of a lengthy prison term.

It was then, prosecutors say, that he turned to a longtime ally for help: Senator Menendez.

What followed would form the basis for [*federal charges*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/22/nyregion/robert-menendez-indicted.html) that Mr. Daibes, Mr. Menendez and his wife, Nadine, and two other businessmen are now facing. All five have pleaded not guilty.

Mr. Daibes, 66, was accused of [*giving the Menendezes bribes*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/23/nyregion/bob-menendez-indictment-bribery-investigation.html) in exchange for the Democratic senator’s efforts to help him in the bank fraud case by installing a U.S. attorney inclined to ease up on the prosecution. Envelopes stuffed with cash bearing Mr. Daibes’s fingerprints and nine bars of gold bullion with serial numbers tracked to him were seized during a search of Mr. Menendez’s home, according to federal prosecutors in Manhattan.

Still, the senator’s effort to meddle in the bank-fraud case failed, prosecutors said.

“I don’t want him to be upset over it,” Mr. Daibes wrote in a text message to [*Ms. Menendez*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/01/nyregion/nadine-menendez-federal-investigation.html) as his case proceeded toward trial. “This is not his fault he was amazing in all he did he’s an amazing friend and as loyal as they come.”

In the end, there was no trial. Mr. Daibes pleaded guilty to a single count of making false entries in connection with a $1.8 million loan document as part of an agreement, approved by the U.S. attorney’s office in New Jersey, that required no prison time.

Last week, however, a judge rejected that plea agreement, scuttling the original deal altogether and complicating an already sprawling web of allegations that poses new threats to Mr. Daibes’s real estate empire.

On Friday, his lawyer in the New Jersey federal case, Lawrence S. Lustberg, formally withdrew Mr. Daibes’s guilty plea.

Both cases — the accusations of bank fraud and bribery — have tainted Mr. Daibes’s legacy as the chief architect of Edgewater’s rebirth.

Forty years ago, the borough of Edgewater was struggling. The narrow ribbon of land adjacent to the Hudson River, facing Manhattan, was once home to factories where Ford manufactured cars, Alcoa made toothpaste tubes and Quanta Resources produced roofing tar. But the companies had shut down, leaving environmental contamination in their wake.

In the 1980s, Mr. Daibes, a mason’s son, hopped on a wave of postindustrial redevelopment already taking place downriver, in Hoboken and Jersey City. While taxpayers financed much of Edgewater’s environmental cleanup, Daibes Enterprises built thousands of residential units, plus office suites, retail complexes and a golf range. Its ***working-class*** bars long gone, Edgewater’s bustling business district today includes Whole Foods and Trader Joe’s, multiple fine restaurants and a seven-story day spa with a rooftop pool.

As Mr. Daibes’s high-rises went up, the population roughly tripled — to 14,600 — over three decades.

Robert D’Angelo, the owner of Roberto’s II, a family-run restaurant in business since 1962 in Edgewater, said Mr. Daibes put the borough on the map yet never forgot his humble roots.

After Hurricane Sandy, Mr. D’Angelo said Mr. Daibes was one of the first people to arrive at the restaurant once the roads reopened. Mr. Daibes helped him clean up and put him in touch with electricians, plumbers and carpenters.

“Without him, it would have taken me months to reopen,” Mr. D’Angelo, 63, said.

“He took himself up from the bottom and he never forgot anyone on the way up,” he added.

A local media fixture, Mr. Daibes was featured in a [*magazine spread*](https://www.northjersey.com/picture-gallery/news/bergen/englewood/2018/10/31/photos-fred-daibes-car-collection/1823099002/) about his classic and exotic car collection, including a red 1957 Jaguar XK140, a silver 2005 Bentley Continental GT with a turbocharged W-12 engine and a pair of Mercedes-Benz SLR McLarens.

His high profile, though, came at a cost. Two days before Thanksgiving, in 2013, four people broke into his penthouse at the St. Moritz, one of his buildings, tied a bag over his head and beat him, breaking his ribs, dislocating a shoulder and bruising his face. They left with at least $2 million in cash, gold and jewelry. When they were arrested, one turned out to be a confidant of Mr. Daibes living in the same building. The four struck plea agreements to serve 12 to 18 years in prison.

Last month, prosecutors in Manhattan unsealed a 39-page [*indictment*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/22/nyregion/robert-menendez-indicted.html) against Mr. Daibes, the Menendezes and the two other businessmen, Wael Hana and Jose Uribe.

It said that Mr. Daibes provided financial backing to Mr. Hana, an [*Egyptian-American businessman*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/01/nyregion/menendez-egypt-bribe-hana.html) who was later awarded a lucrative contract giving his company, IS EG Halal, the sole rights to certify that products imported to Egypt had been prepared according to Islamic law. IS EG Halal operates from a building in Edgewater owned by a company run by Mr. Daibes, who also has offices there.

In turn, Mr. Menendez, as chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, helped direct aid and weapons to Egypt, prosecutors said.

Mr. Daibes’s lawyer in the Manhattan criminal case, Tim Donohue, said his client’s financial link to Mr. Hana was limited to an “arms-length loan.”

“Mr. Daibes is not an owner or investor in that business,” Mr. Donohue said about IS EG Halal.

By then, Mr. Daibes was a major fund-raiser for Mr. Menendez, a Democratic power broker who has represented the region since he was appointed to the Senate in 2006, prosecutors and federal election records show.

Similar generosity had helped earn Mr. Daibes a role as kingmaker in Edgewater, at the expense of taxpayers, according to a recent state investigation.

Mr. Daibes provided Edgewater officials free or reduced rents in apartment buildings he owned and awarded a flooring job to a councilman’s company in exchange for favorable treatment in business deals, state investigators found.

“Daibes’s power and influence within Edgewater were so strong he even held sway in local political decisions and other municipal concerns,” New Jersey’s [*Commission of Investigation found*](https://www.nj.gov/sci/pdf/Edgewater%20Report%20Final.pdf).

“Municipal officers who took official actions unsupportive of the developer faced political and professional retribution,” investigators added. Mr. Daibes, through his lawyer, has rebutted the allegations and said that the rental benefits were gifts provided to longtime friends.

At least one of the subpoenas issued, before the three-count indictment was announced last month in Manhattan, [*requested information about legislation*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/12/nyregion/robert-menendez-inquiry-subpoena.html) pending in New Jersey that could have derailed a major high-rise residential project Mr. Daibes was planning at 115 River Road in Edgewater.

The project had lost its financing after getting bogged down in a delayed environmental cleanup, court records show. But late last year, Mr. Daibes traveled to London and Qatar to meet with potential new lenders.

In January, he finalized a $45-million shared-ownership agreement for the Edgewater project with a company founded by a member of Qatar’s royal family, Bergen County deed records show. It is unclear how his new legal challenges might affect that project.

A judge [*has scheduled trial on the bribery-related charges*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/02/nyregion/robert-menendez-bribery-case.html) for May 2024, in a courthouse in Lower Manhattan, 10 miles from Edgewater.

PHOTOS: New Jersey real estate tycoon Fred Daibes faces federal bribery charges. He has pleaded not guilty. (PHOTOGRAPH BY DAVE SANDERS FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES); Former Gov. Christine Todd Whitman of New Jersey and Mr. Daibes at a 1998 bill-signing event for economic incentives. At right, the former Alcoa plant in Edgewater, N.J., seen in 1997. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY RUBY WASHINGTON/THE NEW YORK TIMES; DITH PRAN/THE NEW YORK TIMES); Prosecutors have said that Mr. Daibes’s fingerprints were found among gold bars and almost $500,000 in cash seized from the home of Senator Robert Menendez of New Jersey, left. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY MAANSI SRIVASTAVA/THE NEW YORK TIMES; PMONTELEONI/U.S. ATTORNEY SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF N.Y., VIA ASSOCIATED PRESS) This article appeared in print on page A16.

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[***America Needs a Serious Talk About How to Shrink Its Deficits; Peter Coy***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69MF-6YV1-DXY4-X281-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Length:** 1649 words

**Byline:** Peter Coy

**Highlight:** Interest rates are making U.S. debt a bigger burden. A bipartisan commission could find solutions.

**Body**

You need to put politics aside to shrink government budget deficits — or that’s the conventional wisdom, anyway. Heidi Heitkamp disagrees. Heitkamp, who served one term in the U.S. Senate as a Democrat from the red state North Dakota, argues that it’s impossible to cut deficits and restrain the growth of the national debt without politics.

“To Get Our Fiscal House in Order: Put Politics First” is the title of an essay that Heitkamp wrote for the Peter G. Peterson Foundation, which focuses on long-term budget challenges. I was given an early look last week at a new [*collection*](https://www.pgpf.org/expert-views/fiscal-commission) that includes her essay and eight others commissioned by the foundation.

Heitkamp told me last week that by politics, she doesn’t mean the kind of skirmishing for electoral advantage that Washington is famous for. She means the art of listening and persuading: getting voters to buy into difficult compromises. Her essay quotes President Abraham Lincoln, who [*said*](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/j/jala/2629860.0015.204/--public-sentiment-is-everything-lincolns-view-of-political?rgn=main;view=fulltext): “Public sentiment is everything. With public sentiment, nothing can fail; without it nothing can succeed.”

“When you’re faced with tough choices, as certainly Lincoln was, you can’t expect people to follow you,” Heitkamp told me. “You have to bring the people along. Ultimately they’re your boss.”

There’s a burst of interest in deficits lately. Last Friday, Moody’s Investors Service [*lowered*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/10/business/moodys-negative-credit-outlook.html) the outlook for its AAA credit rating of the federal government to negative from stable, citing among other factors “continued political polarization.” Speaking of polarization, the federal government will [*shut down*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/11/us/politics/johnson-spending-bill-shutdown.html) this weekend if the House speaker, Mike Johnson, can’t cobble together a temporary budget deal.

Politicians and others who are tired of the can-kicking drama are talking about forming another blue-ribbon, bipartisan commission to recommend ways for Congress and the White House to get America’s fiscal house in order, not just for months but for years.

A [*fiscal commission bill*](https://www.manchin.senate.gov/newsroom/press-releases/manchin-romney-introduce-bipartisan-fiscal-stability-act) was introduced in the Senate on Thursday by Joe Manchin, Democrat of West Virginia, Mitt Romney, Republican of Utah, and eight other senators. A [*similar bill*](https://scottpeters.house.gov/2023/9/peters-introduces-bipartisan-bicameral-fiscal-commission-legislation) was introduced in the House in September by Representatives Scott Peters, Democrat of California, and Bill Huizenga, Republican of Michigan.

Lawmakers are focusing on the debt because the cost of servicing it has soared, thanks to a combination of large, chronic budget deficits and a big increase in interest rates. In this year’s third quarter, federal interest payments were running at an annual rate of $981 billion, up 54 percent from the first quarter of 2022 and up 91 percent from the second quarter of 2020.

Olivier Blanchard, a Massachusetts Institute of Technology economist, [*pointed out*](https://www.aeaweb.org/articles?id=10.1257/aer.109.4.1197) four years ago that it’s possible for a government to run moderate budget deficits with no problem forever so long as the economy’s growth rate exceeds the interest rate on the debt. “Put bluntly,” he wrote, “public debt may have no fiscal cost.”

The problem is that deficits in the United States have been large, not moderate, and the interest rate on the debt now exceeds the economy’s growth rate, rather than vice versa. “I shall freely admit that I did not predict” the big increase in long-term interest rates, he wrote last week in a [*post*](https://www.piie.com/blogs/realtime-economics/if-markets-are-right-about-long-real-rates-public-debt-ratios-will?utm_source=update-newsletter&amp;utm_medium=email&amp;utm_campaign=piie-insider&amp;utm_term=yyyy-mm-dd) for the Peterson Institute for International Economics (also founded by Peter G. Peterson, but otherwise unrelated to the foundation).

The risk for any country, even one as powerful as the United States, is that investors will panic if they don’t see any credible plan for bringing deficits under control. They will demand higher interest rates, which will make the deficits even bigger. Blanchard wrote: “If markets are right about long real rates, public debt ratios will increase for some time. We must make sure that they do not explode.”

I expect to receive email from adherents of Modern Monetary Theory who will point out, correctly, that as long as the United States owes dollars, it can always print more of them, so it never has to default. But that doesn’t solve the real problem, which is that the nation is on a trajectory of spending beyond its means — that is, beyond its productive capacity.

Even my Opinion colleague Paul Krugman, who likes to poke fun at the Very Serious People who constantly harp on deficits, [*wrote*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/10/opinion/us-budget-deficit-interest-rates.html) in October: “Serious deficit reduction, a bad idea a decade ago, is a good idea now.”

The Aspen Institute’s Economic Strategy Group also warned against over-indebtedness in a [*book*](https://www.economicstrategygroup.org/publication/building-a-more-resilient-us-economy/) released last week, “Building a More Resilient U.S. Economy.” “Although changes in policy that substantially narrow the deficit have economic and political disadvantages, they are necessary to put the federal budget on a sustainable path,” Karen Dynan, a professor of the practice of economic policy at Harvard, wrote in one chapter.

That brings us back to Heidi Heitkamp and politics, because agreeing that something needs to be done is only the first step. The political part is figuring out what and how. Should it be achieved entirely through budget cuts, or entirely through tax increases, or more likely a combination of the two? (I [*wrote recently*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/29/opinion/government-shutdown-national-debt.html) that tax increases have to be part of the fix.)

A bipartisan commission can achieve something if it’s made up of people whose opinions are respected and who get along well enough with one another to compromise. In the Peterson Foundation document, several essayists favorably cite President Barack Obama’s National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform, led by the Democrat Erskine Bowles and the Republican Alan Simpson.

“A fiscal commission will not obviate lawmakers’ responsibility to make hard choices, but it will make those choices easier to understand and explain to voters,” Mark Zandi, the chief economist of Moody’s Analytics, wrote in his essay for the Peterson document.

Unfortunately Congress absorbed the wrong message from Bowles-Simpson. It cut discretionary spending a lot, which slowed the economy’s bounce-back from the 2007-9 recession. It did little to nothing about “gradual pro-growth tax and entitlement reform” that would put the budget on a sustainable trajectory, the Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget [*wrote*](https://www.crfb.org/blogs/five-years-simpson-bowles-how-much-it-have-we-enacted) in 2015. That’s something that needs to be avoided this time.

I’m not ready to evaluate the pros and cons of all the deficit-cutting ideas in the collection of essays, but I want to share a few of the essayists’ interesting remarks.

“For the next 15 years, more people will convert to Medicare in America than people being born,” wrote Dana Peterson, the chief economist, and Lori Esposito Murray, the president of the Committee for Economic Development, both of the Conference Board.

Leon Panetta, a former defense secretary, wrote: “In the negotiations at Andrews Air Force Base in the 1990s, the agreement was that if the Democrats would propose $250 billion in spending savings, the Republicans would propose $250 billion in taxes. It worked because both sides were willing to deal with their sacred cows.”

Brian Riedl, a senior fellow at the Manhattan Institute, wrote: “Commissions have historically been more successful when used for narrow issues, such as Social Security solvency or closing military bases. At the same time, separate commissions for Social Security, Medicare and other health programs run the risk of producing incompatible solutions, such as relying on duplicative new taxes, overly targeting the same seniors for cuts, or altering the interaction between programs.”

One more: The Progressive Policy Institute has proposed basing Social Security benefits on how many years people worked, without regard to how much they earned. “This structure would preserve Social Security’s nature as an ‘earned benefit’ but make the program more progressive,” Ben Ritz, the director of the Progressive Policy Institute’s Center for Funding America’s Future, wrote. “A low-level employee and a CEO who put in the same amount of work will get the same benefit out of Social Security.”

The Readers Write

Forget inflation, deflation and the job market, which you [*focused on*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/08/opinion/economy-joe-biden-inflation.html). The average American thinks about the cost of living. I am lucky enough to have a six-figure job but I live in the Northeast. My income barely covers my expenses. Prices are high and taxes continue to rise. It is challenging.

Mary Falco

Floral Park, N.Y.

I am a female Hispanic and a retired federal employee. I am also a veteran. I look at all sides of the issue and vote for what benefits me and the country the best. Biden has not addressed the needs of issues that pertain to me. He has often focused on younger generational issues or on group issues (such as Medicare costs, when dealing with retirees). The Republicans have not done any better. I believe this is why so many people are scoping out alternatives such as Kennedy. They are being left behind.

Mayjo D. LaPlante

Topeka, Kan.

A [*tax-and-transfer*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/06/opinion/democratic-party-inequality-biden.html) approach encourages imposition of punitive bureaucracy out of fear that someone might get a nickel more than they deserve. It also smacks of a handout that is begrudgingly given and even then through some arcane schedule on a tax form. People don’t like being told they have to jump through hoops to get something because someone else worries they might not deserve it. Predistribution has the advantage of feeling like the recipient earned it in the first place instead of having to get it as a handout at the back end.

James Petrie

Norwood, N.J.

Regarding how Democratic policies have lost less-educated and ***working-class*** voters: It is almost impossible to overstate how much student loan forgiveness, for those who chose college, infuriates working people who didn’t choose college.

Robert Hackney

Charleston, S.C.

Quote of the Day

“The secret to enjoying your job is to have a hobby that’s even worse.”

— Bill Watterson, “Calvin and Hobbes” ([*April 5, 2015*](https://www.gocomics.com/calvinandhobbes/2015/04/05))

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**Load-Date:** November 13, 2023

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[***Weaponizing America Against Itself***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65GB-Y2R1-DXY4-X180-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

May 18, 2022 Wednesday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; Editorial Desk; Pg. 23; BRET STEPHENS

**Length:** 960 words

**Byline:** By Bret Stephens

**Body**

In the broadest sense, what goes by the name ''replacement theory'' -- the idea that American elites are conspiring to replace so-called real Americans with immigrants from poor countries -- is merely a description of the American way, enshrined in tradition, codified by law, promoted by successive generations of American leaders from Washington and Lincoln to Kennedy and Reagan.

There have been four, arguably five, great replacements in American history.

The first was the worst and the cruelest: the destruction -- through war, slaughter, ill-dealing and wholesale expulsion -- of Native Americans by European migrants. The same far-right true believers who now scream about their own purported replacement by the non-indigenous tend to be the most indignant when reminded that at least some of their ancestors were once the replacements themselves.

The second was a religious replacement of Protestants, who now number fewer than half of all Americans. It began at least as far back as 1655, when the Dutch West India Company rejected a petition by Peter Stuyvesant to expel Jews from New Amsterdam. (Doing so, the company wrote, would be ''somewhat unreasonable and unfair.'') It accelerated in the 19th and 20th centuries, mainly thanks to the mass migration of Catholics from Europe and, later, Latin America. It continues with the arrival of Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus and others, along with a more general loss of faith.

The third was the ethnic replacement of the English. With their arrival in North America came indentured servants from Ireland and continental Europe, then immigrants from Germany, France and Ireland, later from places ever farther east. Willa Cather's ''My Ántonia,'' the American prairie classic, is a story of settlers from Bohemia and other places in Central Europe, who soon became the backbone of the American Midwest.

Non-Europeans had a tougher time. The descendants of enslaved captives from Africa, the only replacements who came against their will, faced years of resistance even after emancipation. And the first major federal law to restrict immigration was the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882.

The fourth replacement was of WASP elites. ''A furtive Yacoob or Ysaac, still reeking of the ghetto, snarling a weird Yiddish to the officers of the customs'' was how Henry Adams, John Quincy's grandson, sneeringly described the immigrants he saw in New York. Within a generation, those Yacoobs and Ysaacs would be Goldmans, Frankfurters, Salks, Rickovers and Bellows. To judge by enrollment figures at Brooklyn Tech or elite universities, the next generation of elites will also be immigrants or their children, many from South or East Asia.

The fifth is the most contentious but also the most routine and unexceptional: the alleged replacement of the native-born white ***working class*** with a foreign-born nonwhite ***working class***. In this telling, Washington policy, from the 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act to the 1994 North American Free Trade Agreement to current enforcement failures at the border, are part of a broad conspiracy to give American businesses cheap labor and Democratic politicians ready votes.

This is both nothing new and nothing at all. The United States has, from its earliest days, repeatedly ''replaced'' its ***working class*** with migrants, not as an act of substitution, much less as a sinister conspiracy, but as the natural result of upward mobility, the demands of a growing economy and the benefits of a growing population. The idea that NAFTA simply caused jobs to flee the United States sits at odds with the fact that the labor-force participation rate in the United States grew to its peak in the years immediately after the signing of the agreement.

What all of this says is that the phenomenon of replacement, writ large, is America, and has been from the beginning, sometimes by force, mostly by choice. What the far right calls ''replacement'' is better described as renewal.

The first immigration bill was passed by the first Congress and signed into law by the first president. The American heartland was almost certainly more linguistically diverse in the 1890s than it is today -- and adult immigrants often never learned to speak more than rudimentary English. The people who today think of themselves as regular Americans, people with surnames like Stefanik, Gaetz or Anton, would, on account of their faith or ethnicity, have been seen by previous generations of nativists as uncouth and unassimilable, dirty and disloyal.

All this is of a piece with our traditional self-understanding as a country in which a sense of common destiny bound by ideals matters more than common origins bound by blood. It's also necessary to any form of conservatism that wants to draw a line against blood-and-soil nationalism or white-identity politics. You cannot defend the ideal of ''E pluribus unum'' by deleting pluribus. To subscribe to ''replacement theory'' -- the sinister, conspiratorial kind now taking hold of parts of the right -- is to weaponize America against itself.

I'm writing this in the wake of Saturday's massacre in Buffalo, whose alleged perpetrator wrote a racist and antisemitic rant about replacement theory. It's usually a mistake to judge an idea based on the behavior of some deranged believer. It's also unnecessary. The danger with replacement theory in its current form isn't that a handful of its followers are crazy but that too many of them are sane.

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[*https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/17/opinion/replacement-theory-us.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/17/opinion/replacement-theory-us.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: (PHOTOGRAPH BY Damon Winter/The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

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[***The Right Weaponizes America Against Itself; Bret Stephens***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65G7-JHB1-JBG3-602Y-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

May 17, 2022 Tuesday 14:03 EST

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 965 words

**Byline:** Bret Stephens

**Highlight:** You cannot defend the ideal of “E pluribus unum" by deleting “pluribus.”

**Body**

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[***Conservative Thinkers Didn’t Create Trumpism; Ross Douthat***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69KT-H5H1-JBG3-62PY-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

November 10, 2023 Friday 16:21 EST

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 1783 words

**Byline:** Ross Douthat

**Highlight:** But Trumpism recreated them.

**Body**

There is a story that professional ideamongers like to tell about political history that gives pride of place to their own work. It’s a story that usually begins with some small tribe of writers or intellectuals who come up with a set of theories that describe the world in a new way. Marginal at first, their arguments eventually break out into the wider sphere of campaigns and candidates, capturing one or the other major political coalition and finally emerging as the consensus of an age.

If you don’t sweat the details too much, this story fits the rise of both American progressivism and American conservatism: In the New Deal and the Reagan eras, you could identify an intellectual class that had passed from prophecy to a certain degree of power. And you could arguably see the same pattern in more recent periods of political change — Bill Clinton’s style of moderation was anticipated in the small-magazine intellectual culture of The Washington Monthly and The New Republic, George W. Bush’s vision of “compassionate conservatism” in the writings of Myron Magnet and Marvin Olasky, Barack Obama’s 2008 campaign by the scribblers of the netroots and the liberal blogosphere.

This fall, I’ve been co-teaching a course at Yale University, the Crisis of Liberalism, which looks for the roots of today’s disturbances in long-running debates about the liberal order. In the past week, we’ve worked our way up to the 2010s and the rise of both wokeness and right-wing populism, which means I’ve been thinking more than usual about how ideas work in both of those movements. And one of my thoughts is that both of them break, in different ways, with the familiar narrative about intellectuals and democracy I’ve just sketched.

With wokeness, you have a movement in which the intelligentsia really matters but democratic politics much less so. The ideas that we associate with contemporary social-justice progressivism followed the initial part of the script — an [*origination*](https://heterodoxacademy.org/blog/seizing-means-knowledge-production/) in the [*1960s and 1970s*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/21/opinion/black-power-wokeness.html), a long period of incubation and development within the American academy and an emergence into mass consciousness somewhere in the late Obama years.

But that emergence worked primarily from the top down. Progressive belief isn’t purely an elite phenomenon, but the Great Awokening has largely wielded influence through what Nate Silver calls the “[*indigo blob*](https://www.natesilver.net/p/twitter-elon-and-the-indigo-blob),” a center-left network of schools and foundations and media enterprises and human resources departments. It has not really sought power through elections — in part, I would argue, because its project is fundamentally therapeutic and educational, placing soulcraft [*before statecraft*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/18/opinion/woke-definition.html). But also because when it’s been tested at the ballot box, it’s been a loser. That’s why President Biden, not Elizabeth Warren, is the leader of the Democratic Party right now, even if some of Warren’s ideas have prevailed behind the scenes, through the staffing of the White House.

On the right-wing populist side, you have a rather different phenomenon, a political revolution — the earthquake of Trumpism, the similar shocks in Europe — that far outruns any theory of what it’s about or what it’s doing and leaves the intelligentsia rushing to catch up.

Yes, of course you can find writers who anticipated right-wing populism to some degree, figures as diverse as Sam Francis and Michael Lind, Pat Buchanan and Christopher Lasch. To some extent, I was one of them, co-writing a protopopulist [*book*](https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/42417/grand-new-party-by-ross-douthat-and-reihan-salam/) on how Republicans could win the ***working class*** back in 2008 and associating with so-called reform conservatism in the Obama era.

But the paleo, Buchananite school of conservatism wasn’t at all ascendant in the Republican Party of the early 2010s, and there was no obvious connection between Donald Trump and any version of the reform-conservative movement. We saw the opening he filled, but he didn’t need to listen to us in order to fill it.

Instead, what you had was a celebrity figure with his own set of ideas, forged in the 1980s and barely altered since, who managed a successful mind meld with a swath of beleaguered voters from both parties. Trumpism certainly has aspects of a cult of personality, but the cult has plenty of doctrines — protectionism, immigration restriction, industrial policy — even if the Great Leader is flexible about their application. And rather than embrace or vindicate any existing ideological or intellectual movement, Trump often appeared to bypass the idea factories entirely.

In a way, these inverse patterns are what you’d expect from the ongoing [*educational polarization*](https://nl.nytimes.com/f/a/U1flLA0-ciu_T29fJ7zQhQ~~/AAAAAQA~/RgRnMNbrP0T3aHR0cHM6Ly9ueW1hZy5jb20vaW50ZWxsaWdlbmNlci8yMDIyLzEwL2VkdWNhdGlvbi1wb2xhcml6YXRpb24tZGlwbG9tYS1kaXZpZGUtZGVtb2NyYXRpYy1wYXJ0eS13b3JraW5nLWNsYXNzLmh0bWw_Y2FtcGFpZ25faWQ9MCZlbWM9ZWRpdF9yZF8yMDIzMTExMCZpbnN0YW5jZV9pZD0wJm5sPXJvc3MtZG91dGhhdCZyZWdpX2lkPTAmc2VnbWVudF9pZD0wJnRlPTEmdXNlcl9pZD04NWNiMGZlNmUyM2Q3YTgxNjA4N2VlMjk1NTIzMjc2ZlcDbnl0QgplQutRTmUYFTZXUhhtYXJ5LmFrZGVtaXJAbnl0aW1lcy5jb21YBAAAAAM~) created under current meritocratic conditions, in which one coalition is increasingly the party of the intelligentsia and the other is organized around populist resistance to meritocratic rule.

It makes sense that the first coalition would be more idea driven but more likely to be stampeded into new ideologies through internal pressure. Once a consensus is reached within its ranks — all the smart people and serious institutions agree — there’s a natural assumption that this can substitute for democratic persuasion. And it makes sense that the second coalition would be more hostile to any kind of top-down intellectual project, more comfortable with inconsistency and incoherence and that it would often come to its agenda not through white papers and think-tank arguments but through a populist alchemy of the sort that Trump performed.

That’s not to say that the second kind of process necessarily renders intellectuals irrelevant. Someone is still needed to actually run any political order that the alchemy creates, to fill in all the details of the Great Man’s sketch, to make the inchoate somehow cohere. This can be a thankless and hopeless job (just ask some of Trump’s functionaries), but it can also be an exciting one, with more space given to the individual thinker than in the somewhat more herdlike atmosphere of the liberal intelligentsia.

In confounding the assumptions of the wise, the populist phenomenon also creates a wider sense of political possibility in general. It encourages right-wing intellectuals not just to fill in the blanks of Trumpism but also to imagine further revolutions. If Donald Trump can seemingly impose his worldview on a major political party, what other worldviews might be more viable than we think?

You can sense this widening ambition in the conservative writers who first made the leap to Trumpism — a feeling of opportunity, not just followership, if only you can catch up to the man on horseback and swing yourself into a saddle, too. And this is part of why right-wing intellectual life became, in my experience, much more interesting and experimental during the wild four years of Trump’s presidency, even if the right’s intelligentsia didn’t actually exert all that much influence over his chaotic administration.

There was energy in the effort to make something out of Trumpism, through populist economics and realist or isolationist foreign policy, and new energy in the resistance to that effort among those conservatives who refused the Trumpian revelation. There was also energy in the general widening of debate, the willingness to consider political alternatives that weren’t really part of the Trumpian synthesis (surely no one would confuse Trump with a Catholic integralist or a Christian nationalist, a Marxist-Catholic fusionist or a restorer of founding-era republican virtue) but that were offered in the spirit of radical or reactionary possibility that his unexpected triumph opened up.

But this sense of excitement and energy also yields the great temptation for conservative intellectuals and ideologists, which was embodied most fully by a figure [*like John Eastman*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/25/opinion/john-eastman-claremont-trump.html) in the days around Jan. 6 — a temptation to see in Trumpian chaos a ladder for your own vision of a renewed America and to deliberately exacerbate that chaos for purposes that don’t really command any substantial democratic support.

Damon Linker, in [*an essay*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/04/opinion/sunday/conservative-intellectuals-republicans.html) on right-wing intellectuals last week, analyzed this temptation in terms of its apocalypticism — a belief that things in America or the West are so bad, so far gone that the most procedurally radical moves are justifiable and necessary, even unto constitutional crisis.

I have a number of disagreements with Linker, both about the substantive ideas of some of the intellectuals he folds into his analysis and about the near-term political influence of certain far-right vitalists and technomonarchists, as notable as their ideas may be. But clearly the impulse he describes exists, and it’s played a part in encouraging some conservatives to embrace the power trips of an unstable demagogue.

I’m less sure, though, about whether emphasizing the sense of doom fully captures this mentality’s appeal. It’s just as much, if not more, about possibility — the excitement of living through a revolution and playing a dramatic part.

Thus the seeming paradox of right-wing intellectualism in the age of populism. In one sense, the lesson of Trump’s ascent for conservative intellectuals should have been a humbling one, a harsh message of you are not in control. But that loss of certainty was also felt as emancipation: proof that the goddess Fortuna can still overrule the sophists and calculators and there need actually be fewer limits on the intellectual’s political ambitions — because the goddess, as we know, shows special favoritism to the bold.

Breviary

Tom Hiney [*on the new agnosticism*](https://www.firstthings.com/article/2023/12/the-new-agnosticism)

Rod Dreher and Diana Walsh Pasulka [*on U.F.O.s and the supernatural*](https://europeanconservative.com/articles/dreher/ufos-and-aliens-are-probably-not-what-you-think-an-interview-with-diana-walsh-pasulka/)

Lex Pryor [*on the holy city of Halloween*](https://www.theringer.com/features/2023/10/30/23934926/salem-witch-trials-tourism-halloween)

Philip Goff [*on the trouble with the multiverse*](https://theconversation.com/many-physicists-assume-we-must-live-in-a-multiverse-but-their-basic-maths-may-be-wrong-216106)

The mysterious mathematical beauty of [*Gothic architecture*](https://thetarwater.substack.com/p/naturalisms-problem-of-gothic-beauty)

New survey data [*on Gen Z’s polarization of the sexes*](https://www.americansurveycenter.org/research/generation-z-and-the-transformation-of-american-adolescence-how-gen-zs-formative-experiences-shape-its-politics-priorities-and-future/)

Are we sure inequality [*has risen*](https://twitter.com/Jon_Hartley_/status/1720510613775118690)

This Week in Decadence

America will enter the 22nd century with a shrinking population unless immigration increases, according to new U.S. Census Bureau projections released Thursday. …

The U.S. population will begin declining after reaching a peak of nearly 370 million people in 2080, per the Census Bureau’s “most likely” scenario. … In almost all scenarios, immigration was projected to be the largest contributor to population growth, as it has been [*for decades*](https://www.pewresearch.org/hispanic/2015/09/28/chapter-2-immigrations-impact-on-past-and-future-u-s-population-change/). When the bureau considered the zero-immigration scenario, the country’s population began declining almost immediately and would drop to 226 million by 2100. …

The bureau believes 29.1 percent of the population will most likely be older than 65 and 16.4 percent will be children by 2100. … Around 2038, the country will likely begin experiencing more deaths than births annually.

— Jacob Knutson, “[*Census Projects U.S. Population Bust by 2080*](https://www.axios.com/2023/11/09/us-population-decline-down-projections-data-chart),” Axios (Nov. 9)

PHOTO: (PHOTOGRAPH BY Alain Pilon FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** November 10, 2023

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[***‘Everybody Is Welcome Here’; Sports of The Times***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:685F-1611-JBG3-6082-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Section:** SPORTS; soccer

**Length:** 1403 words

**Byline:** Kurt Streeter and Mason Trinca

**Highlight:** Kaig Lightner founded the Portland Community Football Club to give local youth an inexpensive chance to play. When he came out as transgender, they gave him a place to belong.

**Body**

Kaig Lightner founded the Portland Community Football Club to give local youth an inexpensive chance to play. When he came out as transgender, they gave him a place to belong.

PORTLAND, Ore. — The soccer coach looked out at two dozen or so of his players and felt nervousness course through him like a rip current. His heart pounded, and his voice felt unsteady.

Kaig Lightner (pronounced “Cage,” a phonetic shortening of his initials — K and J) had been thinking of this moment since the summer of 2013 when he founded the Portland Community Football Club, a program for teaching soccer to mostly first- and second-generation immigrant youth who lived in his city’s most distressed neighborhoods.

In the four years since, Coach Kaig had become a friend, an ally and even, to some of his players, a father figure.

How would they react once he told them he had been raised as a girl?

He had always asked his players to be open and honest about their lives. That he had not modeled such deep honesty filled him with remorse.

The election of Donald Trump — who had promised to appoint conservative judges and whose vice president, Mike Pence, had opposed gay rights and was [*seen as supporting conversion therapy*](https://www.nytimes.com/2016/11/30/us/politics/mike-pence-and-conversion-therapy-a-history.html) — had ignited a sense of foreboding and uncertainty within the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community. Lightner certainly felt it. He worried that the players — tweens and teens on this afternoon — would leave his club. Or that their families would cut ties, no matter how good the program had been at mentoring and providing a safe space to grow up in.

Lightner considered all of this, took a deep breath and knew he needed to speak up.

“I haven’t totally shared with you something about myself.”

“It’s an important thing for me to share with you because we all should be who we are.”

“I am transgender.”

One player chuckled nervously but walked to Lightner for a hug. Most looked straight at their coach in a kind of wonder and awe.

No one left.

Born Katherine Jean Lightner and raised in a comfortable suburb east of Seattle, nothing about Lightner’s adolescence was easy. Lightner, who consented to the use of his former name and gender identity throughout this article, recalls a paralyzing fear that began around age 4 that he was a boy stuck in a girl’s body. When his family called him Katie, he protested. It sounded too feminine. Kate was better by a shade. He refused ballet lessons. His mother bought him a tailored dress. He wore it once, then vowed to never wear it again.

As the years went on, Kate favored baggy pants, sweats, billowing T-shirts and baseball caps turned backward. A favorite birthday gift was a bright red Michael Jordan baseball jersey.

“The way she presented, she did not look like a typical girl,” recalled Leslie Ridge, a friend who attended high school with Lightner in the 1990s. “And because of that, she was made fun of constantly, especially by boys. It was brutal to see how painful that was for her.”

The bullying taunts and sense of unease ignited a terrible internal storm. “I began to think of myself as a freak,” recalls Lightner. “The feeling was that I don’t belong here. I don’t belong in any space.”

Sports became a refuge.

An excellent softball, basketball and soccer athlete, Lightner found that on fields and courts he could be judged solely based on performance.

“Sports kept me alive.”

After rowing crew at the University of Washington, Lightner moved to Portland after graduation in the early 2000s. There he coached soccer for kids between 8 and 14 on a team that initially looked much the same as the white, affluent ones on which Lightner had grown up playing.

After changing his name to Kaig, Lightner approached a fellow soccer coach he regarded as a trustworthy friend and explained that this was a first step toward becoming a man.

The reaction was laughter.

“It didn’t take me long to realize that coaching as an out trans person at that time, in the years around 2005, ’06, ’07, was just not going to work,” Lightner said. “I was not going to be safe.”

Lightner left coaching for a while. He flew to Baltimore for breast removal surgery and began weekly sessions of hormone replacement therapy. His voice deepened. New layers of muscle wrapped around his shoulders. His jaw grew square, and his face sprouted the beginnings of a beard.

Eventually, he took a job as an instructor for after-school programs in the ***working-class*** outskirts of Portland, home to the city’s population of immigrants from Africa, Mexico, Central and South America, and Asia.

Lightner quickly saw that the abundant sports opportunities in the city’s wealthier communities barely existed for the kids he was now working with. He had always felt like an outsider and now saw that the players he coached — the children of ***working-class*** immigrants in one of America’s whitest cities — thought of themselves in much the same way. Considering how he could best help, Lightner focused on what had kept him going through all those years of adolescent anguish.

“Soccer had been my main way of finding healing and connection, and I wanted that for these kids, too,” he said.

After a year of cobbling together seed money, Lightner formed the Portland Community Football Club in 2013 with grant funding and donated equipment from Nike. The club was a rarity because everybody had a place. Nobody got cut. Lightner emphasized developing skilled players more than turning out stars. Families paid $50 to join, but less than that was OK. Not paying a dime was fine, too.

At his first practice, held in a worn corner of a public park, 50 kids showed up. Soon it was 75. Then 100. The club played during the winter, spring, summer and fall.

“Coach Kaig became a constant in our lives,” says Shema Jacques, one of the program’s early stalwarts. Jacques, now a 22-year-old Marine, first picked up the basics of soccer in a Rwandan refugee camp but honed his game at P.C.F.C. “From the start, I could tell he believed in us. He would be there for us for anything we needed. I had never experienced someone being like that before.”

Lightner was open about being a transgender man to everyone in his life except the players and families of P.C.F.C., and the dissonance ate at him. So on that rain-swept day in 2017, he gathered every player who had shown up for a chat before practice.

“I want you guys to know about me, and I also want you guys to know that I’m still me,” he said. “I’m still the same person I was five minutes before you all knew this, right? I’m still the same guy who comes out here, gets you guys to be better soccer players, gets on you when you’re not playing hard, loves you no matter what.”

He saw nothing but acceptance as he looked into his players’ eyes. One of them was Jacques.

“Suddenly, hearing that, it all made sense,” Jacques said. “This is why he knows what it is like for so many of us — not being accepted, trying hard to fit in. I actually felt more connected to him as he spoke, and I am not alone. He was still the person I looked up to and wanted to be like.”

Six years later, the only thing that has changed about P.C.F.C. is its growth. There are more coaches and a small administrative staff. The roster of registered players has swelled to 165. It is also about more than just soccer now. During the early days of the coronavirus pandemic, Lightner received a grant that allowed P.C.F.C. to provide its families with fresh groceries, rental assistance and help tapping into social services.

“None of the families abandoned Kaig once he spoke his truth,” says Carolina Morales Hernandez, whose young son and daughter have grown up in the program.

“Sometimes people join, and they will call me and say, ‘We heard this and that about Kaig,’” she adds. “I’m like, ‘Oh yeah, it’s true, yep. The head of the P.C.F.C. is a transgender person, but that changes nothing. Everybody is welcome here.’”

PHOTOS: Kaig Lightner offering defensive tips to Bella Martinez. Lightner created the Portland Community Football Club with the mission of teaching soccer to predominantly immigrant children.; Lightner is part administrator, part coach and part chauffeur for the program, which focuses on developing skills over stars and offers a place for everybody regardless of their ability or financial means.; “From the start, I could tell he believed in us,” a former member of the club said. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY MASON TRINCA FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page B6.

**Load-Date:** May 6, 2023

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[***Is the Surge to the Left Among Young Voters a Trump Blip or the Real Deal?; Guest Essay***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:689G-FPG1-JBG3-60W7-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 2706 words

**Byline:** Thomas B. Edsall

**Highlight:** The question is how long it will last.

**Body**

There is a lot about the American electorate that we are only now beginning to see. These developments have profound implications for the future of both the Republican and the Democratic coalitions.

Two key Democratic constituencies — the young and the religiously unobservant — have substantially increased as a share of the electorate.

This shift is striking.

In 2012, for example, white evangelicals — a hard-core Republican constituency — made up the same proportion of the electorate as the religiously unaffiliated: agnostics, atheists and the nonreligious. Both groups stood at roughly 19 percent of the population.

By 2022, according to the [*Public Religion Research Institute*](https://robertpjones.substack.com/p/five-charts-that-explain-the-desperate) (better known as P.R.R.I.), the percentage of white evangelicals had fallen to 13.6 percent, while those with little or no interest in religion and more progressive inclinations had surged to 26.8 percent of the population.

Defying the adage among practitioners and scholars of politics that voters become more conservative as they age — millennials (those born between 1981 and 1996) and Gen Z (those born in 1997 and afterward) have in fact become decidedly more Democratic over time, according to data compiled by the [*Cooperative Election Study.*](https://cooperativeelectionstudy.shinyapps.io/CumulativeHouseVote/)

The graphic below, which is derived from the study, shows a significant increase in voting for House Democratic candidates among [*millennials*](https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2019/01/17/where-millennials-end-and-generation-z-begins/) and [*Gen Z*](https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2019/01/17/where-millennials-end-and-generation-z-begins/).

I asked [*Brian Schaffner*](https://as.tufts.edu/politicalscience/people/faculty/brian-schaffner), a political scientist at Tufts who oversees the study, whether he thought the liberal trends among young voters were a temporary reaction to Donald Trump or a more significant change in the electorate.

“I think it’s a real shift,” Schaffner wrote in an email, quoting an analysis from December 2022 by John Burn-Murdoch of The Financial Times, “[*Millennials Are Shattering the Oldest Rule in Politics*](https://www.ft.com/stream/e191658e-c66a-45bc-9bad-343bdc4210b3)”:

If millennials’ liberal inclinations are merely a result of this age effect, then at age 35 they too should be around five points less conservative than the national average and can be relied upon to gradually become more conservative. In fact, they’re more like 15 points less conservative and in both Britain and the U.S. are by far the least conservative 35-year-olds in recorded history.

Schaffner noted that Burn-Murdoch’s article “is pretty convincing and focuses on not just vote share but also issue positions, so I don’t think it is just a Trump thing.”

At the same time, Schaffner observed:

Because the population is very big and turnout rates tend to be much higher for older adults, these trends can be slow to lead to significant gains. For example, in 2018, I applied a life expectancy model to our C.E.S. data and using that model I calculated that it would take more than 20 years for Democrats to gain just 3 percentage points on their vote share from differential mortality.

Schaffner continued:

Those gains could easily be offset by Republicans doing a bit better among other groups. For example, part of what has helped them in recent elections is that even while the share of the population who are non-college white people is in decline, it is still a large group that (1) has come to vote more Republican in the past decade and (2) has seen its turnout rate increase during the same period.

In a report published this month, “[*What Happened in 2022*](https://catalist.us/whathappened2022/),” [*Catalist*](https://catalist.us/who-we-are/), a progressive data analysis firm, found more developments among young voters that favor Democrats: “Gen Z and millennial voters had exceptional levels of turnout, with young voters in heavily contested states exceeding their 2018 turnout by 6 percent among those who were eligible in both elections.”

What’s more, as the Catalist report noted,

65 percent of voters between the ages of 18 and 29 supported Democrats, cementing their role as a key part of a winning coalition for the party. While young voters were historically evenly split between the parties, they are increasingly voting for Democrats. Many young voters who showed up in 2018 and 2020 to elect Democrats continued to do the same in 2022.

In addition, the report found:

Women voters pushed Democrats over the top in heavily contested races, where abortion rights were often their top issue. Democratic performance improved over 2020 among women in highly contested races, going from 55 percent to 57 percent support. The biggest improvement was among white non-college women (+4 percent support).

So why haven’t Democrats returned to the kind of majority status the party enjoyed from the 1930s to the mid-1960s? Why does the conservative coalition that emerged in the late 1960s remain a competitive force in 2023?

One answer came from [*Geoffrey Layman*](https://politicalscience.nd.edu/people/geoffrey-c-layman/), a political scientist at Notre Dame, who noted in an email:

As whites’ and white Christians’ numbers have declined, their sense of threat and anxiety over losing their dominant position in American society and culture has increased, making conservatism and the Republican Party (particularly Republican candidates like Trump who promise to restore that dominant position) more attractive to them.

Layman cited 2000 and 2020 data from [*American National Election Studies*](https://electionstudies.org/data-center/) to prove his point:

White ***working-class*** people, white evangelicals, white Catholics and white Christians in general all voted significantly more Republican in 2020 than in 2000. White people with no college education: 56 percent for Bush in 2000, 68 percent for Trump in 2020. White evangelicals who regularly attend church: 75 percent for Bush in 2000, 89 percent for Trump in 2020. White Catholics who regularly attend church: 56 percent for Bush in 2000, 67 percent for Trump in 2020.

Layman noted that data from the [*General Social Survey*](https://gss.norc.org/), a series of nationally representative surveys conducted regularly since 1972, demonstrates the numerical rise in secular voters: “From 1991 to 2021, the percent of nones increased from 6 percent to 28 percent of Americans. Also, the percent of people claiming to never attend religious services increased from 11 percent to 30 percent between 1991 and 2021.”

The big picture, Layman concluded, “is that religious, demographic and socioeconomic trends that seem to bode very well for the Democrats and very poorly for the Republicans have not yet had the expected effects because there has been a countermobilization toward the G.O.P. among the declining groups.”

For now, Layman wrote:

Those countervailing trends have left the two parties in about the same competitive balance as in 2000. However, as the pro-Democratic sociodemographic trends continue, it will become increasingly difficult for the G.O.P. to stay nationally competitive with a base of just white ***working-class*** people, devout white Christians and older white people. The Republicans are starting to max out their support among these groups.

The white backlash to the growing strength of liberal constituencies not only prompted conservative voters to back Republicans by higher margins; they also turned out to vote at exceptionally high rates to make up for their falling share of the electorate.

[*Robert Jones*](https://www.prri.org/staff/robert-p-jones-ph-d/), founder and president of P.R.R.I., pointed out by email that both white Protestant and white Catholic Christians punch well above their weight on Election Day: “Key white Christian subgroups — which strongly supported Trump and Republicans — were significantly overrepresented in the electorate compared to their proportion of the population.”

He cited poll data that showed

White evangelicals: proportion of population in 2020, 14 percent, proportion of voters, 22 percent. White Catholics: proportion of population in 2020, 12 percent, proportion of voters, 16 percent.

In contrast, Jones wrote, nonreligious voters are somewhat underrepresented on Election Day: “Religiously unaffiliated: proportion of population in 2020, 23 percent, proportion of voters, 21 percent.”

White Christians are, in effect, engaged in a herculean struggle to maintain political power.

“As recently as 2008, when our first Black president was elected, the U.S. was a majority (54 percent) white Christian country,” Jones wrote. “By 2014, that proportion had dropped to 47 percent. Today, the 2022 Census of American Religion shows that figure has dropped further to 42 percent.”

The Southern Baptist Convention, Jones continued, “the largest white evangelical denomination, has now lost more than 3 million members since its peak in the early 2000s.”

I asked [*Ryan Burge*](http://ryanburge.net/), a political scientist at Eastern Illinois University who has conducted extensive research on partisan trends among various religious denominations, why Democrats haven’t regained firm majority status.

Burge emailed to say that he agreed that the rapid rise of the nonreligious has raised Democratic prospects, but, he noted, “it’s not like all the nones have shifted to the Democrats. Republicans have gotten 40 percent of the increase, too.”

In addition, Burge argued, it’s important to distinguish between consciously secular atheists and agnostics and more passive men and women who have simply lost interest in religion.

While atheists are solidly Democratic and highly engaged in politics, Burge said,

Most of the nones — around 60 percent — are nothing in particular. They are incredibly disengaged from the political process. They don’t go to school board meetings. They don’t put up political yard signs. Which means that their voter turnout is very low. They also aren’t die-hard Democrats. In 2020, they were no more than 64 percent for Biden.

Atheists, in contrast, have become one of the Democrats’ most loyal constituencies, according to the [*Cooperative Election Study*](https://cooperativeelectionstudy.shinyapps.io/prez2020/), voting 87-9 for Biden over Trump. Agnostics favored Biden 80-17. Together, atheists and agnostics make up [*roughly 12 percent*](https://www.graphsaboutreligion.com/p/no-one-participates-in-politics-more) of the population.

In a May 15 posting on Substack, “[*No One Participates in Politics More Than Atheists*](https://www.graphsaboutreligion.com/p/no-one-participates-in-politics-more),” Burge wrote:

Here’s what I believe to be the emerging narrative of the next several decades: the rise of atheism and their unbelievably high level of political engagement in recent electoral politics. Let me put it plainly: Atheists are the most politically active group in American politics today.

My exchange with Burge prompted him to add another piece to his Substack, “Given the Rise of the Nones, Why Aren’t Democrats Winning Most Elections?”

In that essay, Burge elaborated on the point he mentioned earlier:

Every time a party (the Democrats, in this case) tries to appeal to a new set of voters (nones), it leaves the other part of its flank exposed (white Christians). The opposite party then swoops in and takes over that part of the electorate. Thus, parties continue to try and make their tent bigger, which inevitably pushes other folks out of the tent to be scooped up by the opposing party.

While the right has engineered a countermovement — a holding action — that has at least temporarily kept ascendant liberal constituencies at bay, the trends among young voters have begun to erode Republican competitiveness.

There is another area in which the Democratic advantage among younger voters has already begun to pay off: campaign contributions.

In their April 13 paper, “[*Old Money*](https://www.dropbox.com/s/tui5dkbnnfu7if2/bonica_grumbach_old_money.pdf?dl=0): Campaign Finance and Gerontocracy in the United States,” [*Adam Bonica*](https://web.stanford.edu/~bonica/), a political scientist at Stanford, and [*Jacob Grumbach*](https://www.polisci.washington.edu/people/jake-grumbach), a political scientist at the University of Washington, demonstrate that younger campaign contributors lean decisively left:

As a group, Millennial/Gen Z donors are overwhelmingly supporting Democrats and left-leaning organizations and causes, with 85 percent of these donors with left-of-center DIME ([*Database on Ideology, Money in Politics and Elections*](https://data.stanford.edu/dime)) scores. And of those who donate to Democrats, they are giving disproportionately to support progressive candidates and causes. This trend is largely driven by the leftward turn among young professionals and college graduates.

Bonica and Grumbach continue: “While Millennials and Generation Z remain heavily underrepresented in fund-raising for now, as their share of total contribution dollars inevitably increases, the campaign finance landscape will shift in response.”

The result?

Republicans will be at a disadvantage in fund-raising from the mass public, forcing them to rely more on megadonors. And in terms of within-party competition, it signals a much stronger fund-raising environment for progressives within the Democratic Party.

The accompanying chart from the Bonica-Grumbach paper shows how the Democratic share of donors grows steadily as the donors get younger and younger:

In another [*study of the 2022 election*](https://www.brookings.edu/research/new-voter-turnout-data-from-2022-shows-some-surprises-including-lower-turnout-for-youth-women-and-black-americans-in-some-states/), released earlier this month, the demographer [*William Frey*](https://www.brookings.edu/experts/william-h-frey/), a senior fellow at Brookings, cited a steady decline in the share of the electorate made up of whites with no college degrees, a key source of Republican support.

The vote share of this cohort fell steadily in every nonpresidential election — from 50 percent in 2006 to 37.7 percent in 2022. In contrast, whites with college degrees, an increasingly Democratic constituency, grew from 30.5 percent of all voters in 2006 to 35.5 percent in 2022.

The nonwhite share of the electorate, Frey found, rose from 19.5 percent in 2006 to 26.7 percent in 2022, a slight drop from the record 27.2 percent in 2018.

Two decades ago, Republican leaders were convinced that the [*Southern strategy*](https://press.princeton.edu/books/paperback/9780691163246/the-emerging-republican-majority) — initiated by Richard Nixon and followed up by Ronald Reagan with his successful mobilization of the white ***working class*** — was running out of gas. After they lost for a second time to President Barack Obama, top Republicans argued in a March 2013 “[*autopsy report*](https://www.wsj.com/public/resources/documents/RNCreport03182013.pdf)”— issued by the Republican National Committee — that “in the past six presidential elections, four have gone to the Democratic nominee, at an average yield of 327 electoral votes to 211 for the Republican” while “public perception of the party is at record lows. Young voters are increasingly rolling their eyes at what the party represents, and many minorities wrongly think that Republicans do not like them or want them in the country.”

What should Republicans do, according to the report? “We need to campaign among Hispanic, Black, Asian and gay Americans and demonstrate we care about them.” Republicans need to “embrace and champion comprehensive immigration reform” and “when it comes to social issues, the party must in fact and deed be inclusive and welcoming.”

Three years later, in 2016, Donald Trump rejected this strategy out of hand and instead proved that a Republican candidate stressing the grievances of white America against immigrants and minorities could, in fact, win — albeit without a popular vote victory and, so far, for just one term in the White House.

Trump’s defeat in 2020 revealed some Democratic weaknesses that are likely to become the focus of future contests as Republicans struggle to piece together a winning coalition.

The Catalist report points to gains by Trump and Republican candidates among racial and ethnic minorities. The level of Hispanic support for Republican House candidates rose from 29 percent in 2016 to 38 percent in 2020, where it stayed in 2022. In a [*separate report*](https://catalist.us/wh-national/) on the 2020 election, Catalist found Black support for Republican candidates rose by three points from 7 percent in 2016 to 10 percent in 2020.

These trends virtually guarantee that the Republican Party will pull out the stops in 2024 in an attempt to persuade a portion of the minority electorate — religious, conservative, centrist and entrepreneurial voters of color — to vote for their candidates.

It may be an uphill struggle, but no one should count the Republican Party out. While overall demographic and ideological trends may be pointing toward an increase in Democratic clout, the Republicans will seek to bolster their shrinking white base with support from ideologically sympatico minorities. This may look like a tough sell for a party with the Republicans’ record on civil and minority rights, but in American politics these days, almost anything is possible.

Graphics by Sara Chodosh.

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Graphics by Sara Chodosh.

PHOTO: (PHOTOGRAPH BY Mike Segar/Reuters FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

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[***Latino Residents Challenge a Town's Voting System***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:697R-CXK1-DXY4-X0RG-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

September 24, 2023 Sunday

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**Section:** Section MB; Column 0; Metropolitan Desk; Pg. 1

**Length:** 1315 words

**Byline:** By Grace Ashford

**Body**

Voters in the Town of Mount Pleasant, about 30 miles north of New York City, are urging it to change its voting system under a new state law.

It's not hard to find signs of the Latino influence in this ***working-class*** village along the Hudson River: Mexican taquerias and Ecuadorean delis dot the promenade along Beekman Avenue, and neighbors greet one another in Spanish, while colorful flags dance in the wind.

More than half the Village of Sleepy Hollow is of Hispanic origin, according to the most recent census. But those demographics are rarely reflected on Election Day.

The village, about 30 miles north of New York City, is part of the Town of Mount Pleasant, which uses an at-large voting system that allows residents to cast ballots for all open positions.

The Mount Pleasant town board has no Latino members, and no one could recall the last time it had one. That disconnect has led to a formal claim filed with the town, on behalf of five residents who say that they and other Latino voters are being disenfranchised.

The challenge is the first test of New York's John R. Lewis Voting Rights Act, which offers some of the most comprehensive protections for communities of color in the nation. It creates new strictures on voter intimidation. And the law, which went into effect last year, makes it easier to claim voter suppression or dilution: Complainants can address voting issues without going to court, as has been the case, so far, in Mount Pleasant.

In their claim, the residents urge the town to voluntarily change its at-large system, to avoid a lawsuit. ''Our goal is to bring about the fair electoral process in the town of Mt. Pleasant that the N.Y.V.R.A. requires,'' it reads.

In many of the state's larger municipalities, voters are separated into geographic districts; each one is typically represented by one member on a city council or town board. But Mount Pleasant, like many smaller towns, does not use districts or wards, so voters cast ballots for all open seats.

Although Mount Pleasant is nearly 20 percent Hispanic, some argue that preferred candidates of Latinos have little chance to win an election, because in an at-large voting system the non-Hispanic majority will always be able to outvote them.

David Imamura, a Democratic county legislator and a lawyer who represents the Latino voters, said that he believed the disenfranchisement claim had merit, and if was to succeed, it could have broader implications in New York.

''You're talking about dozens of municipalities where people of color are unable to elect candidates of their choice, right?'' he said. ''This law will allow them to get their seat at the table.''

Last month, the Town of Mount Pleasant approved a resolution announcing its intention to investigate claims of disenfranchisement. If an analysis determines that there is a violation, the town could replace its current at-large voting system with wards, or even ranked-choice voting.

The town attorney, Darius Chafizadeh, said it was too early to tell what the outcome might be. ''Could there be a dispute later on? Sure,'' he said, of a future lawsuit. ''Could there be a way to compromise and create wards? Sure. All options are on the table as far as the town is concerned.''

At one time, this area was known for the cars it made: Chevys, Pontiacs and Buicks, shipped all over the country. After the General Motors plant shuttered, the village, then known as North Tarrytown, made headlines for changing its name to Sleepy Hollow, honoring the hamlet featured in onetime-resident Washington Irving's supernatural tale.

By the turn of the century, the area had become something of a mecca for Central and South Americans, particularly those from Ecuador, drawn in part by manufacturing jobs and a growing community. Real estate agencies brought in bilingual agents, and put out signs saying ''Déjeme ayudarlo'' -- let me help you.

''I actually happened to see my neighbors that lived in Ecuador, be neighbors here in the village,'' said Silvana Tapia, whose family moved to Sleepy Hollow in 1993 because her parents had heard that it had a good school system.

But even as Ms. Tapia has watched her community grow, she said she has noticed how few of the elected leaders looked or sounded like them.

Representation could have a profound effect on the community, she said, from simple things like language access to loftier goals like providing role models for future generations.

''By raising the challenge, we are taking a proactive role in shaping our community's future,'' said Ms. Tapia, one of the five claimants.

There have hardly been a raft of Latino candidates for the town board. Ms. Tapia says this is evidence of how difficult it is for Latinos to see themselves in power. Mr. Chafizadeh, the town attorney, suggests it demonstrates a lack of interest, rather than disenfranchisement.

To win the case, the Latino claimants need to demonstrate that their community has a specific political preference that has been overridden by the white majority.

County data shows that the Village of Sleepy Hollow voted Democratic in the 2021 local elections, while the broader Town of Mount Pleasant elected Republicans. Indeed, all four council members on the town board, and the town supervisor are Republicans, though registered Democrats outnumber Republicans by a wide margin in Mount Pleasant.

Mr. Chafizadeh suggested that the disenfranchisement allegation might have partisan motivations, noting that Mr. Imamura works for Abrams Fensterman, a law firm that has close ties to powerful Democrats across the state.

He also pointed out how little overlap there is on practical matters between the Town of Mount Pleasant and Village of Sleepy Hollow, which has its own government and has elected Latinos in the past.

The mayor of Sleepy Hollow, Martin Rutyna, agreed, saying that for the most part the village had a ''great relationship'' with the Town of Mount Pleasant. ''They don't really push things on us. We don't push it on them,'' he said.

Even so, he said, the challenge presented a good opportunity for the village, and in particular its Hispanic residents, to have their voices heard.

''There's a lot of things happening lately that, you know, maybe we have a different opinion,'' Mr. Rutyna said, citing Mount Pleasant's recent state of emergency declaration that effectively closed its doors to migrants seeking refuge. ''I think our village might have had a different opinion,'' he said.

If Mount Pleasant were to change its voting system, it would be possible to draw a majority Hispanic district, according to an analysis from Andy Beveridge and Susan Weber-Stoger of the data mapping company Social Explorer. But that district could still struggle to elect Latino candidates, according to that analysis, as just 30 percent of the drawn district's Hispanic population would be citizens of voting age.

A pattern like that could complicate a claim under the Federal Voting Rights Act, but architects of New York's law say that the claim could still bring other remedies like ranked-choice or cumulative voting.

''All that's necessary, is that you show that there's racially polarized voting -- that you have a minority community that has particular preferences, and the majority that has different preferences,'' said Michael Pernick, a redistricting counsel at the N.A.A.C.P. Legal Defense Fund. ''And the minority communities' preferences are outvoted by the majority, denying them representation.''

For her part, Ms. Tapia is heartened by the town's response thus far, and what she sees as an opportunity to change the relationship that her community has with their representatives.

''I think it will show to everyone that inclusivity, diversity -- they took that under consideration, and you can trust them,'' Ms. Tapia said.

''You can trust the people working in your town.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/19/nyregion/latino-voters-disenfranchisement-lawsuit.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/19/nyregion/latino-voters-disenfranchisement-lawsuit.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Sleepy Hollow, right, in Westchester County, is part of Mount Pleasant, which uses an at-large voting system. The Mount Pleasant Town Board has no Latino members. In a formal claim against the town, five residents say Latino voters are being disenfranchised. (MB1)

Silvana Tapia, a voter represented in the claim against Mount Pleasant, N.Y

Darius Chafizadeh, the Mount Pleasant town attorney (PHOTOGRAPHS BY GREGG VIGLIOTTI FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (MB5) This article appeared in print on page MB1, MB5.

**Load-Date:** September 24, 2023

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[***The Moral Theater of Social Justice Parenting; Guest Essay***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:697R-C291-DXY4-X0MF-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 1348 words

**Byline:** Tyler Austin Harper

**Highlight:** I can’t help feeling that as American culture has become more racially progressive, it’s also become more pathological about race.

**Body**

I didn’t know what to make of the dolls. There were a half-dozen Black Barbies, Bratz and more arranged neatly on a windowsill. My wife and I were moving to coastal Maine, and as we walked through an open house, the toys in the child&#39;s room bothered me in a way that was not rational but visceral. I couldn’t escape the feeling that in this ritzy corner of New England, these were not only a child’s playthings but also props in her parents’ moral theater, an attempt to compensate for the homogeneous whiteness of their upwardly mobile suburb.

This cynicism was probably unfair. As my wife very reasonably reminded me, they were just toys. But as a Black guy who tends to have little patience for the performative signaling of rich white progressives, the dolls felt like yet another eye-roll-worthy gesture. And this irritation was no doubt related to my own anxiety that a similar fate awaited me: filling a playroom with multiracial toys and books in a desperate attempt to introduce diversity into a place that has everything except people with different skin tones. Now that I have a child on the way, this anxiety has real stakes. As Thomas Chatterton Williams has [*observed*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/09/17/magazine/black-white-family-race.html), perhaps nothing helps one see the tortuous logic of race in America like the prospect of raising a biracial child.

Some of the first studies to examine racism in childhood development in the late 19th century focused on how children view dolls positively or negatively based on the toy’s skin color. As the historian Ibram X. Kendi [*has noted*](https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2022/07/doll-test-history-racial-segregation-toy-diversity/638442/), so-called [*doll tests*](https://www.nytimes.com/2014/05/07/upshot/how-an-experiment-with-dolls-helped-lead-to-school-integration.html) played a prominent role in [*Brown v. Board of Education*](https://caselaw.findlaw.com/court/us-supreme-court/347/483.html) as evidence of segregation’s ills. More contemporary research has shown that infants can develop racial preferences [*by 3 months*](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2566511/) and biases [*by 6 months*](https://www.utoronto.ca/news/racial-bias-may-begin-babies-six-months-u-t-research-reveals#:~:text=Latest%20news-,Racial%20bias%20may%20begin%20in%20babies%20at%20six,U%20of%20T%20research%20reveals&amp;text=U%20of%20T%20Professor%20Kang,to%20nine%20months%20of%20age.) and that anti-Black sentiments continue to ossify [*in early childhood*](https://www.cbc.ca/news/science/racial-bias-children-1.4422812).

The question, of course, is what to do with this information.

A growing cadre of antiracism-parenting gurus have attempted to provide an answer. While so-called [*gentle parenting*](https://www.thecut.com/2023/03/is-gentle-parenting-effective.html) approaches have received plenty of media attention — [*and scrutiny*](https://www.ft.com/content/91918955-db14-4327-bda5-ab776926d15a) — as of late, considerably less attention has been paid to another popular trend that we might call social justice parenting: a set of emerging parenting philosophies that see children as dangerously permeable to prejudice and that insist that antiracism counterprogramming must begin in the cradle.

Social justice parenting starts from [*evidence-based*](https://developingchild.harvard.edu/resources/racism-and-ecd/) foundations. But as with other offshoots of antiracism, it has increasingly devolved into [*a self-help program*](https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2021/09/martin-learning-in-public-diangelo-nice-racism/619497/) for wealthy white progressives. The discourse has become a grab bag — and, one suspects, a [*cash grab*](https://www.bostonglobe.com/2023/09/20/metro/following-layoffs-boston-university-announces-inquiry-into-ibram-kendis-antiracist-center/) — where serious research mingles with [*New Age sloganeering*](https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2023/08/anti-racist-color-blindness-dei-programs/674996/) and self-care practices designed to soothe the troubled souls of guilty liberals.

While the [*summer of racial reckoning*](https://www.npr.org/2020/08/16/902179773/summer-of-racial-reckoning-the-match-lit) in 2020 led to a glut of antiracism books, workshops and speaker events, in recent years the focus has been less on the corporation and more on the cradle. Dr. Kendi, contemporary antiracism’s [*embattled*](https://www.bostonglobe.com/2023/09/21/metro/i-had-take-long-view-ibram-x-kendi-defends-management-embattled-research-center/) chief architect, has increasingly turned his attention to children, producing an [*antiracism parenting guide*](https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/671925/how-to-raise-an-antiracist-by-ibram-x-kendi/), [*children’s books*](https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/624775/goodnight-racism-by-ibram-x-kendi-illustrated-by-cbabi-bayoc/) and [*a graphic novel*](https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/665573/stamped-from-the-beginning-by-ibram-x-kendi-and-joel-christian-gill/) for teenagers. Last year, Britt Hawthorne’s “[*Raising Antiracist Children*](https://www.simonandschuster.com/books/Raising-Antiracist-Children/Britt-Hawthorne/9781982185428)” also became a surprise best seller.

The genre only continues to balloon. Books with titles like “[*Social Justice Parenting*](https://www.harpercollins.com/products/social-justice-parenting-traci-baxley?variant=40615429341218),” “[*Woke Parenting*](https://microcosmpublishing.com/catalog/books/12923): Raising Intersectional Feminist, Empathic, Engaged, and Generally Non-Shitty Kids” and “[*Rainbow Parenting*](https://us.macmillan.com/books/9781250836489/rainbowparenting): Your Guide to Raising Queer Kids and Their Allies” now jockey with gentle-parenting guides for pride of place in the parenting sections of chichi bookstores. They all promise to teach parents how to raise justice-oriented children.

While my own mother had to scour central Pennsylvania in the early 1990s for children’s books with multiracial characters, today progressive parents of all races mostly have it better. Diverse children’s books and toys are more common and easier to find — there are even [*dedicated search engines*](https://diversebookfinder.org/) devoted to this task — and Black history and holidays like Juneteenth are widely (if imperfectly) celebrated by the public.

Yet I can’t help also feeling that as American culture has become more racially progressive, it’s become more pathological about race. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the world of social justice parenting.

The Enlightenment philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau [*argued*](https://www.amazon.com/Emile-Education-Jean-Jacques-Rousseau/dp/0140445633) that children are “gentle, quiet characters” who possess an “early innocence” that must be shielded from society’s corruptions. It is this same prelapsarian belief in the innocence of infancy that animates social justice parenting. Dr. Kendi leans on research that shows that prejudice is not innate but learned. To protect children from becoming racists, he argues, [*it is important*](https://www.pnas.org/doi/10.1073/pnas.2209129119) to talk to them about race and racism early. He also asserts that we must racially “childproof” — which is to say, diversify — our children’s books and toys as well as our friend groups.

The big-picture guidance offered by him and others often makes a good deal of sense. The problem is that the guidance doesn’t stop there: Social justice parenting gurus also tend to espouse strange and at times unsettling beliefs that encourage children of all races to become obsessed with Blackness and to view whiteness as a kind of cultural cancer.

A common theme across many antiracism parenting books is the importance of teaching your child to identify microgradations in skin tone and hair texture. In “Raising Antiracist Children,” Ms. Hawthorne [*recommends*](https://britthawthorne.com/blog/diverse-skin-tones/) that parents acculturate children to recognize and label the many distinct colors of Black and brown skin, offering a typology like “red clay brown” and “pinecone brown.” She calls this phenotype introduction and provides helpful instructions for teaching children racial phenotypes by having them make “skin-tone play dough.”

As an academic with expertise in the history of science, I am struck by just how much overlap there is between social justice parenting’s fixation on phenotypes and that found in 19th- and early-20th-century race science, lending credence to John McWhorter’s observation that antiracism might be better understood as a kind of [*“neoracism”*](https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/696856/woke-racism-by-john-mcwhorter/) that peddles new forms of [*race essentialism*](https://www.newstatesman.com/politics/society/2023/05/against-race-essentialism) under the guise of liberation.

For decades, Black Americans fought against not just legal discrimination and state violence but also persistent exoticism within American culture. There are elements of social justice parenting and its “skin-tone play dough” that feel to me like a 21st-century version of [*blaxploitation*](https://www.theguardian.com/film/2018/jan/11/blaxploitation-shaft-foxy-brown-film) — another cultural effulgence that occupied a fuzzy boundary between genuinely celebrating Blackness and fueling fetishistic white obsessions with racial difference. It’s the same ambiguity that gripped me at that open house as I wondered whether a tidy row of Black dolls was an antiracism teaching tool, a racial curio or somehow both at once.

After reading hundreds of pages of social justice parenting advice, I’m struck by the unmistakable feeling that these books were not written for me or my family. As these experts sometimes admit, their target audience is affluent white moms, not light-skinned Black dads who grew up ***working class*** and are trying to figure out how to raise an even lighter-skinned son. That book has yet to be written.

So until then, I’ll buy some Black toys and some white ones. I’ll explain that people come in different colors and that they’re not always treated the same. I’ll try not to be weird about it. In the absence of an alternative, I’ll settle for doing my best.

Tyler Austin Harper is an assistant professor of environmental studies at Bates College.

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[***Symbol of the U.S. Political Rift This Century: A College Degree***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:63JV-6W81-JBG3-60CX-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; National Desk; Pg. 1; NEWS ANALYSIS

**Length:** 1488 words

**Byline:** By Nate Cohn

**Body**

College graduates are now a firmly Democratic bloc, and they are shaping the party's future. Those without degrees, by contrast, have flocked to Republicans.

The front lines of America's cultural clashes have shifted in recent years. A vigorous wave of progressive activism has helped push the country's culture to the left, inspiring a conservative backlash against everything from ''critical race theory'' to the supposed cancellation of Dr. Seuss.

These skirmishes may be different in substance from those that preceded them, but in the broadest sense they are only the latest manifestation of a half-century trend: the realignment of American politics along cultural and educational lines, and away from the class and income divisions that defined the two parties for much of the 20th century.

As they've grown in numbers, college graduates have instilled increasingly liberal cultural norms while gaining the power to nudge the Democratic Party to the left. Partly as a result, large portions of the party's traditional ***working-class*** base have defected to the Republicans.

Over the longer run, some Republicans even fantasize that the rise of educational polarization might begin to erode the Democratic advantage among voters of color without a college degree. Perhaps a similar phenomenon may help explain how Donald J. Trump, who mobilized racial animus for political gain, nonetheless fared better among voters of color than previous Republicans did, and fared worse among white voters.

President Biden won about 60 percent of college-educated voters in 2020, including an outright majority of white college graduates, helping him run up the score in affluent suburbs and putting him over the top in pivotal states.

This was a significant voting bloc: Overall, 41 percent of people who cast ballots last year were four-year college graduates, according to census estimates. By contrast, just 5 percent of voters in 1952 were college graduates, according to that year's American National Elections Study.

Yet even as college graduates have surged in numbers and grown increasingly liberal, Democrats are no stronger than they were 10, 30 or even 50 years ago. Instead, rising Democratic strength among college graduates and voters of color has been counteracted by a nearly equal and opposite reaction among white voters without a degree.

When the Harvard-educated John F. Kennedy narrowly won the presidency in 1960, he won white voters without a degree but lost white college graduates by a two-to-one margin. The numbers were almost exactly reversed for Mr. Biden, who lost white voters without a degree by a two-to-one margin while winning white college graduates.

About 27 percent of Mr. Biden's supporters in 2020 were white voters without a college degree, according to Pew Research, down from the nearly 60 percent of Bill Clinton's supporters who were whites without a degree just 28 years earlier. The changing demographic makeup of the Democrats has become a self-fulfilling dynamic, in which the growing power of liberal college graduates helps alienate ***working-class*** voters, leaving college graduates as an even larger share of the party.

The Democratic advantage among college graduates may be a new phenomenon, but the relative liberalism of college graduates is not. College graduates have been far likelier than voters without a college degree to self-identify as liberal for decades, even when they were likelier to vote Republican.

College graduates attribute racial inequality, crime and poverty to complex structural and systemic problems, while voters without a degree tend to focus on individualist and parochial explanations. It is easier for college graduates, with their higher levels of affluence, to vote on their values, not simply on economic self-interest. They are likelier to have high levels of social trust and to be open to new experiences. They are less likely to believe in God.

The rise of cultural liberalism is not simply a product of rising college attendance. In fact, there is only equivocal evidence that college attendance makes people vastly more liberal. Far from the indoctrination that conservatives fear, liberal college professors appear to preach to an already liberal choir.

But it is hard to imagine the last half-century of liberal cultural change without the role played by universities and academia, which helped inspire everything from the student movements and New Left of the 1960s to the ideas behind today's fights over ''critical race theory.'' The concentration of so many left-leaning students and professors on campus helped foster a new liberal culture with more progressive ideas and norms than would have otherwise existed.

''If you live in a community which is more liberal, there's a self-reinforcing ratcheting effect,'' said Pippa Norris, a professor and political scientist at the Harvard Kennedy School who believes that the rise of higher education contributed to the rise of social liberalism throughout the postindustrial world.

As college graduates increased their share of the electorate, they gradually began to force the Democrats to accommodate their interests and values. They punched above their electoral weight, since they make up a disproportionate number of the journalists, politicians, activists and poll respondents who most directly influence the political process.

At the same time, the party's old industrial ***working-class*** base was in decline, as were the unions and machine bosses who once had the power to connect the party's politicians to its rank and file. The party had little choice but to broaden its appeal, and it adopted the views of college-educated voters on nearly every issue, slowly if fitfully alienating its old ***working-class*** base.

Republicans opened their doors to traditionally Democratic conservative-leaning voters who were aggrieved by the actions and perceived excesses of the new, college-educated left. This G.O.P. push began, and continues in some ways today, with the so-called Southern strategy -- leveraging racial divisions and ''states' rights'' to appeal to white voters.

The reasons for white ***working-class*** alienation with the Democrats have shifted from decade to decade. At times, nearly every major issue area -- race, religion, war, environmentalism, guns, trade, immigration, sexuality, crime, social welfare programs -- has been a source of Democratic woes.

What the Democratic Party's positions on these very different issues have had in common is that they reflected the views of college-educated liberals, even when in conflict with the apparent interests of ***working-class*** voters -- and that they alienated some number of white voters without a degree. Environmentalists demanded regulations on the coal industry; coal miners bolted from the Democrats. Suburban voters supported an assault gun ban; gun owners shifted to the Republicans. Business interests supported free trade agreements; old manufacturing towns broke for Mr. Trump.

A similar process may be beginning to unfold among Hispanic voters. The 2020 election was probably the first presidential contest in which the Democratic candidate fared better among voters of color who graduated from college than among those without a degree. Mr. Trump made large gains among voters of color without degrees, especially Latino ones. The causes of his surge are still being debated, but one leading theory is that he was aided by a backlash against the ideas and language of the college-educated left, including activist calls to ''defund the police.''

For some Republicans, Mr. Trump's gains have raised the possibility that it may be easier to appeal to ***working-class*** voters of color.

''It doesn't seem quite as big of a bridge to cross as saying, 'Let's go back and win white suburbanites,''' said Patrick Ruffini, a Republican pollster who is writing a book on how the party might build a multiracial coalition.

True or not, it's a view that can become a self-fulfilling prophecy if it leads Republicans to adopt strategies aimed at making it a reality.

There is no guarantee that the rising liberalism of the Democratic primary electorate or college graduates will continue. The wave of activism in the 1960s gave way to a relatively conservative generation of college graduates in the late '70s and early '80s. Perhaps something similar will happen today.

What can be guaranteed is that the college-educated share of the population -- and the electorate -- will continue to increase for the foreseeable future.

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[*https://www.nytimes.com/2021/09/08/us/politics/how-college-graduates-vote.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/09/08/us/politics/how-college-graduates-vote.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: Students in Berkeley, Calif., last month. Only 5 percent of voters in 1952 were college graduates. (PHOTOGRAPH BY JIM WILSON/THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A10)

**Load-Date:** September 9, 2021

**End of Document**



[***How Educational Differences Are Widening America’s Political Rift; News Analysis***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:63JM-K501-DXY4-X1TM-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Byline:** Nate Cohn

**Highlight:** College graduates are now a firmly Democratic bloc, and they are shaping the party’s future. Those without degrees, by contrast, have flocked to Republicans.

**Body**

College graduates are now a firmly Democratic bloc, and they are shaping the party’s future. Those without degrees, by contrast, have flocked to Republicans.

The front lines of America’s cultural clashes have shifted in recent years. A vigorous wave of progressive activism has helped push the country’s culture to the left, inspiring a conservative backlash against everything from “critical race theory” to [*the supposed cancellation of Dr. Seuss*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/03/04/books/dr-seuss-books.html).

These skirmishes may be different in substance from those that preceded them, but in the broadest sense they are only the latest manifestation of a half-century trend: the realignment of American politics along cultural and educational lines, and away from the class and income divisions that defined the two parties for much of the 20th century.

As they’ve grown in numbers, [*college graduates*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/10/08/business/economy/college-graduates-jobs.html) have instilled increasingly liberal cultural norms while gaining the power to nudge the Democratic Party to the left. Partly as a result, large portions of the party’s traditional ***working-class*** base have defected to the Republicans.

Over the longer run, some Republicans even fantasize that the rise of educational polarization might begin to erode the Democratic advantage among voters of color without a college degree. Perhaps a similar phenomenon may help explain how Donald J. Trump, who mobilized racial animus for political gain, nonetheless fared better among voters of color than previous Republicans did, and fared [*worse among white voters*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/06/30/us/politics/pew-election-2020.html).

President Biden won about [*60 percent*](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1GIovkPfwUJvFZeFPdOi0fK8Rr7aOVFCYBzrlMG4Vjro/edit#gid=0) of college-educated voters in 2020, including an outright majority of white [*college graduates*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/10/08/business/economy/college-graduates-jobs.html), helping him run up the score in affluent suburbs and putting him over the top in pivotal states.

This was a significant voting bloc: Overall, 41 percent of people who cast ballots last year were four-year college graduates, according to [*census estimates*](https://www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/voting-and-registration/p20-585.html). By contrast, just 5 percent of voters [*in 1952*](https://electionstudies.org/data-center/1952-time-series-study/) were college graduates, according to that year’s American National Elections Study.

Yet even as college graduates have surged in numbers and grown increasingly liberal, Democrats are no stronger than they were 10, 30 or even 50 years ago. Instead, rising Democratic strength among college graduates and voters of color has been counteracted by a nearly equal and opposite reaction among white voters without a degree.

When the Harvard-educated John F. Kennedy narrowly won the presidency in 1960, he won white voters without a degree but lost white college graduates by a two-to-one margin. The numbers were almost exactly reversed for Mr. Biden, who lost white voters without a degree by a two-to-one margin while winning white college graduates.

About 27 percent of Mr. Biden’s supporters in 2020 were white voters without a college degree, [*according to Pew Research*](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1GIovkPfwUJvFZeFPdOi0fK8Rr7aOVFCYBzrlMG4Vjro/edit#gid=0), down from the nearly 60 percent of Bill Clinton’s supporters who were whites without a degree just 28 years earlier. The changing demographic makeup of the Democrats has become a self-fulfilling dynamic, in which the growing power of liberal college graduates helps alienate ***working-class*** voters, leaving college graduates as an even larger share of the party.

The Democratic advantage among college graduates may be a new phenomenon, but the relative liberalism of college graduates is not. College graduates have been far likelier than voters without a college degree to self-identify as liberal for decades, even when they were likelier to vote Republican.

College graduates attribute racial inequality, crime and poverty to complex structural and systemic problems, while voters without a degree tend to focus on individualist and parochial explanations. It is easier for college graduates, with their higher levels of affluence, to vote on their values, not simply on economic self-interest. They are likelier to have high levels of social trust and to be open to new experiences. They are less likely to believe in God.

The rise of cultural liberalism is not simply a product of rising college attendance. In fact, there is only [*equivocal evidence*](https://www.nytimes.com/2012/03/04/opinion/sunday/college-doesnt-make-you-liberal.html) that college attendance makes people vastly more liberal. Far from the indoctrination that conservatives fear, liberal college professors appear to preach to an already liberal choir.

But it is hard to imagine the last half-century of liberal cultural change without the role played by universities and academia, which helped inspire everything from the student movements and New Left of the 1960s to the ideas behind [*today’s fights over “critical race theory.”*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/06/01/us/politics/critical-race-theory.html) The concentration of so many left-leaning students and professors on campus helped foster a new liberal culture with more progressive ideas and norms than would have otherwise existed.

“If you live in a community which is more liberal, there’s a self-reinforcing ratcheting effect,” said Pippa Norris, a professor and political scientist at the Harvard Kennedy School who believes that the rise of higher education contributed to the rise of social liberalism throughout the postindustrial world.

As college graduates increased their share of the electorate, they gradually began to force the Democrats to accommodate their interests and values. They punched above their electoral weight, since they make up a disproportionate number of the journalists, politicians, activists and poll respondents who most directly influence the political process.

At the same time, the party’s old industrial ***working-class*** base was in decline, as were the unions and machine bosses who once had the power to connect the party’s politicians to its rank and file. The party had little choice but to broaden its appeal, and it adopted the views of college-educated voters on nearly every issue, slowly if fitfully alienating its old ***working-class*** base.

Republicans opened their doors to traditionally Democratic conservative-leaning voters who were aggrieved by the actions and perceived excesses of the new, college-educated left. This G.O.P. push began, and continues in some ways today, with the so-called Southern strategy — leveraging racial divisions and “states’ rights” to appeal to white voters.

The reasons for white ***working-class*** alienation with the Democrats have shifted from decade to decade. At times, nearly every major issue area — race, religion, war, environmentalism, guns, trade, immigration, sexuality, crime, social welfare programs — has been a source of Democratic woes.

What the Democratic Party’s positions on these very different issues have had in common is that they reflected the views of college-educated liberals, even when in conflict with the apparent interests of ***working-class*** voters — and that they alienated some number of white voters without a degree. Environmentalists demanded regulations on the coal industry; coal miners bolted from the Democrats. Suburban voters supported an assault gun ban; gun owners shifted to the Republicans. Business interests supported free trade agreements; old manufacturing towns broke for Mr. Trump.

A similar process may be beginning to unfold among Hispanic voters. The 2020 election was probably the first presidential contest in which the Democratic candidate fared better among voters of color who graduated from college than among those without a degree. Mr. Trump made large gains among voters of color without degrees, especially Latino ones. The causes of his surge are still being debated, but one leading theory is that he was aided by a backlash against the ideas and language of the college-educated left, including activist calls to “defund the police.”

For some Republicans, Mr. Trump’s gains have raised the possibility that it may be easier to appeal to ***working-class*** voters of color.

“It doesn’t seem quite as big of a bridge to cross as saying, ‘Let’s go back and win white suburbanites,’” said Patrick Ruffini, a Republican pollster who is writing a book on how the party might build a multiracial coalition.

True or not, it’s a view that can become a self-fulfilling prophecy if it leads Republicans to adopt strategies aimed at making it a reality.

There is no guarantee that the rising liberalism of the Democratic primary electorate or college graduates will continue. The wave of activism in the 1960s gave way to a relatively conservative generation of college graduates in the late ’70s and early ’80s. Perhaps something similar will happen today.

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PHOTO: Students in Berkeley, Calif., last month. Only 5 percent of voters in 1952 were college graduates. (PHOTOGRAPH BY JIM WILSON/THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A10)

**Load-Date:** October 8, 2021

**End of Document**



[***Top Schools Are Familiar in Rankings That Rankle***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:687C-8HC1-DXY4-X4CF-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

May 14, 2023 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; National Desk; Pg. 23

**Length:** 690 words

**Byline:** By Stephanie Saul

**Body**

The Latest: The 2023-24 rankings are out.

U.S. News & World Report finally released its annual rankings of top law and medical schools on Thursday, after boycotts by those institutions, disputes over methodology, and a delay of weeks.

A few law schools shuffled positions, but the ones at the top of the new list were familiar -- Stanford, Yale, Chicago, Duke, Harvard and New York University.

Yale, which was the first to boycott, retained its No. 1 position, though in a tie this year with Stanford. Columbia, which also participated in the boycott, dropped to eighth place from fourth.

There were some big shifts among the lower ranks, as a result of a new methodology. Wake Forest in North Carolina jumped 15 spots to be tied at No. 22, from No. 37 last year. Texas Tech and Marquette University both moved up 34 points and are tied for No. 71.

Among medical schools, most that were in the top 10 list for research last year remained there in 2023-24.

The top three medical schools are Harvard, Johns Hopkins and the University of Pennsylvania. Joining the top ten: Vanderbilt, Weill Cornell and Washington University in St. Louis.

New York University dropped to No. 10 from No. 2 last year.

Background: Many top schools have boycotted U.S. News.

After criticizing U.S. News's rankings for years, many elite law and medical schools decided to boycott the 2023-24 rankings by refusing to hand over data, saying that the rankings were unreliable and unfair, skewing education priorities.

Yale Law School said that the U.S. News methodology did not give enough weight to programs ''that support public interest careers, champion need-based aid, and welcome ***working-class*** students into the profession.'' As a result, Yale argued, the rankings effectively penalized law schools that emphasize that work, and deterred others from focusing on that work.

Faced with several dozen schools declining to participate, U.S. News went on a listening tour last year to develop a new methodology. For law schools, fully 58 percent of a school's ranking is now based on outcomes -- how many graduating students pass the bar and get jobs -- a substantial increase from prior years.

The new ranking of medical schools for research also used new methodology, and included an evaluation of faculty resources, the academic achievements of entering students and research productivity.

U.S. News said that for the law and medical schools that declined to provide data, it filled in the blanks using publicly available information.

Despite the overhaul, an early preview of the 2023-24 rankings, released on April 21, ran into another wave of criticism, prompting a delay in the release of the final list.

Why It Matters: The rankings are influential for both students and employers.

Many organizations rank colleges and universities, but the U.S. News rankings are probably the most widely followed. Students across the country use the rankings to help them choose schools, and employers consider the rankings when they hire graduates.

Those factors make the rankings especially important for many lesser-known schools. They invest time and money in improving their showing on the metrics that U.S. News values -- for instance, admissions test scores, faculty-to-student ratios, class sizes and post-graduation employment.

What's Next: The new rankings are unlikely to placate critics.

With some schools experiencing turbulent swings in their ratings from year to year, critics have questioned whether the U.S. News list has any real meaning.

In a message posted on his school's website, Stephen C. Payne, dean of the Columbus School of Law at Catholic University of America, said the new methodology penalized his school -- which fell to No. 122 from No. 94 -- partly by giving more weight to the number of graduates who pass the bar examination in their first try.

''The dramatic changes in the calculations of this year's rankings have produced some wild swing and strange results,'' Mr. Payne wrote, adding that ''the specific spot of a given school in the rankings seems to provide little useful information to prospective students.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/11/us/us-news-rankings-law-medical-schools.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/11/us/us-news-rankings-law-medical-schools.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: Yale Law School, which led the boycott of the U.S. News rankings, is at the top again in 2023, though tied with Stanford. (PHOTOGRAPH BY CHRISTOPHER CAPOZZIELLO FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A23.

**Load-Date:** May 14, 2023

**End of Document**



[***'Like Being Shot Out of a Cannon'***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B24-GTY1-DXY4-X056-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

January 7, 2024 Sunday

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**Length:** 2458 words

**Byline:** By Kyle Buchanan

**Body**

In college, Lily Gladstone studied the history of Native American actors in Hollywood. Now, she's making it.

The 37-year-old actress has been checking off all sorts of awards-season firsts thanks to ''Killers of the Flower Moon,'' the Martin Scorsese-directed period drama in which she plays Mollie Burkhart, an Osage woman whose relatives are systematically murdered by her husband (Leonardo DiCaprio) and his uncle (Robert De Niro) in a bid to seize her family's oil-rich Oklahoma land. If Mollie is the movie's conscience, Gladstone is its center of gravity: Even when she shares scenes with A-listers like DiCaprio and De Niro, the film bends to her.

That portrayal has so far earned Gladstone a best-actress win from the New York Film Critics Circle and nominations from the Golden Globes and Critics Choice Awards, and major nods from the Screen Actors Guild and the Academy Awards are likely to come in the weeks ahead. In the run-up to those ceremonies, Gladstone has been a hotly pursued presence for round tables and events on both coasts, and she's taken to those opportunities with such command -- using her platform to amplify other Native voices and concerns -- that you'd never know that she wasn't used to this, or that for a long time, she was hesitant to engage with Hollywood at all.

''There's a handful of people who love film that have been aware of my career for a while, but this has been like being shot out of a cannon,'' Gladstone said, tracing the far-flung route that has led her to all those awards-show ballrooms. ''My dad's a boilermaker, my mom was a teacher. I was raised on a reservation, went to public school. It's a very normal, sort of ***working-class*** upbringing in one way, and in another way, I'm just a rez girl.''

Onscreen, Gladstone has the profile and indomitable presence of a 1940s film star. In person, when we met last month at a rooftop restaurant in Beverly Hills, Gladstone was more approachable but every bit as striking, with vivid brown eyes that her father once warned her were eminently readable. He said this mostly to dissuade her from telling lies, but he was right: When we feel for Mollie, it's because of the fear and righteous indignation that Gladstone can convey in just a look.

She also has a wry sense of humor, glimpsed in some of the Scorsese film's lighter moments, and an ability to punctuate her conversation topics and awards-season speeches with an impressive command of history and facts. ''Lily is a big nerd wrapped up in this very giving, curious person,'' said the director Erica Tremblay, whose film ''Fancy Dance'' starred Gladstone. ''If you're at a dinner party with Lily, you're going to find yourself talking about physics and bumblebees -- and when I say she'll be talking about physics, she'll be talking about some very specific theory that Lily will know the mechanics of inside and out.''

At an Elle event in December celebrating women in Hollywood, Gladstone was honored alongside the likes of Jennifer Lopez, America Ferrera and Jodie Foster, but she particularly sparked to meeting the academic Stacy L. Smith, whose University of Southern California think tank, the Annenberg Inclusion Initiative, had recently issued a report about Native American representation in Hollywood. After analyzing 1,600 films released from 2007 to 2022, Smith found that the amount of speaking roles for Native American actors was virtually nil, less than one quarter of 1 percent of all the roles cataloged.

A leading role like Gladstone's in a film the size of ''Killers'' isn't just unusual, it's unprecedented, so much so that Smith subtitled her report, ''The Lily Gladstone Effect.'' Gladstone can hardly wrap her head around that recognition. ''It's the kind of paper that if I were a student now taking the same class, I would be citing in my studies,'' she said.

For DiCaprio, Gladstone has more than earned the plaudits. ''To see her rise to this occasion and be somebody that's so formidable as far as understanding the depth of her own industry and Native American history, it's an incredible moment to be a part of,'' he said in a phone call. ''I'm just glad to be next to her.''

To tout his co-star, DiCaprio has been a willing participant in the sort of red-carpet photo opportunities and awards-season parties he'd normally eschew. ''It's insane,'' Gladstone said. ''It's like I'm trotting this mythical creature around, out and about, and he's doing so of his own volition.'' The ante was upped even further when Gladstone learned that her favorite actress, Cate Blanchett, would conduct a Q. and A. with her after ''Killers'' screened in London. ''I'm hugging myself right now, I know your readers can't see that,'' she told me.

Gladstone acknowledged that sometimes, the intensity of the awards-season spotlight can feel overwhelming. ''I can't speak from the heart if I'm not connected to what's real about all this,'' she said. In those moments, she endeavors to carry her community forward with her: ''I know that all of this attention on me right now means so much more than just me.''

In other words, don't expect Gladstone to come out of this experience transformed into a demanding Hollywood diva, as so many have before her. She can't be bowled over, onscreen or off.

''I've talked to a lot of people who know Lily Gladstone and have been friends with her for a long time and seen this journey, and she is so steadfast and so immovable in terms of her values and her core,'' Tremblay said. ''I think she'll be exactly the same, but with fancier clothes.''

AS A CHILD growing up on the Blackfeet Reservation in northwestern Montana, there was one week that Gladstone looked forward to all year, when the Missoula Children's Theater would roll up in a little red truck, construct a set out of P.V.C. pipes and cloth backdrops, and cast local kids in a production that the whole community would come out to see at the end of the week. ''I was bullied a lot when I was a kid, partly because I was just goofy,'' Gladstone said. ''But that one week a year is when I was cool.''

In the group's production of ''Cinderella,'' the young Gladstone decided to play her ugly stepsister as if she were Roseanne Barr, studying how to walk and talk like the comedian. It was a lightning-strike moment when she realized that a little bit of craft could go a long way.

''Somebody picked up on that in the audience and said, 'She's funnier than Roseanne,''' Gladstone said. ''And my parents reminded me that somebody there from our community said, 'We're going to see her at the Oscars one day,' just from that.''

Performing has always been Gladstone's true north, the place to which her inner compass is most attuned. She remembers watching ''Return of the Jedi'' at 5 and feeling such a strong desire to be an Ewok that she knew someday, she'd be on the other side of the screen. Similarly obsessed with ''The Nutcracker,'' Gladstone signed up for ballet, which she assumed would be the big performative outlet in her life until the body shaming became too tough to take: ''Not just weight, but things like, 'Your middle toe is too long,''' she said. ''I'm like, 'Hey, my grandma gave me that middle toe!'''

But even in ballet class, instructors told her she was a natural-born actress, less concerned with nailing movements than with communicating a character. In her teenage years, when Gladstone's family moved from Montana to the sometimes alienating suburbs of Seattle, she plunged fully into performance, acting in off-campus plays and auditioning for independent films. During her senior year, fellow students voted her ''Most Likely to Win an Oscar.'' They could already tell that acting was something she lived and breathed.

''It gave me an identity when my identity was forming and reforming,'' she said. ''Being known as an actress felt good even when I wasn't working, even before I got my SAG card, when people asked what I did: 'Yeah, I'm working at Staples right now, but I'm an actress.'''

In her 20s, many of Gladstone's actor friends moved to New York or Los Angeles, but she was reluctant to follow suit. ''I knew if I came to L.A. and was doing audition after audition, it would be really difficult for me,'' she said. ''And I knew how easily my love of ballet had been shot down by these boxes that I couldn't fit in, so I was like, 'I'm going to protect this a little bit.'''

The boxes in Hollywood can be pernicious, and Gladstone is still wary of them. ''I know myself and I know I'm difficult to cast,'' she said. ''I'm kind of 'mid' in a lot of ways.'' Gladstone hastened to add that she didn't mean ''mid'' like meh, dismissively as Gen Z uses it. Instead, she meant the word quite literally. She is in-between, hard to place, neither this nor that. Part of it is that she's mixed-race: Her father is Blackfeet and Nez Perce, her mother white. But there is another part, too.

''It's kind of being middle-gendered, I guess,'' said Gladstone, who uses both ''she'' and ''they'' pronouns. ''I've always known I'm comfortable claiming being a woman, but I never feel more than when I'm in a group of all women that I'm not fully this either.''

She recalled a heartfelt moment at Elle's Women in Hollywood event when Jodie Foster told the nonbinary ''The Last of Us'' actor Bella Ramsey that the room was full of supportive sisters. ''That's wonderful and that's true,'' Gladstone said, but afterward she went up to Ramsey to ''introduce myself and let them know, 'You also have siblings here, too.'''

Instead of moving to Hollywood, where she might have been prodded into walking a narrower path, Gladstone spent her postgraduate years in Montana, doing theater and renting out basements with like-minded performers just to make something. Working in independent films and Native-centric productions allowed her to qualify for the Screen Actors Guild without ever having to move her home base, and a breakthrough role in Kelly Reichardt's 2016 indie ''Certain Women'' raised her profile considerably. Still, the mega-budgeted ''Killers of the Flower Moon'' represents a comparative quantum leap: Though Gladstone was unsure about coming to Hollywood, in the end, Hollywood came to her.

It's a heady thing to go from semi-known to perceived on a major scale, as Gladstone found out during the film's mammoth Cannes Film Festival premiere in May, when photos of her walking the red carpet with DiCaprio were beamed all over the world. But the actual premiere of ''Killers'' in October provided an unexpected respite, since the actors' strike at the time prevented Gladstone from promoting it.

A silver lining was the number of Osage people who instead spoke at the movie's premiere, enjoying the sort of red-carpet moments that would have typically gone to the film's striking actors. Watching them discuss and debate ''Killers'' reminded Gladstone that she was raised to listen to her elders, and the strike-imposed silence provided the perfect opportunity to collect her thoughts and reflect.

''There's a level of ego that is wrapped up with being a public person speaking for other people, and a level of ego it takes being an actor, too,'' she said. ''So I think it was a real gift to be able to sit there and have another reminder that this is way bigger than me.''

She spent the film's opening day on a picket line in Times Square, marching back and forth in the rain near the New York headquarters of Paramount Pictures, the studio that distributed ''Killers'' with Apple. ''It was a little bit of my contrarian nature to choose Paramount that day,'' Gladstone admitted with a grin. Later, while dining at an Italian restaurant in the city, a couple sitting next to her asked if she was Lily Gladstone from ''Killers of the Flower Moon.'' It was the first time she felt permission to own it.

''I was like, 'Yes, I am. Today, I am Lily Gladstone.''' Months later, recounting the story, she was still beaming.

IF GLADSTONE IS nominated for a best actress Academy Award on Jan. 23, she'll be the first Native American contender in that category. With a win, she'd become the first Native performer to earn a competitive acting Oscar.

Still, it's one thing for Hollywood to celebrate underrepresented actors, and a whole other thing to actually provide for them afterward. Academy members were moved to vote for recent winners like Troy Kotsur (''CODA'') and Ke Huy Quan (''Everything Everywhere All at Once'') in part because of their inspiring personal narratives, but follow-up projects on par with their winning films can be hard to come by. DiCaprio hopes that Gladstone's breakthrough year will finally change things.

''I think she realizes that this really is a historical moment,'' he said. ''I know she has a plethora of other stories that she wants to tell, and I want her to be given those opportunities.''

Whatever this season has in store, Gladstone is ready to make the most of it. At a recent Academy Museum gala, the Oscar-winning actress Jennifer Connelly asked to meet Gladstone and wondered whether the demands of campaigning had already run her ragged. Gladstone was surprised to find herself replying that so far, she was doing just fine: ''Maybe it says something about me that I'm kind of enjoying all of this right now.''

The wider world appears invested in her success, too. After ''Killers'' received a standing ovation at Cannes, a clip of Gladstone's moved reaction to the applause earned millions of views. Why does she think that video went viral, with so many excited commenters predicting the Oscar glory that now appears within reach?

''I think people root for folks that come up from the grass roots having this global-stage moment, this dream coming true,'' she said. ''That's something that I wish on everybody at some point in their lives, in whatever form that takes, and also for Native people.''

Gladstone confessed that she had watched the Cannes clip ''about a thousand times'' since the premiere: ''It's a moment of transcendence that was wonderful to have captured.'' But the moment was about more than just her own time in the spotlight: She recalled the way her Native co-star William Belleau let out a whooping war cry during the ovation and how the applause for the women playing her sisters -- Cara Jade Myers, JaNae Collins and Jillian Dion -- prompted Gladstone to let out a trilling lele. It wasn't just a celebration. It was a release.

''Whatever that oppressive system is that sometimes develops with colonial governments, that moment of transcendence for all of us, those are the healing moments,'' Gladstone said. ''Those are the ones that show people very clearly that we're still here and we're excellent. We've survived and we're just soaring now.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/06/movies/lily-gladstone-killers-of-the-flower-moon.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/06/movies/lily-gladstone-killers-of-the-flower-moon.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: PHOTO (PHOTOGRAPH BY THEA TRAFF FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (AR16)

Lily Gladstone and Leonardo DiCaprio in ''Killers of the Flower Moon,'' directed by Martin Scorsese. ''To see her rise to this occasion and be somebody that's so formidable as far as understanding the depth of her own industry and Native American history, it's an incredible moment to be a part of,'' DiCaprio said. (PHOTOGRAPH BY APPLE TV+) (AR19) This article appeared in print on page AR16, AR19.

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[***Brush With Royalty Caps Biden's Glamorous Week***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:670T-9831-DXY4-X55B-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** By Zolan Kanno-Youngs

**Body**

The president's brief encounter with Prince William of Wales came a day after the first state dinner of the Biden administration.

WASHINGTON -- President Biden met Prince William of Wales, the future king of Britain, for a gaze over the Boston harbor on Friday, capping an unusually glamorous week for a president who takes pride in the humble moniker of ''Scranton Joe.''

''What a spectacular setting,'' William told Mr. Biden as he arrived at the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum in Boston, where some locals bristled at the royals' three day tour.

The prince and his wife, Catherine, Princess of Wales, were in town to celebrate the Earthshot Prize, the award they created to encourage work addressing climate change.

Mr. Biden's brief encounter with the monarchy came a day after he rubbed shoulders with President Emmanuel Macron of France and his wife, Brigitte, over caviar and lobster at the first state dinner of the Biden administration.

But Mr. Biden, who was called ''Cher Joe'' by Mr. Macron on Thursday, much prefers to emphasize his ***working-class*** reputation. The son of a car salesman from Scranton, Pa., Mr. Biden kicked off his first presidential bid from the back of an Amtrak train and has long been a strong backer of labor unions.

Earlier on Friday, when he signed legislation to impose a labor agreement between rail companies and workers to avert a nationwide rail strike, Mr. Biden said the move was ''tough for me.''

''But it was the right thing to do at the moment,'' he added, ''to save jobs.''

Mr. Biden attended the funeral of William's grandmother, Queen Elizabeth II, in September, paying homage to a British monarch he had compared to his own mother.

After chatting with the prince, Mr. Biden made sure to nod to the blue-collar workers of the Bay State. He visited the University of Massachusetts Boston for a phone bank organized by the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers to support Senator Raphael Warnock of Georgia, a Democrat who is facing a runoff election against the Republican Herschel Walker.

''I'm tired of trickle-down economics,'' Mr. Biden said, singling out the Massachusetts senators, Elizabeth Warren and Edward J. Markey, both Democrats, as supporters of the middle class.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2022/12/02/us/politics/biden-prince-william.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/12/02/us/politics/biden-prince-william.html)

**Graphic**

This article appeared in print on page A11.

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**End of Document**



[***Lily Gladstone Won’t Let Hollywood Put Her in a Box; The Projectionist***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B1X-0XR1-JBG3-61G1-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** MOVIES

**Length:** 2501 words

**Highlight:** The “Killers of the Flower Moon” star says awards attention feels like “being shot out of a cannon.” For a long time, she’d kept her distance from the industry.

**Body**

In college, Lily Gladstone studied the history of Native American actors in Hollywood. Now, she’s making it.

The 37-year-old actress has been checking off all sorts of awards-season firsts thanks to “Killers of the Flower Moon,” the Martin Scorsese-directed period drama in which she plays Mollie Burkhart, an Osage woman whose relatives are systematically murdered by her husband (Leonardo DiCaprio) and his uncle (Robert De Niro) in a bid to seize her family’s oil-rich Oklahoma land. If Mollie is the movie’s conscience, Gladstone is its center of gravity: Even when she shares scenes with A-listers like DiCaprio and De Niro, the film bends to her.

That portrayal has so far earned Gladstone a best-actress win from the [*New York Film Critics Circle*](https://www.nyfcc.com/awards/) and nominations from the [*Golden Globes*](https://goldenglobes.com/nominations/2024) and [*Critics Choice Awards*](https://www.criticschoice.com/2023/12/13/film-nominations-announced-for-the-29th-annual-critics-choice-awards-hosted-by-chelsea-handler/), and major nods from the Screen Actors Guild and the Academy Awards are likely to come in the weeks ahead. In the run-up to those ceremonies, Gladstone has been a hotly pursued presence for round tables and events on both coasts, and she’s taken to those opportunities with such command — using her platform to amplify other Native voices and concerns — that you’d never know that she wasn’t used to this, or that for a long time, she was hesitant to engage with Hollywood at all.

“There’s a handful of people who love film that have been aware of my career for a while, but this has been like being shot out of a cannon,” Gladstone said, tracing the far-flung route that has led her to all those awards-show ballrooms. “My dad’s a boilermaker, my mom was a teacher. I was raised on a reservation, went to public school. It’s a very normal, sort of ***working-class*** upbringing in one way, and in another way, I’m just a rez girl.”

Onscreen, Gladstone has the profile and indomitable presence of a 1940s film star. In person, when we met last month at a rooftop restaurant in Beverly Hills, Gladstone was more approachable but every bit as striking, with vivid brown eyes that her father once warned her were eminently readable. He said this mostly to dissuade her from telling lies, but he was right: When we feel for Mollie, it’s because of the fear and righteous indignation that Gladstone can convey in just a look.

She also has a wry sense of humor, glimpsed in some of the Scorsese film’s lighter moments, and an ability to punctuate her conversation topics and awards-season speeches with an impressive command of history and facts. “Lily is a big nerd wrapped up in this very giving, curious person,” said the director Erica Tremblay, whose film “[*Fancy Dance*](https://variety.com/2023/film/reviews/fancy-dance-review-1235504520/)” starred Gladstone. “If you’re at a dinner party with Lily, you’re going to find yourself talking about physics and bumblebees — and when I say she’ll be talking about physics, she’ll be talking about some very specific theory that Lily will know the mechanics of inside and out.”

At an Elle event in December celebrating women in Hollywood, Gladstone was honored alongside the likes of Jennifer Lopez, [*America Ferrera*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/01/movies/america-ferrera-barbie.html) and Jodie Foster, but she particularly sparked to meeting the academic Stacy L. Smith, whose University of Southern California think tank, the Annenberg Inclusion Initiative, had recently issued a report about [*Native American representation*](https://annenberg.usc.edu/news/research-and-impact/native-american-characters-are-nearly-invisible-top-films) in Hollywood. After analyzing 1,600 films released from 2007 to 2022, Smith found that the amount of speaking roles for Native American actors was virtually nil, less than one quarter of 1 percent of all the roles cataloged.

A leading role like Gladstone’s in a film the size of “Killers” isn’t just unusual, it’s unprecedented, so much so that Smith subtitled her report, “The Lily Gladstone Effect.” Gladstone can hardly wrap her head around that recognition. “It’s the kind of paper that if I were a student now taking the same class, I would be citing in my studies,” she said.

For DiCaprio, Gladstone has more than earned the plaudits. “To see her rise to this occasion and be somebody that’s so formidable as far as understanding the depth of her own industry and Native American history, it’s an incredible moment to be a part of,” he said in a phone call. “I’m just glad to be next to her.”

To tout his co-star, DiCaprio has been a willing participant in the sort of red-carpet photo opportunities and awards-season parties he’d normally eschew. “It’s insane,” Gladstone said. “It’s like I’m trotting this mythical creature around, out and about, and he’s doing so of his own volition.” The ante was upped even further when Gladstone learned that her favorite actress, Cate Blanchett, would conduct a Q. and A. with her after “Killers” screened in London. “I’m hugging myself right now, I know your readers can’t see that,” she told me.

Gladstone acknowledged that sometimes, the intensity of the awards-season spotlight can feel overwhelming. “I can’t speak from the heart if I’m not connected to what’s real about all this,” she said. In those moments, she endeavors to carry her community forward with her: “I know that all of this attention on me right now means so much more than just me.”

In other words, don’t expect Gladstone to come out of this experience transformed into a demanding Hollywood diva, as so many have before her. She can’t be bowled over, onscreen or off.

“I’ve talked to a lot of people who know Lily Gladstone and have been friends with her for a long time and seen this journey, and she is so steadfast and so immovable in terms of her values and her core,” Tremblay said. “I think she’ll be exactly the same, but with fancier clothes.”

AS A CHILD growing up on the Blackfeet Reservation in northwestern Montana, there was one week that Gladstone looked forward to all year, when the [*Missoula Children’s Theater*](https://mctinc.org/) would roll up in a little red truck, construct a set out of P.V.C. pipes and cloth backdrops, and cast local kids in a production that the whole community would come out to see at the end of the week. “I was bullied a lot when I was a kid, partly because I was just goofy,” Gladstone said. “But that one week a year is when I was cool.”

In the group’s production of “Cinderella,” the young Gladstone decided to play her ugly stepsister as if she were Roseanne Barr, studying how to walk and talk like the comedian. It was a lightning-strike moment when she realized that a little bit of craft could go a long way.

“Somebody picked up on that in the audience and said, ‘She’s funnier than Roseanne,’” Gladstone said. “And my parents reminded me that somebody there from our community said, ‘We’re going to see her at the Oscars one day,’ just from that.”

Performing has always been Gladstone’s true north, the place to which her inner compass is most attuned. She remembers watching “Return of the Jedi” at 5 and feeling such a strong desire to be an Ewok that she knew someday, she’d be on the other side of the screen. Similarly obsessed with “The Nutcracker,” Gladstone signed up for ballet, which she assumed would be the big performative outlet in her life until the body shaming became too tough to take: “Not just weight, but things like, ‘Your middle toe is too long,’” she said. “I’m like, ‘Hey, my grandma gave me that middle toe!’”

But even in ballet class, instructors told her she was a natural-born actress, less concerned with nailing movements than with communicating a character. In her teenage years, when Gladstone’s family moved from Montana to the sometimes alienating suburbs of Seattle, she plunged fully into performance, acting in off-campus plays and auditioning for independent films. During her senior year, fellow students voted her “Most Likely to Win an Oscar.” They could already tell that acting was something she lived and breathed.

“It gave me an identity when my identity was forming and reforming,” she said. “Being known as an actress felt good even when I wasn’t working, even before I got my SAG card, when people asked what I did: ‘Yeah, I’m working at Staples right now, but I’m an actress.’”

In her 20s, many of Gladstone’s actor friends moved to New York or Los Angeles, but she was reluctant to follow suit. “I knew if I came to L.A. and was doing audition after audition, it would be really difficult for me,” she said. “And I knew how easily my love of ballet had been shot down by these boxes that I couldn’t fit in, so I was like, ‘I’m going to protect this a little bit.’”

The boxes in Hollywood can be pernicious, and Gladstone is still wary of them. “I know myself and I know I’m difficult to cast,” she said. “I’m kind of ‘mid’ in a lot of ways.” Gladstone hastened to add that she didn’t mean “mid” like meh, dismissively as Gen Z uses it. Instead, she meant the word quite literally. She is in-between, hard to place, neither this nor that. Part of it is that she’s mixed-race: Her father is Blackfeet and Nez Perce, her mother white. But there is another part, too.

“It’s kind of being middle-gendered, I guess,” said Gladstone, who uses both “she” and “they” pronouns. “I’ve always known I’m comfortable claiming being a woman, but I never feel more than when I’m in a group of all women that I’m not fully this either.”

She recalled a heartfelt moment at Elle’s Women in Hollywood event when Jodie Foster told the nonbinary “The Last of Us” actor Bella Ramsey that the room was full of supportive sisters. “That’s wonderful and that’s true,” Gladstone said, but afterward she went up to Ramsey to “introduce myself and let them know, ‘You also have siblings here, too.’”

Instead of moving to Hollywood, where she might have been prodded into walking a narrower path, Gladstone spent her postgraduate years in Montana, doing theater and renting out basements with like-minded performers just to make something. Working in independent films and Native-centric productions allowed her to qualify for the Screen Actors Guild without ever having to move her home base, and a breakthrough role in Kelly Reichardt’s 2016 indie “[*Certain Women*](https://www.nytimes.com/2016/10/14/movies/certain-women-review-kristen-stewart-michelle-williams-laura-dern.html)” raised her profile considerably. Still, the mega-budgeted “Killers of the Flower Moon” represents a comparative quantum leap: Though Gladstone was unsure about coming to Hollywood, in the end, Hollywood came to her.

It’s a heady thing to go from semi-known to perceived on a major scale, as Gladstone found out during the film’s mammoth [*Cannes Film Festival premiere*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/22/movies/scorsese-dicaprio-de-niro-killers-of-the-flower-moon.html) in May, when photos of her walking the red carpet with DiCaprio were beamed all over the world. But the actual premiere of “Killers” in October provided an unexpected respite, since the actors’ strike at the time prevented Gladstone from promoting it.

A silver lining was the number of Osage people who instead spoke at the movie’s premiere, enjoying the sort of red-carpet moments that would have typically gone to the film’s striking actors. Watching them discuss and debate “Killers” reminded Gladstone that she was raised to listen to her elders, and the strike-imposed silence provided the perfect opportunity to collect her thoughts and reflect.

“There’s a level of ego that is wrapped up with being a public person speaking for other people, and a level of ego it takes being an actor, too,” she said. “So I think it was a real gift to be able to sit there and have another reminder that this is way bigger than me.”

She spent the film’s opening day [*on a picket line*](https://www.yahoo.com/entertainment/lily-gladstone-joins-sag-aftra-205807162.html?guccounter=1&amp;guce_referrer=aHR0cHM6Ly93d3cuZ29vZ2xlLmNvbS8&amp;guce_referrer_sig=AQAAADhOKuEhZ6mTeawZpzWr2e2BVa0wI1JD1AMif0vtYzaXNVb7WyR5YBm_GzcilxMUrSiQMIry5m1cMGJ3uxx2vfECgHSfBf_5vZUR-f9juLemcVM871Pc4aKWvAERsnVuGmSzN7RwIFCQfDYxgsElKGU8xjVQZcPk2sIMNqhsqURL) in Times Square, marching back and forth in the rain near the New York headquarters of Paramount Pictures, the studio that distributed “Killers” with Apple. “It was a little bit of my contrarian nature to choose Paramount that day,” Gladstone admitted with a grin. Later, while dining at an Italian restaurant in the city, a couple sitting next to her asked if she was Lily Gladstone from “Killers of the Flower Moon.” It was the first time she felt permission to own it.

“I was like, ‘Yes, I am. Today, I am Lily Gladstone.’” Months later, recounting the story, she was still beaming.

IF GLADSTONE IS nominated for a best actress Academy Award on Jan. 23, she’ll be the first Native American contender in that category. With a win, she’d become the first Native performer to earn a competitive acting Oscar.

Still, it’s one thing for Hollywood to celebrate underrepresented actors, and a whole other thing to actually provide for them afterward. Academy members were moved to vote for recent winners like [*Troy Kotsur*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/02/16/movies/troy-kotsur-coda-deaf-actor.html) (“CODA”) and [*Ke Huy Quan*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/04/05/movies/ke-huy-quan-everything-everywhere.html) (“Everything Everywhere All at Once”) in part because of their inspiring personal narratives, but follow-up projects on par with their winning films can be hard to come by. DiCaprio hopes that Gladstone’s breakthrough year will finally change things.

“I think she realizes that this really is a historical moment,” he said. “I know she has a plethora of other stories that she wants to tell, and I want her to be given those opportunities.”

Whatever this season has in store, Gladstone is ready to make the most of it. At a recent Academy Museum gala, the Oscar-winning actress Jennifer Connelly asked to meet Gladstone and wondered whether the demands of campaigning had already run her ragged. Gladstone was surprised to find herself replying that so far, she was doing just fine: “Maybe it says something about me that I’m kind of enjoying all of this right now.”

The wider world appears invested in her success, too. After “Killers” received a standing ovation at Cannes, a clip of Gladstone’s moved reaction to the applause earned millions of views. Why does she think that video went viral, with so many excited commenters predicting the Oscar glory that now appears within reach?

“I think people root for folks that come up from the grass roots having this global-stage moment, this dream coming true,” she said. “That’s something that I wish on everybody at some point in their lives, in whatever form that takes, and also for Native people.”

Gladstone confessed that she had watched the [*Cannes clip*](https://www.tiktok.com/@yourdigitalnomadfuture/video/7236784946680007962?lang=en) “about a thousand times” since the premiere: “It’s a moment of transcendence that was wonderful to have captured.” But the moment was about more than just her own time in the spotlight: She recalled the way her Native co-star William Belleau let out a whooping war cry during the ovation and how the applause for the women playing her sisters — Cara Jade Myers, JaNae Collins and Jillian Dion — prompted Gladstone to let out a trilling lele. It wasn’t just a celebration. It was a release.

“Whatever that oppressive system is that sometimes develops with colonial governments, that moment of transcendence for all of us, those are the healing moments,” Gladstone said. “Those are the ones that show people very clearly that we’re still here and we’re excellent. We’ve survived and we’re just soaring now.”

PHOTOS: PHOTO (PHOTOGRAPH BY THEA TRAFF FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (AR16); Lily Gladstone and Leonardo DiCaprio in “Killers of the Flower Moon,” directed by Martin Scorsese. “To see her rise to this occasion and be somebody that’s so formidable as far as understanding the depth of her own industry and Native American history, it’s an incredible moment to be a part of,” DiCaprio said. (PHOTOGRAPH BY APPLE TV+) (AR19) This article appeared in print on page AR16, AR19.

**Load-Date:** January 6, 2024

**End of Document**



[***Kate Winslet Pushes Her Characters, and Herself, to the Edge***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BG4-9GS1-JBG3-62NT-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

March 3, 2024 Sunday 17:39 EST

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**Section:** MAGAZINE

**Length:** 4562 words

**Byline:** Susan Dominus Susan Dominus is a staff writer for The New York Times Magazine. In 2018, she was part of a team that reported on workplace sexual harassment issues and won a Pulitzer Prize for public service.

**Highlight:** As a young star, she endured Hollywood’s brutal treatment of women. Now she’s putting her resilience and grit on full display.

**Body**

Kate Winslet was standing in front of a microphone, breathing hard. Sometimes she did it fast; sometimes she slowed it down. Sometimes the breathing sounded anxious; other times, it was clearly the gasping of someone who was winded. Before beginning a new take, Winslet stood stock still, hands opening and closing at her sides; she looked like a gymnast about to bound into a floor routine. Every breath seemed high-stakes, even though she was well into a long day of recording in a dim, windowless studio in London.

Winslet was adding grace notes to scenes of herself in [*“The Regime,”*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/29/arts/television/the-regime-review-kate-winslet.html) a dark satire created by Will Tracy, a writer and producer on “Succession,” that began airing on Max in early March. Winslet plays Elena Vernham, a dictator ruling precariously over an imaginary Central European country, and she was in the studio rerecording (as is common practice) lines that needed improving, including snippets of Elena’s propaganda: “Even if the protests happening in Westgate were real, which they are not” and “He’s still out there, working with the global elite to destroy everything we’ve built.” Sometimes Winslet laughed out loud after delivering a line, and sometimes she fell completely silent, absorbed in watching a scene of herself with her new recording looped in. “God, she’s such an awful, awful cow,” she said at one point, sounding appalled but also a little awed.

The part of Elena, a despot on the verge of a nervous breakdown, is a departure for Winslet, who has chosen, over the course of her career, a wide range of characters who have in common an intrinsic power. Elena is erratic and grasping, with a facade of strength that covers up a sinkhole of oozing insecurity. Winslet gave a lot of thought to how Elena would sound: She chose a high, tight voice, the sound of someone disconnected from the feelings that reside deep in the body. Elena has the slightest of speech impediments, a strange move she makes with her mouth, a hand that flies to her cheek when she is under real stress — those tells are her answer to King Richard’s hump, the body politic deformed.

Onscreen, as Elena, Winslet is coifed and practically corseted into form-fitting skirt suits, with lacquered fake nails. The day she was recording, in early January, Winslet might have been any woman at the office: blond hair, a hint of roots starting to show, jeans of no particular timely style that she occasionally tugged up from the waist, a black V-neck sweater she occasionally pulled down at the hem. It’s only when you look directly at her, face to face, that you see the extraordinary — the dark blue eyes, the beauty marks (not one, but two), the elaborately curved mouth.

As Winslet recorded, Stephen Frears, one of the show’s two directors, guided Winslet with considerable understatement from his seat across the room: a half-nod here, a thumbs-up there. “Was that all right, Stephen?” Winslet called over after one take; she peered over in his direction, expectant, obedient, professional. Frears, who directed “The Queen” and “Dangerous Liaisons,” among others, was silent, with his eyes closed, his head back. Winslet and a few members of the production team waited for his approval. As the moment stretched on, it seemed that Frears was not deep in thought but deep in sleep. Winslet appeared to register a brief moment of surprise, then smiled and moved on — all right, no problem.

Winslet is not precious or easily rattled; on set, over the years, she has broken a toe, suffered hypothermia and fainted, but very little slows her down when she’s shooting. She’s not a fan of a lunch break. Her sturdiness works its way into her performances onscreen: Even in many a period drama, Winslet, for all her femininity, conveys the impression of someone who could hold her own in a street fight. On one occasion when she actually found herself in peril, during a house fire at Richard Branson’s home in the British Virgin Islands, Winslet, efficiently assisting the evacuation, picked up Branson’s nearly-90-year-old mother and carried her down several stairs. (Winslet is married to Branson’s nephew, Edward Abel Smith.)

Winslet’s practicality makes her eminently relatable, but it comes with a forceful energy. A friend commented to me that Winslet’s patent resilience makes watching her — even in a film about a shipwreck or the Holocaust — an experience in which the viewer’s stress level never interferes with an appreciation of the work. “I don’t worry about her,” she says. “She will turn up OK. Even if she has to eat acorns all winter.”

The day after her dubbing session in London, Winslet and I met near her home on the coast of England; she had decided we would visit a local beach. When I entered her car, I noticed on the floor of the back seat a bowl of half-eaten oatmeal that had clearly been there for some time, a sight that made my heart leap — I somehow felt immediately absolved of all my own car-food sins. “There’s just stuff rolling around the back of the car, clink, clink, all the time,” Winslet said. “Sometimes I look in the back, and I’ll see, like, three apples.” At least, she would console herself, the intention was that apples be eaten. The procurer of those apples would be her husband, who goes by Ned, and their would-be consumer the couple’s 10-year-old son, Bear. (Winslet has two other children: a 23-year-old daughter from her first marriage, to Jim Threapleton; and a 20-year-old son from her second marriage, to the director Sam Mendes.)

The sky was cloud-covered, the air wet and chilled. The temperature hovered around 38 degrees, so we loaded our arms with blankets and traipsed in the direction of a white weathered beach hut a short sprint away from the water. Winslet’s hut is just one of thousands along the shores of the United Kingdom — on many beaches, they go on for miles — some of which have been passed down within families for upward of a century. (This one once belonged to Ned’s grandmother.) Winslet pulled on a lock, and the door swung open to reveal a mostly empty, unheated room with a few beach chairs, a skim board hanging on the wall and a bench in back, which is where we would sit and talk for the next several hours, covered in blankets and eating pastries Winslet bought that morning. Winslet also had her bathing suit with her. “I might go in for a swim later,” she told me.

Winslet is a devotee of cold-water swimming, which she has enjoyed not just near her home but also in Alaska and Norway, where, she told me, the water was dotted with ice. Cold-water swimming is popular in Britain, but it seems especially well suited to Winslet, who prides herself on stamina: For the 2022 movie [*“Avatar: The Way of Water,”*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/29/arts/television/the-regime-review-kate-winslet.html) Winslet, after considerable training, managed to hold her breath underwater for an astonishing seven minutes and 15 seconds (some Navy Seals never break three minutes). On set, she has little interest in the creature comforts that some stars expect: During the filming of [*“Mare of Easttown,”*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/29/arts/television/the-regime-review-kate-winslet.html) an HBO limited series from 2021, Winslet’s only real ask of Mark Roybal, one of the show’s executive producers, was that he replace the extra-large trailer he had intended for her with one the same size as those of her colleagues. “I’ve seen her literally pulling cables, moving props,” Roybal says. “It’s crazy. She’s not far from who she was when she grew up. That’s who she is.”

Winslet was raised in Reading, an hour west of London, in a ***working-class*** neighborhood where, she has said, many of her friends were aspiring to be flight attendants and hairstylists. Unhappy at her local school, she enrolled at age 11 in a private performing-arts school, offsetting some of the cost with voice-over work and a role as a teenage sleuth on a television series. Her father, an aspiring but ultimately unsuccessful actor, worked for the postal service and sold Christmas trees; when Winslet’s performing-arts school ended for her at age 16, she took a job slicing deli meat until her former principal suggested that she audition for a part in a movie based on the true story of two young girls who colluded in murder. Why did the principal think of Winslet? “I looked like the girl,” she told me. Winslet was desperate to win the part. “I wrote letters to the character,” she said. “You chant. You pray.” It turned out that the resemblance was important to the director, Peter Jackson, who wanted an unknown in the role. “That’s the lucky-break moment,” Winslet said.

The movie, “[*Heavenly Creatures,”*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/29/arts/television/the-regime-review-kate-winslet.html) set her career in motion, but she was still a fledgling actor. When she was brought in to audition for a small part in the 1995 adaptation of Jane Austen’s “Sense and Sensibility,” Winslet pretended she thought she was there to read for the more significant role of Marianne, younger sister to Elinor, played by Emma Thompson. Thompson, who also wrote the screenplay, ultimately championed Winslet’s casting. “It was immediately apparent to me that Kate would absolutely capture the quintessence of Marianne,” Thompson says. “She came in — 19 years old, I think — and had all the passion and the wide gaze of a youthful and optimistic spirit, a soul that believed the best in people. I rushed past her in the corridor, needing a pee, and she said as I came rushing back, ‘I know I can do this,’ and I think I might have said, ‘I know you can.’” The two women grew so close that Winslet kept, for many years, a souvenir of the last day of shooting — the box of an apple strudel that they feasted on for consolation as they tearfully prepared to part ways. (When Thompson turned 40, Winslet gave her the box for her birthday.)

In late 1995, Winslet was passed a long treatment for a film called [*“Titanic,”*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/29/arts/television/the-regime-review-kate-winslet.html) the printout of which she recently found in storage, discovering that she had written on the front page, “I love this.” The part of Rose in “Titanic” catapulted her into the realm of the 20th century’s great cinematic heroines. More endearing than Scarlett O’Hara, less thorny than Erin Brockovich, Rose is a Juliet-like figure in love with love who subverts the plot, surviving tragedy instead of succumbing to it. Since then, Winslet’s best performances are of imperfect women who persevere, who are flawed enough to do real damage but still evoke from the viewer deep, sometimes uncomfortable sympathy. In her role as Hanna, a former Nazi prison guard in “The Reader,” for which she won an Oscar, Winslet employs a forceful physicality that the viewer eventually understands as the unyielding rigidity of a woman who can’t make sense of complexity. She pulls off a more exuberant high-wire act in her portrayal of Clementine in “Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind,” a character whose fervent soul spills all over the place. When she meets Joel, the halting figure played by Jim Carrey, Clementine is careering as fast as the train on which they’re talking; she veers dangerously close, emotionally, to going off the rails altogether, with just enough charm and smarts to pull herself to safety, to keep Joel, and viewers, more intrigued than alarmed.

Winslet seems to relish pushing her characters — and herself — to the edge. Todd Haynes, who directed Winslet in “Mildred Pierce,” an HBO limited series about a divorced mother during the Great Depression, recalled one scene she shot in an evening gown on a rainy, frigid night in Queens. After the first take, Winslet, drenched and chilled, screamed out, elated, “This is what we get to do with our lives!” Winslet’s response did not surprise Haynes, given the roles she’d chosen in the past. “I think the pain that she sometimes endures is part of the thrill and excitement that she fully embraces in her work,” he says. “Kate wants to be put in places she’s never been before and be fearless about it.”

Moments like that, Winslet said, do thrill her: “It is living at the absolute edges of the physical lengths to which one can go to feel the most exhilarated and alive,” she said. Women who take risks interest her. In an upcoming biopic, “Lee,” which Winslet produced, she embodies Lee Miller, a onetime model who emerged from a traumatized youth to become a significant World War II photographer. But Winslet also clearly sees the discomfort she experiences on set as an inevitable part of moviemaking, something she has chosen to embrace rather than bemoan. “Still never to this day would I say: ‘I’m cold. I have to stop,’” Winslet said.

I’m cold, I thought to myself. I have to stop. We’d been sitting in that unheated shack, the ocean waves growing louder as the tide rolled in, for almost three hours, as if Winslet, in this instance too, would never be the one to suggest a break. Every so often, labradoodles, cocker spaniels, retrievers, dachshunds and their owners trotted by the aperture of the shack’s open door. The number of people walking their dogs seemed to have picked up, even as the day got colder; Winslet theorized, without resentment, that maybe word had gotten out. Finally, we agreed it was time to go, but by then it was too late for Winslet, who had plans to visit a new godchild, to go swimming.

If only I’d brought a bathing suit, we could have both gone, I said as we left, meaning not a word of it. Winslet brightened at the thought: We’d go tomorrow, she assured me — she could lend me a bathing suit!

Some measure of Winslet’s fame is tied to her beauty, but she seems intent on deflating its importance, using her influence to convey the message that women have value beyond their looks. In “Mare of Easttown,” Winslet, who played Marianne (Mare) Sheehan, a small-town detective grieving a dead son, refused to let editors retouch so much as a wrinkle. A “global ambassador” for L’Oréal Paris, she appears in an ad in full hair and makeup, then pins up her blond strands and starts wiping her makeup off, all the while speaking to the viewer with the urgency and focus she would give to any climactic monologue. “To believe that you are worth it is something we can all help each other to do,” she says. “And perhaps as we all walk through the world, we can show up for each other without judgment.”

Winslet came of age in the era of waif-chic, which has made her all too expert in the subject of harsh objectification. After her role in “Titanic,” public scrutiny of her body was so chronic and exacting that it threatened to consume her. The British tabloids tracked her weight as if it were a matter of national security; Joan Rivers cracked wise about Winslet sinking the Titanic. In a [*1998 Rolling Stone article, Winslet said*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/29/arts/television/the-regime-review-kate-winslet.html) that she was a heavyset teenager who “sensibly lost the weight doing Weight Watchers. End of story.” She now openly acknowledges that at one brief point in her life, she struggled with an eating disorder. “I never told anyone about it,” she said of that time. “Because guess what — people in the world around you go: ‘Hey, you look great! You lost weight!’” For that last bit, Winslet slipped into a pitch-perfect American accent — Los Angeles, maybe a film executive. “So even the compliment about looking good is connected to weight. And that is one thing I will not let people talk about. If they do, I pull them up straight away.” (For the sake of simplicity, I will direct the reader to assume that curses have been edited out of any Winslet quote on the subject of weight, celebrity or tabloids.)

In the hut, I had wondered aloud to Winslet about the impact of [*Ozempic*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/29/arts/television/the-regime-review-kate-winslet.html) on all this. “I actually don’t know what Ozempic is,” Winslet said. “All I know is that it’s some pill that people are taking or something like that.” I told her that Ozempic — which apparently has not yet saturated English culture as it has in the United States — was a very in-demand diabetes drug now commonly taken off-label for weight loss.

“But what is it?” Winslet said, her mouth full of pastry. I went on: It was a shot people took that dampened their interest in food. Winslet looked appalled — as if I’d just told her that millions of Americans were voluntarily injecting themselves with something that made them feel dead inside when they looked at a sunset. “Oh, my God,” she said. “This sounds terrible. Let’s eat some more things!” She made a show of eating more of her pastry, crumbs tumbling onto the blankets.

Together we watched a short video highlighting Winslet’s early career; at one moment, seeing red carpet shots of herself the year after she won the Oscar for “The Reader,” Winslet commented sharply, “Look how thin I was.” This was not Winslet yearning for that moment; it was Winslet feeling sadness for that former self, a young woman who was separating from her second husband and could barely eat from stress, watching her private life become the subject of entertainment-news headlines.

What Winslet accepted as the norm back then she now understands as small cruelties that she is relieved her younger counterparts no longer have to endure in quite the same way. Although a few actors of Winslet’s age have scoffed at what they perceive as the preciousness of intimacy coordinators, Winslet thought her entire experience as a young actor might have been different had they been available to her. “I would have benefited from an intimacy coordinator every single time I had to do a love scene or be partially naked or even a kissing scene,” she said. “It would have been nice to have had someone in my corner, because I always had to stand up for myself.” And often, she didn’t — she felt that whatever was being asked of her was simply part of the job. She has a litany of unspoken objections she wished she had felt empowered to make: “I don’t like that camera angle. I don’t want to stand here full-frontal nude. I don’t want this many people in the room. I want my dressing gown to be closer. Just little things like that. When you’re young, you’re so afraid of pissing people off or coming across as rude or pathetic because you might need those things. So learning to have a voice for oneself in those environments was very, very hard.”

On set, she rarely felt empowered to complain, even when the conditions were difficult. In a 1997 Los Angeles Times article, Winslet, still exhausted from the seven-month shoot of “Titanic,” described the experience as an “ordeal,” recalling two moments of filming in the water that sounded distressing in her telling (though she emphasized to me that she was never in danger). When I spoke to the film’s director, James Cameron, he said that although the set was extremely safe, he might have given Winslet more space to raise whatever subjective concerns about the work she was feeling at the time. “You have to sort of be given permission before the fact,” he said. “I can’t say, sitting here today, that I made that abundantly clear.” He described Winslet as “a force of nature,” adding that “when someone projects that kind of energy and that kind of power to the people around her, it’s difficult to see when they’re in trouble emotionally.”

Like many of her characters, Winslet considers herself a survivor: She survived two public divorces, and she survived the paparazzi, packs of men who chased her in cars or staked out her house. (When she was a new mother, she would put on a hat and sunglasses, hand her baby over a wall to the next-door neighbor, climb over the wall herself, then take the baby through the backyard gate and get on a city bus, where, she swears, no one ever recognized her.)

It’s clear that some of the strength Winslet projects — her nothing-stops-me attitude on set — is a defense she built up, by necessity, years ago. “I was already experiencing huge amounts of judgment, persecution, all this bullying,” she said. “People can call me fat. They can call me what they want. But they certainly cannot say that I complained and I behaved badly. Over my dead body.” To object, especially for young women, was to risk a ruined reputation. “I would not have known how to do that without people in power turning around and saying, ‘Oh, Jesus Christ, you know, her again, that complainer,’” Winslet said. “I would rather suffer in silence than ever let that happen to me, even still today.”

To Winslet, as a mother, it’s a particular horror that the public body-shaming once reserved for celebrities is now a trial that any young woman with a phone might go through. For British television, she recently made an improvised film, “I Am Ruth,” with her daughter, Mia Threapleton, about a mother trying to understand the unraveling of her teenager; behind the closed door of her bedroom, amid the privacy of the world of her phone, Threapleton’s character is enduring bullying on social media in response to revealing images she has posted of herself. With “I Am Ruth,” Winslet became an Everymom, opening her up to interactions of a different kind. “I’ll go to the grocery store, I’ll go anywhere, like walking down the street, and people will stop me,” she said. A parking attendant put her hand on Winslet’s arm and started to weep; Winslet knew intuitively it was about “I Am Ruth.”

In her roles, and in her own life, Winslet has moved, sure-footed, from the role of ingénue to the role of the fierce protector. Roybal described Winslet as an advocate for the crew on “Mare of Easttown,” someone who would personally call the executives if she felt there was some inequity on their part. While shooting “Mare,” Winslet sat in the trunk of a car where the then-19-year-old Angourie Rice would be filming a kissing scene, so Winslet — a safe, big-sister figure — could personally pass on notes from the director coming in through a radio.

By the time she filmed “Mare,” Winslet had decades worth of emotional experiences she could readily access. “In the beginning,” she said, “I would rummage around my emotional toolbox and pull out something that had actually happened to me. But that stopped working for me at a certain point. I don’t know why. As you get older, you live more life; you have more real experiences that you add to the emotional toolbox without realizing that you’re doing it. And so sometimes, as you get older, quite honestly, emotions are easier to access because they just simmer below the surface all the time — because there’s just so damn many of them.” Winslet’s scripts are heavily covered in notes laying out the emotional marks she would need to hit.

The hazard of watching Winslet as Mare is that her acting is so nuanced that you suddenly see others’ elsewhere as telegraphed semaphore (the bitter wife, her arms folded across her chest; the disappointed teacher, mouth tugged downward). In a scene from “Mare” in which Winslet tries to tell her grandson’s pediatrician about her travails with her son, Kevin, who died by suicide, she is reflecting not any one thing but instead the several conversations her character seems to be having simultaneously: one with the pediatrician, one with her past self, as she drifts in and out of being present, and another with her current self, as she struggles to control the frustration she feels at how little the doctor can grasp of this painful history. Watching Winslet, we don’t see a protective mother; we see our own mothering, the depth of our own complicated feelings about the mistakes we’ve made, the gap between all that we feel and all that can’t be easily said.

Winslet seemed uncomfortable talking about her process, not so much because she feared it would sound pretentious, but because it was personal. Long after “Mare” was finished shooting, Winslet wept in interviews when talking about the character’s loss of a son; she couldn’t stop reverting to those emotions she so carefully internalized, any more than she could clear out all the lines of dialogue that have lodged themselves in her consciousness, no matter how much she would like to forget them.

“I finally realized I needed a bit of therapy” to move on from playing Mare, she said. “You actually change something in your brain chemistry about how you think — you know, it’s very, very strange.” She would be at the store buying jeans and realize that she was buying the jeans that Mare would wear — awful-looking jeans, in fact. Her children would sidle up next to her at the house, on days after filming that had left her depleted. “Kevin’s not real,” they would whisper, as if letting her in on a secret. “And neither is Mare. It’s just pretend.” Being an actor, of course, entails coming all too close to the knowledge that for someone in the world, that suffering, that pain, is real. Winslet’s empathy — a protective instinct that extends to her characters — is part of what makes her performances so powerful.

The day after our talk in the hut, Winslet and I headed back to the beach in her car. On our way over, Ned, already waiting there with Bear, called to check in. “The sun is shining,” he told his wife. “It’s really special. But I think everybody got the memo. So — quite a few people.” Ned’s subtext was clear: She would not have a lot of privacy. “Great!” Winslet said, then laughed, not quite a nervous laugh but a sendup of one.

At the beach, Bear was kicking around a soccer ball with his dad. Chatty, funny, smiley, he told a story about the time his dog peed on his favorite soccer ball — he cocked his leg just so, a bit of brilliant and spontaneous mimicry, which I observed again when he put on the voice of his older brother, urging him on in a bit of daredevilry.

I changed quickly into a suit that Winslet lent me and put on a long fleece-lined coat made just for this winter-swimming business, and then there was no more avoiding it: I joined Winslet at the shore. We hesitated briefly, and suddenly a pack of young men were walking by. “Oh, there really are a lot of people,” she said, and for a moment I thought I saw a look of real distress on her face. I remembered she told me that she left New York in 2010, after living there for many happy years, in part because the paparazzi seemed to be picking up their focus on her: She noticed herself looking over her shoulder too often and decided it was time to get away.

Winslet quickly whipped her head around and trained her eyes back toward the ocean. It would clearly be better to move forward than stand paralyzed and exposed on the shore, so in we went. A step, then another — she jog-walked her way into the water, and I had no choice but to follow.

“You have to commit, Susan!” she called out. I managed to pull my focus away from the daggers of cold and look up in the direction of her voice. Fifteen feet away, she was submerged up to her chin. Her eyes were closed. She was far enough out from the shore to be unrecognizable to the public. The water hid her. She breathed in and out slowly, meditatively. A minute passed, then a few more. And then she was up, cursing, cursing the water, cursing the whole idea, laughing, heading toward shore.

Jack Davison is a British photographer known for his black-and-white portraiture. He last photographed Cate Blanchett for the magazine.

PHOTOS (PHOTOGRAPH BY JACK DAVISON FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (MM21); Kate Winslet and Matthias Schoenaerts in ‘‘The Regime.’’ (PHOTOGRAPH BY MIYA MIZUNO/HBO.) (MM23); (PHOTOGRAPH BY JACK DAVISON FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (MM24, MM25); Winslet and Andy Samberg in ‘‘Lee.’’ (PHOTOGRAPH BY KIMBERLEY FRENCH) (MM26);(PHOTOGRAPH BY JACK DAVISON FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (MM28-MM29) This article appeared in print on page MM20 MM21, MM22, MM23, MM24, MM25, MM26, MM27, MM28, MM29.

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[***Your Tuesday Briefing: South Korea’s Olive Branch to Japan***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67PP-RFN1-JBG3-649B-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Highlight:** Also, Ukraine says it wants to strengthen its presence in Bakhmut.

**Body**

Also, Ukraine says it wants to strengthen its presence in Bakhmut.

South Korea and Japan ease dispute

South Korea announced that it would set up [*a fund to pay victims of forced Japanese labor during World War II*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/05/world/asia/south-korea-japan-forced-labor.html). It’s a sign of strengthening ties between America’s most steadfast Asian allies as the threat from China and North Korea grows.

The fund is the most notable action taken by either country to try and resolve a festering historical dispute, [*one of several*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/10/21/obituaries/kim-hak-soon-overlooked.html) that date back to Japan’s colonization of Korea from 1910 to 1945. South Korea will now stop demanding that Japanese companies compensate the victims, which some view as a concession.

The promise of increased cooperation is a boon to the U.S., which is trying to shore up regional alliances as China grows stronger. President Biden celebrated the deal as “a groundbreaking new chapter of cooperation and partnership.”

And the fund is part of a broader easement. As the regional threats mount, President Yoon Suk Yeol has made improving relationships with Tokyo a top diplomatic goal. He has expanded joint military drills with Japan and the U.S. and asked his people to see Japan as a “cooperative partner” rather than a “militarist aggressor.”

Korea’s reaction: Opposition leaders called it a “capitulation.” Of the 15 victims awarded pay by South Korea’s Supreme Court, only four have expressed support. “I am not going to accept money even if I have to starve,” a 94-year-old said.

Background: Korea’s Supreme Court has stipulated that Japanese companies must pay the compensation, despite Japan’s insistence that the question was settled under a 1965 treaty.

Ukraine doubles down in Bakhmut

Despite Russia’s near-encirclement of the eastern city, [*Ukraine’s top generals want to strengthen their defense of Bakhmut*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2023/03/06/world/russia-ukraine-news/ukraines-top-generals-want-to-keep-fighting-for-bakhmut-zelenskys-office-says?smid=url-share). Their announcement comes amid growing speculation about a possible Ukrainian withdrawal.

President Volodymyr Zelensky, who called the city “our fortress” a month ago, said that the situation in Bakhmut was a particular focus. Ukraine’s most senior military commander signaled that [*Ukraine’s fight there*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2023/03/06/world/russia-ukraine-news/here-are-five-takeaways-from-inside-the-battle-for-bakhmut?smid=url-share) should continue, according to Zelensky’s office.

The fight over Bakhmut had seemed in recent days to be reaching a climax. Some Ukrainian officials started [*preparing the public*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/04/world/europe/ukraine-russia-war-bakhmut.html?searchResultPosition=2) for the possibility of a retreat, but Ukrainian assault brigades [*went on the attack*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/06/world/europe/ukraine-bakhmut-battle.html) and appeared to push back Russian forces this weekend.

Analysis: Bakhmut itself has little strategic value, but it has taken on heightened symbolic importance for both sides. The battle has created a defining moment — a marathon contest to see which army can break the other.

Russia’s strategy: Russia’s defense minister, Sergei Shoigu, [*visited the occupied southern city of Mariupol*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2023/03/06/world/russia-ukraine-news/russias-defense-minister-pays-a-rare-visit-to-occupied-areas-of-ukraine?smid=url-share) amid [*growing tensions*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/02/23/world/europe/wagner-russia-prigozhin-ukraine.html) with the Wagner mercenary group. Wagner’s founder also urged Russia’s military to send reinforcements and ammunition so his fighters wouldn’t get cut off in Bakhmut.

Other updates:

* In a rare admission, Ukraine said one of its drones had [*destroyed an unmanned watch tower*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2023/03/06/world/russia-ukraine-news/ukraine-says-russia-is-increasingly-launching-drone-attacks-from-bryansk?smid=url-share) in Russia.

1. Estonian voters have elected a government that has been one of [*Ukraine’s staunchest backers*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/06/world/europe/estonia-election.html?smid=url-share).

Will the U.S. deal with TikTok?

The Biden administration is increasingly pushing Congress to [*give it more legal power to deal with the Chinese-owned video app*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/06/technology/white-house-congress-on-tiktok.html) and other technology that could expose Americans’ sensitive data to China. As [*security concerns mount*](https://www.nytimes.com/article/tiktok-ban.html), TikTok has become a battleground in a technological cold war between the countries.

My colleague David McCabe spoke to five people with knowledge of the matter. Two told him that the White House is weighing whether to support legislation being developed by a Democratic senator that would give the U.S. government more ability to police apps like TikTok. The draft bill would offer an alternative to legislation that bans the app.

The growing focus on Congress is a shift in strategy. Since taking office, the Biden administration has privately negotiated with TikTok on a deal that would allow the app to operate in the U.S. But the talks have not [*resulted in an agreement*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/01/26/technology/tiktok-bytedance-data-security.html), and calling more aggressively on Congress to act could shift the focus away from the stalled talks.

Other bans: The White House told federal agencies last month that they had [*30 days*](https://apnews.com/article/technology-politics-united-states-government-ap-top-news-business-95491774cf8f0fe3e2b9634658a22e56) to delete TikTok from government devices. More than [*two dozen states*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/12/20/technology/tiktok-ban-government-issued-devices.html) have banned the app from government devices, as have [*Canada*](https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2023/feb/28/canada-bans-tiktok-on-government-phones-devices-over-security-risks) and the executive arm of the [*E.U.*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/02/23/business/european-union-tik-tok.html) India [*banned the platform*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/30/technology/india-china-tiktok.html) in mid-2020.

What’s next: TikTok’s chief executive, [*Shou Zi Chew*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/16/technology/tiktok-ceo-shou-zi-chew.html), is scheduled to testify before a House committee later this month.

THE LATEST NEWS

Around the World

* Experts are working to restore Notre Dame’s unique sound as they rebuild the fire-torn cathedral. You can [*experience its acoustics*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/03/03/magazine/notre-dame-cathedral-acoustics-sound.html) in our interactive story. (Use headphones!)

1. Residents said that Myanmar’s soldiers killed at least 17 villagers in a rampage, [*The Associated Press reports*](https://apnews.com/article/myanmar-burma-army-village-killings-beheading-f67a2070a43cfa60c5800881a38f0b82).
2. Israel’s military reservists are speaking out against the government’s efforts to overhaul the judiciary, an expression of anger that military leaders fear could [*affect operational readiness*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/06/world/middleeast/israel-military-judiciary.html).

Other Big Stories

* “Everything Everywhere All at Once” has now [*won all the top prizes*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/05/movies/writers-guild-winners-everything-everywhere-all-at-once.html) from Hollywood’s major guilds. The four other films that have done so went on to win the best picture Oscar.

1. Toblerone will [*drop an image*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/06/business/toblerone-chocolate-switzerland-matterhorn.html) of a famous Swiss mountain from its packaging as it moves some production out of Switzerland.

A Morning Read

Some of [*Toronto’s best restaurants are in aging, low-slung strip malls*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/05/world/canada/toronto-restaurants-immigration-multiculturalism.html). Run by immigrants, many offer nostalgic dishes from places like Sri Lanka and Malaysia. Others, like an Indonesian-Lebanese restaurant, fuse new flavors that reflect waves of immigration.

But many strip malls — some of the only places that first-generation restaurateurs could afford — have been replaced by high-end condominiums. One food writer described their disappearance as a “loss of culture.”

ARTS AND IDEAS

Asian Americans, shifting right

In the past two U.S. national elections — 2020 and 2022 — the Asian American vote, while still favoring Democrats, has moved right. A [*dramatic shift also occurred in New York City*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/03/05/nyregion/election-asians-voting-republicans-nyc.html) between 2018 and 2022, where Asian voters span many ethnicities and ideologies. A few explanations:

* Outreach. Republicans increased their presence in Asian neighborhoods where voters felt [*overlooked*](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/07/04/nyregion/asians-overlooked-specialized-schools.html) by Democrats, and focused on local issues.

1. Class divide. The Democratic Party increasingly reflects [*the views of college-educated professionals*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/09/08/us/politics/how-college-graduates-vote.html). Many Asian voters are ***working class***.
2. Education. Asian voters [*have*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/02/17/us/san-francisco-school-board-parents.html) [*fought*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/02/06/nyregion/nyc-specialized-high-school-test.html) Democratic proposals to change admissions policies at [*top public high schools*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/01/25/us/selective-high-schools-brooklyn-tech.html). And progressives supported [*extended school closures*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/05/briefing/school-closures-covid-learning-loss.html), which were harder for ***working-class*** parents.
3. Crime. Republicans’ tough-on-crime stance has attracted voters after increased anti-Asian violence. “[*Being Asian, I felt I had a bigger target on my back*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/01/10/nyregion/asian-voters-republican-crime-nyc.html),” said a lifelong Democrat, who voted for a Republican in the governor’s race.

For more, check out [*our explanation in The Morning*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/06/briefing/asian-americans-conservative-republican.html).

PLAY, WATCH, EAT

What to Cook

If you’re celebrating the Jewish holiday of Purim, make these [*savory onion and poppy seed hamantaschen*](https://cooking.nytimes.com/recipes/1020075-caramelized-onion-and-poppy-seed-hamantaschen).

What to Read

“[*War Diary*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/06/books/yevgenia-belorusets-war-diary.html)” is an intimate chronicle of the early days of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine.

What to Watch

Give yourself chills with one of these [*thrillers*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/03/movies/five-horror-movies-to-stream-now.html).

Health

Take a 60-second breathing test and try these [*three simple breath work exercises*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/03/03/well/mind/breathing-exercises.html).

Now Time to Play

Play the [*Mini Crossword*](https://www.nytimes.com/crosswords/game/mini), and a clue: Inside informant (four letters).

Here are the [*Wordle*](https://www.nytimes.com/games/wordle/index.html) and the [*Spelling Bee*](https://www.nytimes.com/puzzles/spelling-bee).

[*You can find all our puzzles here*](https://www.nytimes.com/crosswords).

That’s it for today’s briefing. See you next time. — Amelia

P.S. Spelling Bee featured in [*an unusual marriage proposal*](https://www.reddit.com/r/NYTSpellingBee/comments/11eaa9l/proposed_to_my_gf_with_the_bee/). (She said yes!)

“[*The Daily*](https://www.nytimes.com/thedaily)” is on the fallout of a train derailment in Ohio.

We’d like your feedback! Please email thoughts and suggestions to [*briefing@nytimes.com*](mailto:briefing@nytimes.com?subject=Briefing%20Feedback).

PHOTO: A rally in Seoul on Monday denouncing the South Korean government’s proposal. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Lee Jin-Man/Associated Press FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** March 6, 2023

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[***U.S. News Releases Its Latest, Disputed Rankings of Law and Medical Schools***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:686R-X4G1-JBG3-652C-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

May 11, 2023 Thursday 01:59 EST

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**Section:** US

**Length:** 720 words

**Byline:** Stephanie Saul

**Highlight:** After protests and a boycott, the publication has altered its methodology. But the changes are unlikely to placate critics.

**Body**

The Latest: The 2023-24 rankings are out.

U.S. News &amp; World Report finally released its annual rankings of top [*law*](https://www.usnews.com/best-graduate-schools/top-law-schools/law-rankings) and [*medical*](https://www.usnews.com/best-graduate-schools/top-medical-schools/research-rankings) schools on Thursday, after boycotts by those institutions, disputes over methodology, and a delay of weeks.

A few law schools shuffled positions, but the ones at the top of the new list were familiar — Stanford, Yale, Chicago, Duke, Harvard and New York University.

Yale, which was the first to boycott, retained its No. 1 position, though in a tie this year with Stanford. Columbia, which also participated in the boycott, dropped to eighth place from fourth.

There were some big shifts among the lower ranks, as a result of a new methodology. Wake Forest in North Carolina jumped 15 spots to be tied at No. 22, from No. 37 last year. Texas Tech and Marquette University both moved up 34 points and are tied for No. 71.

Among medical schools, most that were in the top 10 list for research last year remained there in 2023-24.

The top three medical schools are Harvard, Johns Hopkins and the University of Pennsylvania. Joining the top ten: Vanderbilt, Weill Cornell and Washington University in St. Louis.

New York University dropped to No. 10 from No. 2 last year.

Background: Many top schools have boycotted U.S. News.

After criticizing U.S. News’s rankings for years, many elite law and medical schools decided to boycott the 2023-24 rankings by refusing to hand over data, saying that the rankings were unreliable and unfair, skewing education priorities.

Yale Law School [*said*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/11/16/us/yale-law-school-us-news-rankings.html) that the U.S. News methodology did not give enough weight to programs “that support public interest careers, champion need-based aid, and welcome ***working-class*** students into the profession.” As a result, Yale argued, the rankings effectively penalized law schools that emphasize that work, and deterred others from focusing on that work.

Faced with several dozen schools declining to participate, U.S. News went on a listening tour last year to develop a new methodology. For law schools, fully 58 percent of a school’s ranking is now based on outcomes — how many graduating students pass the bar and get jobs — a substantial increase from prior years.

The new ranking of medical schools for research also used new methodology, and included an evaluation of faculty resources, the academic achievements of entering students and research productivity.

U.S. News said that for the law and medical schools that declined to provide data, it filled in the blanks using publicly available information.

Despite the overhaul, an early preview of the 2023-24 rankings, [*released*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/04/21/us/21nat-us-news-rankings-law-medical-school.html) on April 21, ran into another wave of criticism, prompting a delay in the release of the final list.

Why It Matters: The rankings are influential for both students and employers.

Many organizations rank colleges and universities, but the U.S. News rankings are probably the most widely followed. Students across the country use the rankings to help them choose schools, and employers consider the rankings when they hire graduates.

Those factors make the rankings especially important for many lesser-known schools. They invest time and money in improving their showing on the metrics that U.S. News values — for instance, admissions test scores, faculty-to-student ratios, class sizes and post-graduation employment.

What’s Next: The new rankings are unlikely to placate critics.

With some schools experiencing turbulent swings in their ratings from year to year, critics have questioned whether the U.S. News list has any real meaning.

In a message posted on his school’s website, Stephen C. Payne, dean of the Columbus School of Law at Catholic University of America, said the new methodology penalized his school — which fell to No. 122 from No. 94 — partly by giving more weight to the number of graduates who pass the bar examination in their first try.

“The dramatic changes in the calculations of this year’s rankings have produced some wild swing and strange results,” Mr. Payne wrote, adding that “the specific spot of a given school in the rankings seems to provide little useful information to prospective students.”

PHOTO: Yale Law School, which led the boycott of the U.S. News rankings, is at the top again in 2023, though tied with Stanford. (PHOTOGRAPH BY CHRISTOPHER CAPOZZIELLO FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A23.

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**End of Document**



[***Democrats Move a Step Closer to Making South Carolina First Primary***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:670N-H441-DXY4-X478-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Section:** US; politics

**Length:** 1506 words

**Byline:** Katie Glueck

**Highlight:** A key panel supported President Biden’s plan, which would remove Iowa as the first presidential nominating state. States with more diverse, ***working-class*** and in some cases more moderate constituencies are being elevated.

**Body**

A key panel supported President Biden’s plan, which would remove Iowa as the first presidential nominating state. States with more diverse, ***working-class*** and in some cases more moderate constituencies are being elevated.

WASHINGTON — Over objections from some Democratic state leaders, the Democratic National Committee on Friday moved one step closer to enacting President Biden’s vision for drastically [*overhauling the party’s 2024 presidential primary process*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/12/01/us/politics/biden-dnc-primary-south-carolina-2024.html), as a key committee voted to recommend sweeping changes to the calendar.

At a daylong gathering of the D.N.C.’s Rules and Bylaws Committee in a Washington hotel ballroom, members voted to recommend supporting a 2024 Democratic presidential primary calendar that would begin in South Carolina on Feb. 3, followed by New Hampshire and Nevada on Feb. 6, Georgia on Feb. 13 and then Michigan on Feb. 27.

That plan reflected a framework Mr. Biden delivered to the committee on Thursday that emphasized racial and geographic diversity. Representatives from Iowa and New Hampshire voted against the proposal, and officials emphasized that the move by the Rules Committee was one step in what might still be a prolonged and contentious process. The proposed early states have until Jan. 5 to confirm that they can hold a primary on their assigned date.

The recommendation, which upends the traditional Democratic order of Iowa, New Hampshire, Nevada and South Carolina, must be affirmed by the full D.N.C. at a meeting in early February, but Mr. Biden’s preferences carry enormous weight with the party committee.

The proposed new order rewards some of the states that powered his political rise in 2020, elevating diverse, ***working-class*** and in some cases more moderate constituencies that were vital to Mr. Biden’s primary victory. At the same time, smaller states that have long emphasized retail politics — Iowa and New Hampshire — would be diminished.

“Given the president’s strong interest in the design of the 2024 primaries, and the dates for them, I think it’s clear that he’s running,” said James Roosevelt Jr., a co-chairman of the Rules and Bylaws Committee, who said he had spoken with Mr. Biden this week about the early-state order.

Mr. Biden has said that he [*intends*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/11/13/us/politics/biden-2024-election.html) to run again but plans to discuss the race with his family. If he does not run, the schedule, if adopted, would help other candidates with strong support from the voters of color who make up the backbone of the Democratic Party.

Black voters accounted for more than half of the Democrats who voted in the South Carolina primary in 2020, [*according to exit polling*](https://www.cnn.com/election/2020/primaries-caucuses/entrance-and-exit-polls/south-carolina/democratic). And they make up a significant share of the primary electorates in Georgia and Michigan. Latino voters play an especially central role in Nevada.

But the shift could also hurt candidates without the campaign cash to compete quickly in early states with expensive media markets — like Nevada, Georgia and even New Hampshire, where Boston television stations drive up rates. The fast pacing of the proposed calendar could force contenders with smaller bank accounts to choose to compete in just one or two of the first three states.

“One of the things that New Hampshire is known for is our retail politics, and candidates having the opportunity to engage the electorate face to face,” said Joanne Dowdell, a D.N.C. member from New Hampshire who opposed the proposal. “By having three states, one on top of the other, I think causes a little bit of conflict for candidates trying to vie for the attention, get name recognition and also raise money.”

Jeff Link, a longtime Des Moines operative, said cutting Iowa’s caucuses out of the Democratic presidential nominating process would diminish the importance of organizing, which is central to the state’s political culture.

That could prove detrimental to the party nationally, he said, by eliminating a critical proving ground for Democratic field operatives.

“Rather than having a big field operation, they’re going to have a big social media operation,” Mr. Link said. “There’s going to be less people talking to other people in the campaign. One of the benefits of having a caucus early is that for three decades, we’ve trained campaign staff on how to organize person to person.”

Other objections have been far louder, especially from the two states accustomed to being at the front of the line.

New Hampshire has long held the nation’s first primary as a [*matter of state law*](https://constitutioncenter.org/blog/why-iowa-and-new-hampshire-go-first), and state officials [*have said*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/12/01/us/politics/biden-dnc-primary-south-carolina-2024.html) they intend to follow that law rather than any party decision. And the chairman of the Iowa Democratic Party noted in a statement that the country’s longtime leadoff caucus state has a law that “requires us to hold a caucus before the last Tuesday in February, and before any other contest.” The decision on timing would be up to the state central committee and elected officials, said Scott Brennan, a member of the Rules Committee from Iowa.

More than political clout and bragging rights is at stake: Studies of the economic impact of past caucuses in Iowa and New Hampshire primaries have found that spending was in the hundreds of millions of dollars, much of that on TV ads, though the figures were a drop in the bucket of each state’s annual economic activity.

The party has powerful tools with which to compel states to fall in line.

D.N.C. rules agreed upon earlier this year stipulated notable consequences for any state that jumps ahead to operate outside the party’s agreed-upon early window, including cuts to the number of pledged delegates and alternates for the state in question. Significantly, candidates who campaign in such states would face repercussions as well.

“If a candidate chose to campaign in a state that operated outside the window, they would lose the delegates from that state,” Mr. Roosevelt said. “They could have other penalties, because the chair is empowered to go beyond that.”

Some officials have suggested they are willing to take those risks.

“For decades we have said we will bear any sanctions,” said Raymond Buckley, the chairman of the New Hampshire Democratic Party.

Republican willingness, or lack thereof, to change dates may also be relevant in several states, including in Republican-controlled Georgia. A spokesman for Gov. Brian Kemp did not respond to a question on Friday afternoon about his reaction to the Democratic proposal. The primary date is set by Georgia’s secretary of state, Brad Raffensperger, who declined to comment on the Democrats’ process on Friday.

“Our focus is on the security and integrity of the election that’s currently underway, and we will be looking at the entire process for possible improvements once this one is successfully complete,” said Jordan Fuchs, the deputy secretary of state, as Georgia hosts a Senate runoff. But, she noted in a statement, “Our legal team has continuously stated that both parties’ primaries must be on the same day and must not cost anyone any delegates.”

Republicans have already agreed to their own early-state lineup of Iowa, New Hampshire, South Carolina and Nevada.

The Rules and Bylaws committee’s vote came a day after Mr. Biden sent a letter to members laying out his criteria for the early-voting window. In it, he rejected caucuses — effectively dealing a mortal blow to the troubled Iowa caucuses, which [*struggled for days to deliver results*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/02/04/us/politics/iowa-democratic-caucus-explained.html) in 2020.

After Mr. Biden came in fourth place in Iowa and fifth in New Hampshire, two states with high percentages of white voters, he showed new signs of political life in Nevada. And it was South Carolina’s primary, with large numbers of Black voters, that revived his candidacy and propelled him through Super Tuesday and to the nomination.

“Defense, education, agriculture, manufacturing — South Carolina is a perfect laboratory,” said Representative James E. Clyburn, the South Carolina Democrat whose endorsement of Mr. Biden in 2020 played a vital role in the president’s victory in the state. “That’s why the people who do well in South Carolina end up doing pretty good in the general.”

Mr. Clyburn said that he had urged Mr. Biden to keep South Carolina in the early-state window — “first, second, third or fourth, didn’t matter to me” — but that he had learned of the state’s possible elevation to the kickoff primary on Thursday from the president.

Jaime Harrison, the chairman of the D.N.C., who is also from South Carolina, said he had found out at [*Thursday night’s state dinner*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/12/01/us/politics/white-house-state-dinner-biden-macron.html).

Mr. Biden has urged the Rules and Bylaws Committee to review the calendar every four years, and the committee [*embraced an amendment*](https://www.politico.com/news/2022/12/02/democrats-biden-2024-primaries-00071943) to get that process underway.

“Nevada still has the strongest argument for being the first-in-the-nation primary,” Catherine Cortez Masto and Jacky Rosen, the state’s senators, said in a joint statement. “We will keep making our case for 2028.”

Reid J. Epstein contributed reporting from New Orleans, Lisa Lerer from New York, and Trip Gabriel from Des Moines.

Reid J. Epstein contributed reporting from New Orleans, Lisa Lerer from New York, and Trip Gabriel from Des Moines.

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**End of Document**



[***For Some Senators, New Relaxed Dress Code Is Just Uncomfortable***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:696V-M431-DXY4-X03K-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

September 20, 2023 Wednesday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; National Desk; Pg. 18; CONGRESSIONAL MEMO

**Length:** 1257 words

**Byline:** By Annie Karni

**Body**

Some senators worry that more casual dress might breed disrespect for Congress. Others argue that the harshest critics have already debased the institution, even in business attire.

Senator J.D. Vance of Ohio has accused President Biden of trying to inundate the heartland with fentanyl to ''punish people who didn't vote for him.'' He has eagerly promoted the false claim that former President Donald J. Trump won the 2020 election. And recently, he announced his plans to block all nominations to the Justice Department until it stops what he describes as a ''political prosecution'' of Mr. Trump.

But on Tuesday, Mr. Vance spoke about a different gripe altogether: the relaxing of the Senate dress code, which he said would demean America's governmental institutions.

''My grandfather, who I never saw wear a suit, who didn't own a suit as far as I know, would have never shown up to work in the United States Senate without dressing properly,'' said Mr. Vance, who grew up in poverty in Appalachia and today purchases his bespoke suits from an Italian tailor in Cincinnati. ''A lot of ***working-class*** people across this country respect this building. They're frustrated by it, but they respect it and I think the dress code should reflect that.''

The recent decision by Senator Chuck Schumer, Democrat of New York and the majority leader, to relax the Senate's informal dress code and allow members to enter the chamber in casual attire, or even gym clothes, has set off waves of consternation and cries of dismay in the stuffy upper chamber. Many senators, mostly Republicans, have publicly expressed concerns along the same lines as Mr. Vance's, and privately have said that the change could harm America's standing on the international stage.

Even some Democrats say they are appalled. At the Capitol on Tuesday, Senator Joe Manchin of West Virginia, said he had told Senator John Fetterman, the Pennsylvania Democrat whose hoodie-and-gym-shorts attire appears to have prompted the change, that he thought the decision was ''wrong'' and that he would do everything in his power to ''try to hold the decorum'' of the Senate.

''Senator Schumer has done everything he can to destroy the traditions of the Senate,'' said Senator John Cornyn, Republican of Texas. ''It's another indication he doesn't respect the Senate as an institution.''

Senator Cynthia Lummis, Republican of Wyoming, said that ''people who dress like slobs tend to think they can act like slobs.''

''We have a bad enough reputation for lack of civility and decorum now, and this just takes it to rock bottom,'' she added.

Senator Susan Collins, the 70-year-old Republican from Maine who favors modest, tailored skirt suits, joked that she would protest by showing up to work wearing a bikini, an image so incongruous she didn't have to say anything more. By the end of the day, 46 Republican Senators -- the vast majority of the caucus -- had signed a public letter to Mr. Schumer, imploring him to reverse the plan. ''The world watches us on that floor, and we must protect the sanctity of that place at all costs,'' they wrote.

The new rules, which direct the sergeant-at-arms to no longer enforce the longstanding dress code for members, appear to have been changed mainly to accommodate Mr. Fetterman. Since returning to the Senate after being hospitalized for depression, Mr. Fetterman has refused to squeeze his hulking, 6-foot-8 frame into a suit, navigating the Capitol instead in airy basketball shorts and oversized sweatshirts. The rule change will now allow him to enter the chamber, and even preside over it, in his preferred state of dishevelment, which doubles as a way to signal his blue-collar, outsider status.

''Oh my god!'' Mr. Fetterman said sarcastically on Tuesday of the hand-wringing about what would become of the nation's Capitol if he were to preside over the Senate in a hoodie. ''I think it will be OK. The Republicans think I'm going to burst through the doors and start break dancing on the floor in shorts. I don't think it's going to be a big issue.''

Online, Mr. Fetterman has been having fun pointing out instances in which the Republicans who have criticized him for his sartorial choices have not comported themselves with great dignity or decorum, even while wearing business slacks or dresses.

Representative Marjorie Taylor Greene, Republican of Georgia, called it ''disgraceful'' that the Senate was ''lowering the bar'' by changing its dress code.

''Thankfully, the nation's lower chamber lives by a higher code of conduct: displaying ding-a-ling pics in a public hearing,'' Mr. Fetterman replied, referencing Ms. Greene's move during a recent House committee hearing to display oversized nude photos of the president's son, Hunter Biden, engaged in sex acts.

The dress code drama, however inconsequential it may seem during a week when Congress is inching steadily closer to a government shutdown, did ignite a real discussion about what it means to show respect for the body in which one serves -- especially at a moment when hard-right members who feel they have been sent to Washington to dismantle the government and disrupt its hallowed institutions are wielding their influence.

To many, gym shorts may be a sign of disrespect. But many of the best-dressed members in Congress have not always acted in ways that convey respect for democratic institutions.

Representative Jeff Van Drew, the former New Jersey Democrat who switched parties in 2019 and pledged his ''undying support'' to Mr. Trump, shows up to work most days with a four-point pocket square. In 2021, he voted to overturn the presidential election results.

Representative George Santos, the Long Island Republican who has been charged by federal prosecutors with money laundering, stealing public money, wire fraud and making false statements to Congress, among other crimes, regularly looks preppy and dapper in his signature crew-neck sweaters layered over crisp, white, button-down shirts. Despite his natty outfits, his Republican colleagues largely treat him like a pariah who brings only notoriety by association.

Some members argued that it's not lawmakers' dress code, but their inability to address pressing issues of national import that draws disrespect from allies abroad.

Representative Jasmine Crockett, a freshman Democrat from Texas, said she spent much of the summer break on a bipartisan congressional trip to Southeast Asia, where leaders she met with in Thailand, the Philippines and Indonesia were mystified at Congress's paralysis. ''When we asked why our exchange numbers are down at universities, they talked about gun violence,'' she said, noting that Congress has been unable to muster a bipartisan consensus to enact any additional gun control measures in response to an epidemic of mass shootings.

When pressed about why a dress code should matter so much in a political moment defined by ''ding-a-ling'' pictures, Mr. Vance laughed.

''We should set standards of behavior, recognizing that a lot of people, most people, will fall short from time to time,'' he said.

Senator Sherrod Brown of Ohio was one of the few Democratic senators unhappy about the dress code and its attendant issues of respect for different reasons.

''I can go in dressed any way I want and the workers can't?'' Mr. Brown said, noting that the change would not extend to the staff members who work in the chamber. ''If we are allowed to dress casually, they should be allowed to dress casually. To me, it's a dignity of work issue.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/19/us/politics/senate-dress-code-fetterman-schumer.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/19/us/politics/senate-dress-code-fetterman-schumer.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: Senator J.D. Vance of Ohio, who grew up in poverty, has lamented the new, breezy dress code as a matter of respect for the chamber. (PHOTOGRAPH BY HAIYUN JIANG FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A18.

**Load-Date:** September 20, 2023

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[***Democrats and G.O.P. Both See a Win in Ohio***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:66RK-0KT1-JBG3-633H-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

October 30, 2022 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; National Desk; Pg. 15

**Length:** 1341 words

**Byline:** By Trip Gabriel

**Body**

Polls show Representative Tim Ryan competing within the margin of error against his Republican opponent, J.D. Vance, in the high-profile Ohio Senate race.

CLEVELAND -- When Tim Ryan speaks to Democratic crowds in the closing days of the Ohio Senate race, his biggest applause line is about the other team.

A Republican official in a ''deep-red county,'' he recounts, his voice dropping to a stage whisper, told him, ''You have no idea how many Republicans are going to quietly vote for you.''

The hoots and hollers that break out represent the high hopes of a party that has lost much of its appeal to ***working-class*** voters and that sees in Mr. Ryan -- a congressman from the Mahoning Valley who has an anti-China, pro-manufacturing message and whose own father is a Republican -- a chance to claw back blue-collar credibility.

Polls show Mr. Ryan competing within the margin of error against his Republican opponent, J.D. Vance. Mr. Ryan is polling higher than President Biden's job approval rating in Ohio surveys, and he is outperforming the Democratic candidate for governor, Nan Whaley. That suggests a potentially sizable pool of voters who intend to split their tickets between a Republican for governor and a Democrat for Senate.

''This is going to be the upset of the night,'' Mr. Ryan said in an interview on his campaign bus on Thursday, as he plied the pro-Democrat shoreline of Lake Erie from Toledo to Cleveland.

''There's a lot of Republicans who would never tell a pollster that they're voting for me,'' he said. ''They don't want to put a yard sign up. They don't want to get in a fight with the neighbor who's got the 'Let's Go Brandon' flag.''

He said his internal polling showed 12 percent or more of Republicans ''coming our way.''

But there is also the cold reality of a midterm environment tilting against Democrats almost everywhere, with inflation the top voter concern. Polling in Ohio in recent elections has undercounted the backing for Republican candidates. And there has been a political realignment of Ohio voters in the past decade, which has largely pushed the state off the battleground map.

White Ohioans without college degrees have shifted toward Republicans up and down the ballot, while suburban, college-educated voters have moved to favor Democrats, though less consistently.

''Ohio is a much more Republican state than Texas is,'' said Mike Hartley, a Republican strategist with 25 years of experience in Ohio. ''Democrats talk about things that for a lot of Ohioans offends their core principles and sensibilities, and they run away from the pocketbook issues.''

Former President Donald J. Trump twice won Ohio with ease by appealing to the economic and cultural anxieties of ***working-class*** white voters. In 2020, he grew his support in the state's industrial northeast -- Mr. Ryan's base -- and became the first Republican presidential candidate in 50 years to win Mahoning County, which is home to Youngstown.

Bob Paduchik, chairman of the Republican Party of Ohio, brushed off the notion of quiet Republican support for Mr. Ryan. He said county-level absentee voting data and an analysis using Republican National Committee modeling predicted a clean Vance victory.

''I don't know what he thinks he's looking at,'' he said of Mr. Ryan's assertion of hidden support. ''But I'll take our data, which is based on the R.N.C. modeling, which has hundreds of millions of dollars invested in it.''

Despite Mr. Trump's success in Ohio, Democrats point to the example of Senator Sherrod Brown, a Democrat and gruff-voiced champion of organized labor who won re-election in 2018 by appealing to ***working-class*** voters who might not have liked his progressive social priorities, but believed he would fight for their jobs.

Mr. Ryan, casting himself partly in the Brown mold, is the grandson of a steelworker and a longtime opponent of trade deals that hurt American factories. He has said that President Biden should not seek re-election and he opposed Nancy Pelosi for House speaker. A former college quarterback, he appears in his ads throwing darts in a bar or footballs at TV sets. ''You want culture wars? I'm not your guy,'' he says.

Mr. Ryan pitches himself to voters weary of the divisiveness and anger broiling in America. ''I have this conversation with my dad all the time,'' he said in the interview, adding that his father ''probably'' voted for Mr. Trump, twice.

''People are tired of the insanity,'' Mr. Ryan told a gathering of Democratic activists on the shore of Lake Erie in Sandusky on Thursday. ''We're Ohio. Ohio doesn't do crazy.''

It was a sideswipe at Mr. Vance, who has campaigned with the far-right Representative Marjorie Taylor Greene of Georgia, has flirted with the conspiracy theory that Democrats want to ''replace'' existing voters with immigrants and has defended Alex Jones as ''more reputable'' than an MSNBC host.

On Friday, speaking to supporters at the county Republican headquarters in Canton, Mr. Vance portrayed his opponent as disingenuous in claiming to be a new-model Democrat. Mr. Vance joked that ''maybe we should have invited Tim Ryan'' because of the Democrat's efforts to distance himself from his own party.

''This guy is not the moderate that he pretends to be,'' Mr. Vance continued. ''He's a guy who bends the knee to Nancy Pelosi and does what he's told.''

One sign that Mr. Ryan remains a long shot is the lack of TV advertising from big-spending groups tied to the Democratic Senate leadership, which have poured tens of millions of dollars into races elsewhere.

Mr. Ryan has compensated by raising a staggering $48 million on his own. The money flowed from small donors around the country, many annoyed by Mr. Vance's political evolution, from the ''Hillbilly Elegy'' author who denounced Mr. Trump in 2016 as ''cultural heroin'' to a stalwart Trump supporter. At a rally in Ohio last month, the former president joked that Mr. Vance ''is kissing my ass'' to win his support.

Mr. Trump is scheduled to return to the state the day before the election for a rally with Mr. Vance in Dayton. Asked at a brief news conference on Friday whether he needed a boost from the former president, Mr. Vance said: ''I like the president. I thought his policies deliver prosperity for the state of Ohio, and he wants to come to Ohio, and we'd love to have him in Ohio. It's really that simple.''

Unlike Mr. Ryan, who has shunned campaigning with national Democratic figures, Mr. Vance has embraced national G.O.P. leaders, appearing in Canton with the Republican National Committee chairwoman, Ronna McDaniel, and Senator Rick Scott of Florida, the chairman of the Republican Senate campaign arm.

Mr. Vance has largely relied on the Republican cavalry from out of state, most significantly for $28 million in TV ads from a super PAC aligned with Senator Mitch McConnell, the Senate minority leader.

Mr. Vance on his own has raised $12.7 million, after his campaign was supported almost exclusively by a super PAC funded by $15 million from the Silicon Valley billionaire Peter Thiel, who once employed Mr. Vance. After Mr. Vance won his primary, Mr. Thiel moved on to other races.

On Friday, Ms. McDaniel reminded reporters that polls in Ohio historically have widely missed support for Republicans.

''J.D. is actually polling higher than President Trump was heading into the election in 2020,'' she said. Mr. Trump went on to win the state by eight percentage points.

''What people were seeing in the polling is not new in this state,'' Mr. Vance told reporters. ''It always overstates things to the benefit of the Democrats.''

With a little more than one week before the election on Nov. 8, Mr. Ryan has been making an appeal to unity in these fractured times.

''I know you feel the same way as I do,'' he told activists in an autoworkers union hall in Cleveland on Thursday night. ''I don't want any more hate. I don't want any more anger.'' He added: ''I want people who care about each other. I want some forgiveness. I want some grace.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/29/us/politics/ohio-senate-race.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/29/us/politics/ohio-senate-race.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Tim Ryan at the United Auto Workers' Local 14 in Toledo, Ohio. (PHOTOGRAPH BY MADDIE MCGARVEY FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

J.D. Vance at the Darke County Republican Party Hog Roast. (PHOTOGRAPH BY BRIAN KAISER FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A15.

**Load-Date:** October 30, 2022

**End of Document**



[***Lawmakers Give New Senate Dress Code a Dressing Down; Congressional Memo***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:696P-TWK1-JBG3-609V-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Byline:** Annie Karni

**Highlight:** Some senators worry that more casual dress might breed disrespect for Congress. Others argue that the harshest critics have already debased the institution, even in business attire.

**Body**

Some senators worry that more casual dress might breed disrespect for Congress. Others argue that the harshest critics have already debased the institution, even in business attire.

Senator J.D. Vance of Ohio has accused President Biden of trying to inundate the heartland with fentanyl to “punish people who didn’t vote for him.” He has eagerly promoted the false claim that former President Donald J. Trump won the 2020 election. And recently, he announced his plans to block all nominations to the Justice Department until it stops what he describes as a “political prosecution” of Mr. Trump.

But on Tuesday, Mr. Vance spoke about a different gripe altogether: the relaxing of the Senate dress code, which he said would demean America’s governmental institutions.

“My grandfather, who I never saw wear a suit, who didn’t own a suit as far as I know, would have never shown up to work in the United States Senate without dressing properly,” said Mr. Vance, who grew up in poverty in Appalachia and today purchases his bespoke suits from an Italian tailor in Cincinnati. “A lot of ***working-class*** people across this country respect this building. They’re frustrated by it, but they respect it and I think the dress code should reflect that.”

The recent decision by Senator Chuck Schumer, Democrat of New York and the majority leader, to relax the Senate’s informal dress code and allow members to enter the chamber in casual attire, or even gym clothes, has set off waves of consternation and cries of dismay in the stuffy upper chamber. Many senators, mostly Republicans, have publicly expressed concerns along the same lines as Mr. Vance’s, and privately have said that the change could harm America’s standing on the international stage.

Even some Democrats say they are appalled. At the Capitol on Tuesday, Senator Joe Manchin of West Virginia, said he had told Senator John Fetterman, the Pennsylvania Democrat whose hoodie-and-gym-shorts attire appears to have prompted the change, that he thought the decision was “wrong” and that he would do everything in his power to “try to hold the decorum” of the Senate.

“Senator Schumer has done everything he can to destroy the traditions of the Senate,” said Senator John Cornyn, Republican of Texas. “It’s another indication he doesn’t respect the Senate as an institution.”

Senator Cynthia Lummis, Republican of Wyoming, said that “people who dress like slobs tend to think they can act like slobs.”

“We have a bad enough reputation for lack of civility and decorum now, and this just takes it to rock bottom,” she added.

Senator Susan Collins, the 70-year-old Republican from Maine who favors modest, tailored skirt suits, joked that she would protest by showing up to work wearing a bikini, an image so incongruous she didn’t have to say anything more. By the end of the day, 46 Republican Senators — the vast majority of the caucus — had signed a public letter to Mr. Schumer, imploring him to reverse the plan. “The world watches us on that floor, and we must protect the sanctity of that place at all costs,” [*they wrote.*](https://www.rickscott.senate.gov/services/files/2A7EC7D9-0152-414F-A08C-A8A203ED3CE9)

The new rules, which direct the sergeant-at-arms to no longer enforce the longstanding dress code for members, appear to have been changed mainly to accommodate Mr. Fetterman. Since returning to the Senate after being hospitalized for depression, Mr. Fetterman has refused to squeeze his hulking, 6-foot-8 frame into a suit, navigating the Capitol instead in airy basketball shorts and oversized sweatshirts. The rule change will now allow him to enter the chamber, and even preside over it, in his preferred state of dishevelment, which doubles as a way to signal his blue-collar, outsider status.

“Oh my god!” Mr. Fetterman said sarcastically on Tuesday of the hand-wringing about what would become of the nation’s Capitol if he were to preside over the Senate in a hoodie. “I think it will be OK. The Republicans think I’m going to burst through the doors and start break dancing on the floor in shorts. I don’t think it’s going to be a big issue.”

Online, Mr. Fetterman has been having fun pointing out instances in which the Republicans who have criticized him for his sartorial choices have not comported themselves with great dignity or decorum, even while wearing business slacks or dresses.

Representative Marjorie Taylor Greene, Republican of Georgia, called it “disgraceful” that the Senate was “lowering the bar” by changing its dress code.

“Thankfully, the nation’s lower chamber lives by a higher code of conduct: displaying ding-a-ling pics in a public hearing,” Mr. Fetterman replied, referencing Ms. Greene’s [*move during a recent House committee hearing*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/07/19/us/politics/irs-hunter-biden-whistle-blowers.html) to display oversized nude photos of the president’s son, Hunter Biden, engaged in sex acts.

The dress code drama, however inconsequential it may seem during a week when Congress is inching steadily closer to a government shutdown, did ignite a real discussion about what it means to show respect for the body in which one serves — especially at a moment when hard-right members who feel they have been sent to Washington to dismantle the government and disrupt its hallowed institutions are wielding their influence.

To many, gym shorts may be a sign of disrespect. But many of the best-dressed members in Congress have not always acted in ways that convey respect for democratic institutions.

Representative Jeff Van Drew, the former New Jersey Democrat who switched parties in 2019 and pledged his “undying support” to Mr. Trump, shows up to work most days with a four-point pocket square. In 2021, he voted to overturn the presidential election results.

Representative George Santos, the Long Island Republican who has been charged by federal prosecutors with money laundering, stealing public money, wire fraud and making false statements to Congress, among other crimes, regularly looks preppy and dapper in his signature crew-neck sweaters layered over crisp, white, button-down shirts. Despite his natty outfits, his Republican colleagues largely treat him like a pariah who brings only notoriety by association.

Some members argued that it’s not lawmakers’ dress code, but their inability to address pressing issues of national import that draws disrespect from allies abroad.

Representative Jasmine Crockett, a freshman Democrat from Texas, said she spent much of the summer break on a bipartisan congressional trip to Southeast Asia, where leaders she met with in Thailand, the Philippines and Indonesia were mystified at Congress’s paralysis. “When we asked why our exchange numbers are down at universities, they talked about gun violence,” she said, noting that Congress has been unable to muster a bipartisan consensus to enact any additional gun control measures in response to an epidemic of mass shootings.

When pressed about why a dress code should matter so much in a political moment defined by “ding-a-ling” pictures, Mr. Vance laughed.

“We should set standards of behavior, recognizing that a lot of people, most people, will fall short from time to time,” he said.

Senator Sherrod Brown of Ohio was one of the few Democratic senators unhappy about the dress code and its attendant issues of respect for different reasons.

“I can go in dressed any way I want and the workers can’t?” Mr. Brown said, noting that the change would not extend to the staff members who work in the chamber. “If we are allowed to dress casually, they should be allowed to dress casually. To me, it’s a dignity of work issue.”

PHOTO: Senator J.D. Vance of Ohio, who grew up in poverty, has lamented the new, breezy dress code as a matter of respect for the chamber. (PHOTOGRAPH BY HAIYUN JIANG FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A18.

**Load-Date:** September 19, 2023

**End of Document**



[***In Ohio, G.O.P. Sees a Clean Victory as Democrats Predict an Upset***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:66RB-GNN1-JBG3-622Y-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

October 29, 2022 Saturday 07:56 EST

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**Section:** US; politics

**Length:** 1382 words

**Byline:** Trip Gabriel

**Highlight:** Polls show Representative Tim Ryan competing within the margin of error against his Republican opponent, J.D. Vance, in the high-profile Ohio Senate race.

**Body**

Polls show Representative Tim Ryan competing within the margin of error against his Republican opponent, J.D. Vance, in the high-profile Ohio Senate race.

Follow our [*live coverage of the 2022 midterm elections*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2022/11/10/us/election-updates-midterms-results) for the latest news and updates.

CLEVELAND — When Tim Ryan speaks to Democratic crowds in the closing days of the Ohio Senate race, his biggest applause line is about the other team.

A Republican official in a “deep-red county,” he recounts, his voice dropping to a stage whisper, told him, “You have no idea how many Republicans are going to quietly vote for you.”

The hoots and hollers that break out represent the high hopes of a party that has lost much of its appeal to ***working-class*** voters and that sees in Mr. Ryan — a congressman from the Mahoning Valley who has an anti-China, pro-manufacturing message and whose own father is a Republican — a chance to claw back blue-collar credibility.

Polls show Mr. Ryan competing within the margin of error against his Republican opponent, J.D. Vance. Mr. Ryan is polling higher than President Biden’s job approval rating in Ohio surveys, and he is outperforming the Democratic candidate for governor, Nan Whaley. That suggests a potentially sizable pool of voters who intend to split their tickets between a Republican for governor and a Democrat for Senate.

“This is going to be the upset of the night,” Mr. Ryan said in an interview on his campaign bus on Thursday, as he plied the pro-Democrat shoreline of Lake Erie from Toledo to Cleveland.

“There’s a lot of Republicans who would never tell a pollster that they’re voting for me,” he said. “They don’t want to put a yard sign up. They don’t want to get in a fight with the neighbor who’s got the ‘Let’s Go Brandon’ flag.”

He said his internal polling showed 12 percent or more of Republicans “coming our way.”

But there is also the cold reality of a midterm environment tilting against Democrats almost everywhere, with inflation the top voter concern. Polling in Ohio in recent elections has undercounted the backing for Republican candidates. And there has been a political realignment of Ohio voters in the past decade, which has largely pushed the state off the battleground map.

White Ohioans without college degrees have shifted toward Republicans up and down the ballot, while suburban, college-educated voters have moved to favor Democrats, though less consistently.

“Ohio is a much more Republican state than Texas is,” said Mike Hartley, a Republican strategist with 25 years of experience in Ohio. “Democrats talk about things that for a lot of Ohioans offends their core principles and sensibilities, and they run away from the pocketbook issues.”

Former President Donald J. Trump twice won Ohio with ease by appealing to the economic and cultural anxieties of ***working-class*** white voters. In 2020, he grew his support in the state’s industrial northeast — Mr. Ryan’s base — and became the first Republican presidential candidate in 50 years to win Mahoning County, which is home to Youngstown.

Bob Paduchik, chairman of the Republican Party of Ohio, brushed off the notion of quiet Republican support for Mr. Ryan. He said county-level absentee voting data and an analysis using Republican National Committee modeling predicted a clean Vance victory.

“I don’t know what he thinks he’s looking at,” he said of Mr. Ryan’s assertion of hidden support. “But I’ll take our data, which is based on the R.N.C. modeling, which has hundreds of millions of dollars invested in it.”

Despite Mr. Trump’s success in Ohio, Democrats point to the example of Senator Sherrod Brown, a Democrat and gruff-voiced champion of organized labor who won re-election in 2018 by appealing to ***working-class*** voters who might not have liked his progressive social priorities, but believed he would fight for their jobs.

Mr. Ryan, casting himself partly in the Brown mold, is the grandson of a steelworker and a longtime opponent of trade deals that hurt American factories. He has said that President Biden should not seek re-election and he opposed Nancy Pelosi for House speaker. A former college quarterback, he appears in his ads throwing darts in a bar or footballs at TV sets. “You want culture wars? I’m not your guy,” he says.

Mr. Ryan pitches himself to voters weary of the divisiveness and anger broiling in America. “I have this conversation with my dad all the time,” he said in the interview, adding that his father “probably” voted for Mr. Trump, twice.

“People are tired of the insanity,” Mr. Ryan told a gathering of Democratic activists on the shore of Lake Erie in Sandusky on Thursday. “We’re Ohio. Ohio doesn’t do crazy.”

It was a sideswipe at Mr. Vance, who has campaigned with the far-right Representative Marjorie Taylor Greene of Georgia, has flirted with the conspiracy theory that Democrats want to “replace” existing voters with immigrants and has defended Alex Jones as “more reputable” than an MSNBC host.

On Friday, speaking to supporters at the county Republican headquarters in Canton, Mr. Vance portrayed his opponent as disingenuous in claiming to be a new-model Democrat. Mr. Vance joked that “maybe we should have invited Tim Ryan” because of the Democrat’s efforts to distance himself from his own party.

“This guy is not the moderate that he pretends to be,” Mr. Vance continued. “He’s a guy who bends the knee to Nancy Pelosi and does what he’s told.”

One sign that Mr. Ryan remains a long shot is the lack of TV advertising from big-spending groups tied to the Democratic Senate leadership, which have poured tens of millions of dollars into races elsewhere.

Mr. Ryan has compensated by raising a staggering $48 million on his own. The money flowed from small donors around the country, many annoyed by Mr. Vance’s political evolution, from the “Hillbilly Elegy” author who denounced Mr. Trump in 2016 as “cultural heroin” to a stalwart Trump supporter. At a rally in Ohio last month, the former president joked that Mr. Vance “is kissing my ass” to win his support.

Mr. Trump is scheduled to return to the state the day before the election for a rally with Mr. Vance in Dayton. Asked at a brief news conference on Friday whether he needed a boost from the former president, Mr. Vance said: “I like the president. I thought his policies deliver prosperity for the state of Ohio, and he wants to come to Ohio, and we’d love to have him in Ohio. It’s really that simple.”

Unlike Mr. Ryan, who has shunned campaigning with national Democratic figures, Mr. Vance has embraced national G.O.P. leaders, appearing in Canton with the Republican National Committee chairwoman, Ronna McDaniel, and Senator Rick Scott of Florida, the chairman of the Republican Senate campaign arm.

Mr. Vance has largely relied on the Republican cavalry from out of state, most significantly for $28 million in TV ads from a super PAC aligned with Senator Mitch McConnell, the Senate minority leader.

Mr. Vance on his own has raised $12.7 million, after his campaign was supported almost exclusively by a super PAC funded by $15 million from the Silicon Valley billionaire Peter Thiel, who once employed Mr. Vance. After Mr. Vance won his primary, Mr. Thiel moved on to other races.

On Friday, Ms. McDaniel reminded reporters that polls in Ohio historically have widely missed support for Republicans.

“J.D. is actually polling higher than President Trump was heading into the election in 2020,” she said. Mr. Trump went on to win the state by eight percentage points.

“What people were seeing in the polling is not new in this state,” Mr. Vance told reporters. “It always overstates things to the benefit of the Democrats.”

With a little more than one week before the election on Nov. 8, Mr. Ryan has been making an appeal to unity in these fractured times.

“I know you feel the same way as I do,” he told activists in an autoworkers union hall in Cleveland on Thursday night. “I don’t want any more hate. I don’t want any more anger.” He added: “I want people who care about each other. I want some forgiveness. I want some grace.”

PHOTOS: Tim Ryan at the United Auto Workers’ Local 14 in Toledo, Ohio. (PHOTOGRAPH BY MADDIE MCGARVEY FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES); J.D. Vance at the Darke County Republican Party Hog Roast. (PHOTOGRAPH BY BRIAN KAISER FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A15.

**Load-Date:** November 10, 2022

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[***Enola Holmes 2***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:66SK-YJR1-DXY4-X4SS-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

November 4, 2022 Friday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section C; Column 0; Movies, Performing Arts/Weekend Desk; Pg. 9

**Length:** 352 words

**Byline:** By Beandrea July

**Body**

Millie Bobby Brown delivers an understated, playful performance in this young-adult mystery sequel.

Enola Holmes is back, and she's ready for both her first official case as a detective and, work schedule permitting, some romance. Millie Bobby Brown delivers an understated, playful performance in the follow up to the Netflix young-adult mystery ''Enola Holmes.'' This time around, the director Harry Bradbeer and the screenwriter Jack Thorne forgo prolonged dialogue when Enola breaks the fourth wall, making more room for Brown's intense looks and physical gestures to resonate.

Working in the shadow of her famous brother, Sherlock (Henry Cavill), Enola realizes that independent, professional women are treated more like suspects than like trusted investigators in Victorian England. So it makes sense that her first case comes from a fellow young woman, Bessie (Serrana Su-Ling Bliss), who needs to track down a missing co-worker at a matchstick factory where women workers are mysteriously dying of typhus. (This plot point was inspired by the women who orchestrated the 1888 Match Girls Strike in London.)

[Video: Watch on YouTube.]

Sherlock himself is working on a case of stolen government funds, and the siblings eventually discover their cases are in fact linked. As Enola finds she can hold her own, both alongside and without her brother, a sheltered girl gives way to a young woman who embraces the literal and figurative fighter in her, finding solidarity with ***working-class*** women in the fight for women's rights in the process. As Edith, a suffragist leader and jiu-jitsu master played by a steadying Susan Wokoma, proclaims in the film: ''You can't control Enola. She's a force of nature.''

Speaking of the movie's well-choreographed fight scenes, when Enola's mother, Eudoria (a delightful Helena Bonham Carter), and Edith band together to beat the heck out of grown-men assailants, one can't help but cheer on this Y.A. feminist tale as a welcome addition to the Sherlock Holmes universe.

Enola Holmes 2Rated PG-13 for moderate violence. Running time: 2 hours 9 minutes. Watch on Netflix.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2022/11/02/movies/enola-holmes-2-review.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/11/02/movies/enola-holmes-2-review.html)

**Graphic**

This article appeared in print on page C9.

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**End of Document**



[***Monday Briefing***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:691X-XM41-JBG3-6021-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

August 28, 2023 Monday 00:40 EST

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**Section:** BRIEFING

**Length:** 1174 words

**Byline:** Natasha Frost

**Highlight:** The future of the Wagner private military company.

**Body**

The future of the Wagner private military company.

A leaderless future for the Wagner military company

Wagner, the once-powerful Russian private military company that fell out of favor with the Kremlin after an aborted mutiny in June, has been cast into uncertainty. [*The Russian authorities have confirmed the death*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2023/08/27/world/russia-ukraine-war-news) of the group’s leader, Yevgeny Prigozhin, in a plane crash, and Russia’s president, Vladimir Putin, has sent mixed signals on his plans for Wagner.

Attention is now shifting to whether Wagner, which Prigozhin built into a global empire over nearly a decade, ultimately will die, too. The Kremlin is believed to be considering ways to bring Wagner under more direct control, experts say, but hasn’t made any final decisions on what to do with the group and its trained fighters, geopolitical inroads and business interests.

Wagner fighters are already joining volunteer formations, as well as official units, under the Russian armed forces.

Analysis: “I think that PMC Wagner, in itself, as a structure, most likely won’t exist,” said Aleksandr Borodai, a member of the Russian Parliament who briefly served in 2014 as a Moscow-installed proxy leader in Donetsk, Ukraine.

In other news from the war:

* Russia said Ukraine fired a string of drones over the weekend [*in an attempt to attack border regions and Moscow*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/27/world/europe/russia-ukraine-war.html?smid=url-share).
* Remarks by Nicolas Sarkozy, the former president of France, [*have raised fears that Europe’s pro-Putin chorus may grow louder*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/27/world/europe/former-french-president-voice-russia.html), as Ukraine’s plodding counteroffensive puts pressure on Western resolve.

1. “He has blood on his hands”: People in a Ukrainian village [*destroyed by Wagner mercenary forces*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/26/world/europe/ukraine-russia-prigozhin-wagner.html) reflected on Prigozhin’s brutality.

African nations cast doubt on Zimbabwe’s elections

Zimbabwe’s neighbors in southern Africa have for the first time [*publicly questioned the legitimacy of the country’s elections*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/27/world/africa/zimbabwe-elections-mnangagwa.html) last week, after a vote that kept the governing party in power. President Emmerson Mnangagwa has brushed off the criticism. “Those who feel the race was not run properly should know where to go to complain,” he said.

Southern Africa has long prided itself on relative stability and on being generally free of the coups and terrorism that have plagued other parts of the continent. But Zimbabwe has been seen as a drag on the region, analysts say, with a decades-long economic and political crisis that has led to sanctions and isolation by the U.S. and other Western nations.

Details: The Southern African Development Community observer mission criticized voter intimidation in Zimbabwe, mismanagement by its electoral body and laws that restricted free speech.

Egypt razes historic treasures and green spaces

The government in Egypt has [*destroyed ancient tombs*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/26/world/middleeast/egypt-cairo-city-construction-demolition.html), gardens and a growing number of historic but shabby ***working-class*** neighborhoods, as developers in Cairo work to build concrete high-rises. Families who have lived in the sprawling Egyptian capital for generations are being pushed to its fringes.

President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi is fast modernizing the unruly city of 22 million people into a place of efficient uniformity — at a cost. “There is not a single place in Egypt that has not been touched by the hand of development,” he said in a recent speech.

THE LATEST NEWS

Around the World

* More than six months after a powerful earthquake, [*Syrians feel forgotten*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/27/world/middleeast/syria-earthquake-rebuilding.html) amid limited repairs and almost no rebuilding.

1. A gang vying for control of a swath of Haiti’s capital, Port-au-Prince, [*opened fire on protesters*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/27/world/americas/haiti-shooting-protest-port-au-prince.html), killing at least seven people, human rights groups said.
2. An estimated 80 percent of buildings [*were reportedly damaged during a hailstorm*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/27/world/europe/hailstorm-damage-germany-bavaria.html) in the town of Bad Bayersoien in southern Germany.
3. The authorities in Jacksonville, Fla., are [*investigating a shooting at a dollar store*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/27/us/jacksonville-shooting-victims-timeline.html), in which three Black people were killed, as a hate crime.

Other Big Stories

* The U.S. Air Force is starting to use [*A.I. to fly robot aircraft*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/27/us/politics/ai-air-force.html). But there are concerns about how much autonomy to give a lethal weapon.

1. Three U.S. Marine Corps troops died [*after a military aircraft crashed during a routine training exercise*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/27/world/asia/marines-plane-crash-australia.html) in Australia.
2. California, once synonymous with boundless growth, has [*seen its population stagnate*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/27/us/california-population-decline-housing-crisis.html).
3. JAXA, the Japanese space agency, [*has postponed the launch*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/27/science/japan-space-launch-xrism-slim.html) of an X-ray telescope and an experimental robotic moon lander.

From Opinion

* David French describes how [*the worst tidings can sometimes transform*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/27/opinion/family-together-health-scare.html) into the greatest joy.

1. [*Stepping into Raymond Chandler’s shoes*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/26/opinion/raymond-chandler-philip-marlowe-denise-mina.html)showed Denise Mina the power of fiction.
2. Donald Trump’s fate belongs in [*the hands of 12 ordinary citizens*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/27/opinion/trump-prosecution-jury-courts.html), Jesse Wegman says.
3. President Vladimir Putin of Russia had [*every reason to want Yevgeny Prigozhin gone*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/26/opinion/prigozhin-death-putin.html), Tatiana Stanovaya writes.

A Morning Read

A distinctive 16-foot clock, decorated in gold, was [*installed on a sidewalk of Fifth Avenue, one of Manhattan’s busiest streets*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/27/nyregion/trump-tower-clock-nyc.html), by the Trump Organization, which did so without applying for a permit or paying a fee.

City inspectors never noticed. Now, more than a decade later, they would like to be paid for allowing it to occupy part of a public sidewalk.

SPORTS NEWS

Surprising normalcy: The Formula 1 superstar Max Verstappen discusses [*keeping his feet on the ground*](https://theathletic.com/4797666/2023/08/23/max-verstappen-formula-one/).

U.S. Open: Coco Gauff and Jessica Pegula are [*entering the tournament*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/27/sports/tennis/usopen-gauff-pegula.html) on a roll.

Women’s World Cup: FIFA suspended Luis Rubiales, president of Spain’s soccer federation, amid an investigation after [*he kissed a player on the lips after Spain’s victory*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/27/world/europe/spain-luis-rubiales.html).

ARTS AND IDEAS

Being a little bit bad

The Times’s Opinion section asked writers to come clean about the vices that bring them joy. Here is a selection — or [*read the full list*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/08/25/opinion/bad-pleasures-virtues.html).

“I keep my Facebook account active for the sole purpose of stalking figures from my past. Their lives are slow-motion serial dramas that I investigate assiduously. No more pictures of the spouse? Let’s take a closer look.” — Melissa Febos, author, professor and usually good at minding her own business.

“Gossiping is a habit I inherited from my mother, who is the biggest gossip I know. It is a pleasure I now share with my husband. If you’re reading this and are among our loved ones, know that your personal life is a regular topic of discussion in our house.” — Vauhini Vara, journalist, author and mostly a very good friend.

“I eat whatever’s in front of me — usually ribs — and follow it with a martini. Modern medicine ensures I won’t die straight away. It’s a glorious time to be alive.” — Gary Shteyngart, writer who once ate a salad.

For more: [*The case against being a good person*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/25/opinion/desires-good-person.html).

RECOMMENDATIONS

Dress [*cold noodles and vegetables*](https://cooking.nytimes.com/recipes/1024544-cold-sesame-noodles-with-cucumber-corn-and-basil) with nutty sesame dressing.

Turn [*errands into exercise*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/26/well/move/errands-exercise.html).

Romp [*through the French Riviera*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/27/books/review/once-upon-a-time-world-jonathan-miles.html), via Jonathan Miles’s book, “Once Upon a Time World.”

Harness [*feelings of regret*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/25/well/mind/dealing-with-regret.html) to create positive change.

Play the [*Spelling Bee*](https://www.nytimes.com/puzzles/spelling-bee). And here are [*today’s Mini Crossword*](https://www.nytimes.com/crosswords/game/mini) and [*Wordle*](https://www.nytimes.com/games/wordle/index.html). [*You can find all our puzzles here*](https://www.nytimes.com/crosswords).

That’s it for today’s briefing. Thanks for joining me. — Natasha

P.S. Take our [*weekly history quiz*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/08/26/upshot/flashback.html).

Reach Natasha and the team at [*briefing@nytimes.com*](mailto:briefing@nytimes.com?subject=Europe%20Morning%20Briefing%20Feedback).

PHOTO: A memorial in Moscow for Yevgeny Prigozhin. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Nanna Heitmann for The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** August 28, 2023

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[***Wes Anderson and Todd Haynes to Compete at Cannes Film Festival***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:680S-3W51-JBG3-608K-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

April 13, 2023 Thursday 11:49 EST

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**Section:** MOVIES

**Length:** 612 words

**Byline:** Alex Marshall

**Highlight:** More than 50 movies will be screened at the event, including Johnny Depp’s first major film since a defamation trial and Martin Scorsese’s latest epic.

**Body**

More than 50 movies will be screened at the event, including Johnny Depp’s first major film since a defamation trial and Martin Scorsese’s latest epic.

Follow our live updates from the opening night of the [*Cannes Film Festival.*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2023/05/16/movies/cannes-film-festival)

Movies by Wes Anderson, Todd Haynes and Ken Loach will compete for the Palme d’Or at this year’s Cannes Film Festival, the event’s organizers announced during a news conference on Thursday.

Also in the running for the festival’s top prize will be films by the returning winners Wim Wenders, Hirokazu Kore-eda, Nuri Bilge Ceylan and Nanni Moretti.

But Martin Scorsese will not compete at the festival, which opens May 16 and runs through May 27. Instead, his eagerly anticipated movie “Killers of the Flower Moon,” which stars Leonardo DiCaprio and is about the murder of Osage Indians in 1920s Oklahoma, will appear out of competition. Thierry Frémaux, Cannes’s artistic director, said during Thursday’s news conference that the festival wanted “Killers of the Flower Moon” to play in competition, but Scorsese had turned him down.

The Wes Anderson picture in competition is “[*Asteroid City*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9FXCSXuGTF4&amp;ab_channel=FocusFeatures),” about a space cadet convention that is interrupted by aliens; Todd Haynes will show “May December,” starring Natalie Portman and Julianne Moore, which follows an actress researching the woman she is set to play.

Ken Loach, whose movies focused on ***working-class*** life in Britain have twice won the Palme d’Or, will present “The Old Oak,” about Syrian refugees [*arriving in an economically depressed English mining town*](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-tyne-63536292).

A jury led by the Swedish director Ruben Ostlund will choose the winner. Ostlund won last year’s Palme d’Or for “[*Triangle of Sadness*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/06/movies/triangle-of-sadness-review.html),” a satire of the international superrich; he also took the 2017 award for “[*The Square*](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/10/26/movies/the-square-review-elisabeth-moss.html),” a sendup of the art world.

Of the 19 titles in competition, five are directed by women, including the Cannes veterans Jessica Hausner and Alice Rohrwacher, and Ramata-Toulaye Sy, a French-Senegalese newcomer.

Many of the highest profile titles at this year’s event will be shown out of competition. The festival will open with “Jeanne du Barry,” a period drama about a poor woman who becomes a lover of King Louis XV of France. It [*stars Johnny Depp*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/04/05/movies/johnny-depp-cannes-film-festival.html?searchResultPosition=1) in his first major role since he won a defamation trial against his ex-wife Amber Heard.

Other high-profile movies scheduled to premiere at Cannes’s 76th edition include “[*Indiana Jones and the Dial of Destiny,*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eQfMbSe7F2g&amp;ab_channel=Lucasfilm)” directed by James Mangold — the final movie in the Harrison Ford adventure series about a globe-trotting archaeology professor — and Pedro Almodóvar’s “Strange Way of Life,” the Spanish director’s second movie in English. Starring Ethan Hawke and Pedro Pascal, that movie is a short western about a reunion between two hit men.

Wim Wenders, the German director who won the 1984 Palme d’Or for “[*Paris, Texas*](https://www.nytimes.com/1984/10/14/movies/paris-texas-from-wim-wenders.html),” has two films in the official selection. In the main competition, he will show “Perfect Days,” which Frémaux said was about a janitor in Japan who drives between jobs listening to rock music. Out of competition, Wenders will show a 3-D documentary about [*Anselm Kiefer*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/12/magazine/anselm-kiefer-art.html), one of Germany’s most revered artists.

Frémaux said that over 2,000 movies were submitted for the festival, although only 52 made Thursday’s selection. Of those, one other notable title is Steve McQueen’s “Occupied City,” about Amsterdam under the Nazis. Frémaux said that McQueen, the director of “12 Years a Slave” and “Widows,” had made a “very radical” film that was several hours long. But, Frémaux added, watching it, “you won’t fall asleep.”

PHOTO: The director Wes Anderson at Cannes in 2021. (PHOTOGRAPH BY VADIM GHIRDA/ASSOCIATED PRESS) This article appeared in print on page C4.

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[***Transcript: Ezra Klein Interviews Bhaskar Sunkara; The Ezra Klein Show***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65N9-T4N1-JBG3-649Y-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** PODCASTS

**Length:** 11080 words

**Highlight:** A conversation with the political writer Bhaskar Sunkara.

**Body**

Every Tuesday and Friday, Ezra Klein invites you into a conversation about something that matters, like today’s episode with Bhaskar Sunkara. Listen [*wherever you get your podcasts*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/19/opinion/how-to-listen-ezra-klein-show-nyt.html).

Transcripts of our episodes are made available as soon as possible. They are not fully edited for grammar or spelling.

EZRA KLEIN: I’m Ezra Klein. This is “The Ezra Klein Show.”

[MUSIC]

Before we begin today, some job creation — we’re looking for a researcher on the show. If this is something you think you’d be great at, that you have some experience in, that you can show us the way you’ve done it before, take a look at the job listing. We have a link in the show description today.

But for today’s episode, go back a decade, and socialist is a dirty word in American politics. Today, it’s a pretty good brand, at least if you’re in a pretty blue district. The bulk of the credit there, of course, goes to Bernie Sanders and his two presidential runs. But some of it goes to “Jacobin,” the socialist journal launched in 2010 by Bhaskar Sunkara that updated both socialist thinking and, I would say, the socialist aesthetic for a new generation of young leftists looking for ideas, for community, and for identity. But for all the progress, Sunkara, who is now both the founding editor of “Jacobin,” and the president of “The Nation” magazine — got a lot of power over lefty journals in America — is nervous.

The left has gotten enough power to drive narrative, but not enough to win many elections. Biden, not Sanders, won in 2020. Eric Adams, not Dianne Morales, won the 2021 primary for mayor among Democrats in New York City. In San Francisco, Chesa Boudin, one of the most visible of the progressive lefty DAs — he just got overwhelmingly recalled in the primary. So in a recent edition of “Jacobin,” titled, “The Left in Purgatory,” Sunkara warns against, quote, “The path to political self-satisfaction, a marginality that is just large enough to sustain itself, but that will never be strong enough to move beyond permanent resistance.” And then, he turns his attention and that of his journal to understanding why the left isn’t winning, and whether the kind of highly ideological appeals to the highly educated that form the core of “Jacobin’s” brand may be part of the problem, may actually be preventing them from developing the ***working-class*** base that a successful left needs.

So I wanted to have him on the show to talk about where the left is now and where he thinks it needs to go next. As always, my email — [*ezrakleinshow@nytimes.com*](mailto:ezrakleinshow@nytimes.com) Bhaskar Sunkara, welcome to the show.

BHASKAR SUNKARA: Thanks for having me, Ezra.

EZRA KLEIN: So you recently published an issue of “Jacobin,” titled, “The Left in Purgatory.” Tell me about that. How would you describe the state of the left today?

BHASKAR SUNKARA: Well, the state of the left is far better than I could have imagined where it would be 10 years ago, in that we’re actually having a conversation about the state of the left. I feel like for a good chunk of modern American history, at least since the ’70s, it’s been taken for granted that we were a country without a left, where the furthest left you could go in American politics was not even Ezra Klein and Chris Hayes, but probably Jon Stewart, maybe, Al Gore.

And I think we’re in a much better position than we used to be. So even with some of the recent setbacks for the left, electorally, in the U.S., even with two Bernie Sanders defeats, we’re at a point where we can say that the left is a presence in American life. But the purgatory part comes in, because we are simultaneously too large to be wiped completely off the map by a few setbacks, but we’re also too small and too — I say this as a member of the left, of course — too incompetent in our ability to actually carry out our program, so we’re stuck in the space in between.

EZRA KLEIN: You have an interesting way, in the editorial you write in that issue, of describing that space in between. And I want to quote it here. You write, “There is something dangerous about being large enough to be a political presence in parts of the country and a subculture for thousands of activists, but far too disorganized and powerless to carry out your political program.” Why did you use the word, “dangerous”? What is dangerous about that in-between state?

BHASKAR SUNKARA: I think the part that’s dangerous for those of us on the left is the risk of self-satisfaction, or the risk of being able to basically spend the entirety of our lives in the left and around the left. I am a member of the Democratic Socialists of America. I’ve been less active in the past year, but there has been whole stretches where I could wake up on a Saturday and meet up with a friend from the Democratic Socialists of America, go to a canvas for a candidate we cared about, hang out afterwards, maybe in the evening, write something for a DSA-affiliated publication or for a pamphlet or some piece of literature or whatever else.

I could spend a huge chunk of my life in and around the left and actually doing useful things. But at the same time, we get so obsessed about small, little victories and silver linings and the feeling that things are pushing our direction, we ignore the fact that the right in America is organized and actually achieving huge amounts of victories and rollbacks of even rights that many of us took for granted, like Roe v. Wade, for instance, and doing that through their own mechanisms.

And also, you have, just in general, the center of the country, the political spectrum, feeling more threatened by criticisms from the right rather than from the left. And at the same time, it’s dangerous, because I think a lot of voters associate the left with power and blame us for things that we have no control of, and blame us for not being able to carry out our program, and feel, in general, more and more disenchanted from politics as usual.

So we are kind of gone from this outsider insurgent force that in 2016, in Sanders campaign, was actually able to win over some people who were disengaged from the political process and might have not even described themselves as liberals, to being, I guess, just a part of the political scene that is not getting much done for ordinary people.

EZRA KLEIN: Give me some examples of things that you feel the left might get blamed for wrongly.

BHASKAR SUNKARA: Well, I think that there are certainly a host of policy ideas that the left has pushed for, that are sometimes wrongheaded. But I think one example — you could look at the discourse and debate around Defund the Police. You can look at the discourse around critical race theory.

You would think that the left had control over policing policies in major cities in America. You would think that the left had control of our nation’s curriculum. You would think that the left had this overarching control of a lot of the things you could put into the bucket of the, quote unquote, culture war in the United States, when I think that the left is largely a weak outsider opposition force that has a few well-known figures.

We have our A.O.C.s, we have our Bernies. But in general, we’ve been locked out of power, and locked out, not just by the establishment in some kind of secret way, but locked out in part because we just don’t have a social base attached to our project.

That’s the reason why I’m saying the word, the left, instead of saying something like, the workers’ movement, like you would in certain other countries of the world where the political left and the broad organization of ***working-class*** people were one and the same for decades and decades in the 20th century. You just don’t have that association in the United States today.

EZRA KLEIN: I want to put a pin in that question of the social base and who composes it, but I want to ask you one more question about that quote. Because I was thinking about what it might mean and came to a thought similar to, I think, what you just gestured at, which is that there’s maybe an asymmetry in the power the left wields, which is to say that the left that is arisen around Bernie Sanders, around “Jacobin,” has a lot of narrative-setting power, a lot of media power, a lot of power to push ideas out into the ether, but then, as you say, not a lot of power to actually accomplish, execute, improve, modify the lived realities people are in.

Is that right? And is that part of the dangers? Is there something dangerous about having a lot of power over what people are talking about, but not a lot of power over what they’re actually experiencing?

BHASKAR SUNKARA: I think that’s exactly right, Ezra. And I would say that there’s also a lot of danger in considering yourself just a rhetorical force. Because what do you do when you’re not responsible to a constituency but you have this influence in the cultural sphere?

Well, you end up just maximalizing your rhetoric. If Joe Biden wants $4 trillion of spending, you’ll say you want $10 trillion. There’s a kind of rhetorical maximalism that comes from having a political worldview that, I think, for many people on the left, is too focused on expanding the Overton window — the window of what’s possible through our rhetoric and through our demands, instead of figuring out how to connect with and build a base and move them along to more progressive policies and rhetoric, and eventually, a very different, more humane world.

EZRA KLEIN: You wrote something else that relates to that, in this editorial, that I thought was interesting. You wrote, quote, “The question we may have to ask ourselves in the years to come is whether some of our actions could be hastening, rather than reversing, the process of class dealignment.” So beginning with the question of, what is class dealignment, can you unpack that for me?

BHASKAR SUNKARA: Yeah, I think class dealignment is just simply the fact that we used to associate being poor, being ***working-class***, having less in society, with the politics of redistribution, of — these people get the franchise in many countries, the late-19th century, in the U.S., obviously, throughout the 19th century and into the 20th century, until people got the true franchise.

And the thinking was, OK, the people with less in a capitalist society are going to use this power to demand that the state redistribute wealth from the rich to the not-so-rich. And that redistribution could be in very direct forms. More often than not, it’d be through the creation of a welfare state.

So the left-of-center parties around the world that were advocating for the creation of welfare states and redistribution tended to have the support of people with less — not just less education, but less education, less wealth, less power, more generally. They used their collective power to overcome what they didn’t have as individuals.

There was kind of a common sense to that. But all around the world, what you’re seeing now is that a lot of ***working-class*** people are either dropping out of the political process entirely. They feel like they can’t get anything from politics, so they’re not bothering.

And some of them are actually voting for the political right, voting for parties that might be trying to reach them through cultural appeals, through enticing, sometimes even populist rhetoric, which fundamentally don’t alter the distribution of resources in a society. And that’s the danger of dealignment.

In the United States, we have had this problem for many, many years on the left. Education is one simple proxy for it. Obviously, it’s a little bit more complex than that, but we could see that voters without college degrees used to be a very, very strong part of the New Deal coalition of the Democratic Party.

Now, voters without college degrees, especially white voters, are drifting towards the Republican Party. And as a result, the Democrats are not modulating their appeals to those people.

EZRA KLEIN: So I want to key in on something important you said there, which is that this is happening all around the world. And certainly in peer countries — you look at Europe, you look at Canada — Thomas Piketty, who was just on the show, along with coauthors, has done work looking at what they call the rise of a Brahmin left, right, this highly educated left.

Why do you think that is happening? What is behind this shift from a coalition of those who have less cultural and economic capital making up the foundation of the left, to it becoming a coalition of people who have more little capital, but particularly more educational and cultural capital?

BHASKAR SUNKARA: Well, in the 20th century, the types of parties that captivated the attention of ***working-class*** people were deeply rooted parties. They were rooted in civil society. They were rooted in trade unions.

They were tied so closely with ***working-class*** life, that in some countries, every single tenement building might have had a representative from the labor party, a local resident who would knock on doors and whip the vote, and who would take problems their neighbors would have to their local MP or their local city councilor. So there was this deep connection between ***working-class*** people and their politicians.

To some degree, we had this in the United States in certain areas with political machines. And when we hear political machines, we think that it’s an entirely negative thing. And we hear the word, patronage, and we think it’s just a synonym for corruption.

But there was a sense of rootedness in a lot of areas where people felt like the Democratic party, for instance, was close to their needs, close to them, and an avenue that they could use to even up the odds, and navigate bureaucracy, and to figure things out. There was a deep sense of association. A union endorsement actually meant something back then. If your union told you, this is the list of candidates we’re supporting in this election, you’d be more apt to help that. So that’s gone now.

But also, once in power, those politicians were offering a model of growth tied to redistribution. So in the post-war period, up through the ’70s, not just in the United States, but across Europe, you have Social Democratic parties, and you have the New Deal Democratic Party, overseeing high-growth rates and overseeing expansions of the welfare state going along with those growth rates.

It wasn’t just an ideological quest of convincing people, one by one, that their interest was voting for the left, so they had more things, or they had representatives who, quote unquote, look like them, or spoke like them, or whatever else. It was tied to a real concrete program. And I think since the ’70s, you’ve had a decline in that kind of either growth liberalism in the United States or social democracy in Europe, and as a result, politics has lost some of its material force.

EZRA KLEIN: So I’m always a little skeptical of explanations that track an international trend but that seem like they have a lot of counterexamples. And so the story that left parties, kind of, across the Western world became — to summarize it very quickly — more neoliberal, right? They moved away from that kind of post-New Deal, mid-1950s consensus, common good politics, and towards this more market-oriented somewhat redistributive politics.

It’s true in a bunch of individual cases, but politics, it seems to me, is competitive enough across a multi-country sample, that you’d expect to see — if that was a really bad way of doing politics, there’d be a bunch of countries where left parties didn’t do that, and really thrived.

But what’s so striking to me about the turn of the left in many countries to being a much more highly educated coalition is, it really happens in virtually every country in the samples that I know of.

And that implies to me that it’s reacting to something or building on something that is more common, right? If it was just strategic mistakes by this party or that party, it seems very unlikely they would all be making the same strategic mistake at once, unless there was something that they’re commonly responding to.

So what do you see is the common force? If it’s that they stopped offering the agenda they should have offered, why did they all kind of do that at the same time?

BHASKAR SUNKARA: Well, it wasn’t rooted primarily in politics. I think it was rooted in an economic problem. It was rooted in the fact that the growth rates of the post-war period slowed down.

There’s a variety of reasons. Why it slowed down in the ’70s is up for debate. Part of it was just contingent factors like the OPEC oil shock, and the growth in globalization, which kind of made some of these models less feasible to continue. Some of it was the fact that labor was demanding really high wages and demanding lots of benefits.

And that was great when things were growing, but when things slowed down, it became harder for capitalists to keep up with, and they looked for a way to restore growth and restore profitability. And I think a lot of center-left leaders made a calculation.

And they said, we’re going to give capital the flexibility to restructure. We’re going to allow them to attack unions. We’re going to allow them to deregulate certain things, to restore growth rates, but then we’re going to continue to tax this unleashed capital to maintain the bedrock of our social programs.

So to some extent, this kind of political shift of center-left parties worked. And of course, as they undermined their social base, their traditional base in the ***working class***, they had to find more and more voters from elsewhere to reach out to. So more of their voting bloc became professionals.

It shifted to certain other segments of capital that might be willing to support them, so they broadened their social base at a time when the old model wasn’t working. And when it seemed like you really couldn’t get far enough in politics with just a ***working-class*** base, then that obviously became a self-fulfilling prophecy, because you’ve now weakened trade unions. You’ve now weaken some of the most powerful vehicles for actually getting your party into office to begin with.

EZRA KLEIN: So let’s go back then to the more recent history of the American left. So Bernie 2016 is a genuine watershed moment. It does, as a campaign, I think, change American politics profoundly.

When you look back from now, post-Bernie 2020, post all that we’ve seen, what were the lessons you think the left learned from that campaign? And for that matter, what lesson do you think Bernie learned from that campaign? And were they the right ones?

BHASKAR SUNKARA: Well, I think the initial lesson the left learned from Bernie 2016 was the fact that there are people out there that are hungry for a message that more or less tells them it’s not their fault, that the day-to-day miseries and the problems that they’re encountering are things that are not the product of not working hard enough, not getting the right certificate or training, but the result of social problems and that social problems demand a collective solution.

And Bernie was able to reach these people through the mass media, through the bully pulpit of a presidential campaign, and just through very simple common-sense rhetoric. You might say it was oversimplified, how he was describing the world. But I think it was a simplification that tapped into and resonated with people, because it was rooted in something real.

They felt that they were working hard, and they felt that millionaires and billionaires were not allowing them their fair share. And that was basically the core of left-wing politics, of egalitarian politics, for decades and decades and decades. And Bernie, I think, just helped us remember some of it.

And even though our trade unions were hollowed out, even though our civic associations in ***working-class*** areas were hollowed out, even though the American left was minuscule at the time, Bernie, I think, through this kind of left-wing populist rhetoric, tapped into something really special, and it became associated with just Medicare For All.

And with the same set of slogans, it became just a parody, right? Everyone knew what Bernie was going to say, every single line of his speech, because he just never deviated from his message. I think some of the wrong lessons that were learned from 2016 was that Bernie was too repetitive, that Bernie didn’t incorporate gender and race into his worldview and into his rhetoric.

And I think that ignored the fact that the simplicity and clarity is what attracted people to Bernie Sanders, and that people basically want the same things. Black voters, white voters, Latino voters, Asian voters — our concerns are really not all that different.

How we phrase our concerns, how we order our priorities might be different, but there was a simplicity to Bernie’s universalism that I think, to some extent, he moved away from to try to be more competitive in a Democratic Party primary where identity really does matter more and how you frame things and how you reach voters.

EZRA KLEIN: Something I notice around people who like Joe Biden, who think there was a genius to the way he ran the 2020 campaign, but are now frustrated by him — I often notice a view that Biden’s best instincts are older, that he had an advantage for being rooted in an older period of politics, and that gave him some standing, some intuitions, that let him resist some of the trends buffeting Democratic politicians today, particularly very online ones.

But I also detected, in this edition of “Jacobin,” a kind of similar view of Bernie and the left — a view that Bernie was rooted in an older left, Bernie was rooted in other periods of American politics, and that, particularly in 2016, gave him a kind of difference, gave him an aesthetic that was different, gave him a set of concerns that were different — that he lost a bit of that in 2020, and that the people coming after him — there are some pieces in there critical of A.O.C. and others — have really lost it.

And I think it’s interesting that both the moderates and the lefties, or at least some lefties at “Jacobin,” have a kind of nostalgia for what the more veteran politicians know, that they worry the younger politicians don’t. Do you think I’m reading this right, or does that ring falsely to you?

BHASKAR SUNKARA: I think you’re reading this right. But I would say that Bernie’s politics were a learned politics. Yes, when you hear Bernie, it sounds like he’s harkening not to the old left, necessarily, of the 1930s in the U.S., but to the rhetoric of the Civil Rights movement, which always aimed at majoritarian support.

Martin Luther King’s last campaign was, of course, a campaign for economic justice. He’s famous for having lines saying, yes, it’s important that we desegregated the lunch counter, but we also need to make sure that everyone could afford to buy hamburger there, too. These are kind of the common-sense rhetoric of people trying to build majorities.

But Sanders came out of a new left that was at times more fringe and more radical in its rhetoric. He spent a lot of the 1970s kind of going back to the land and pursuing kind of minor third-party politics in Vermont up until his election as mayor of Burlington. So I think Bernie found the rhetoric that worked through trial and error. He found the way to reach ordinary people.

And it wasn’t just that he was reading from the same book as older leftists. I think he and a lot of his generation around the new left figured out how to reach people. So I don’t think that A.O.C. is locked into sounding less like a Bernie Sanders-style Democratic Socialist at time and more like a hyper-liberal or a more hyperbolic version of the same liberalism offered by other wings of the party.

But I think that there’s something can be learned. At her best, A.O.C. offers this kind of soaring, really inspiring rhetoric. It’s just about getting to that core and avoiding language that I think the left has borrowed too much from academia, in part because that’s where we existed in the ’80s, ’90s, and beginning of 2000s. We were really much just cloistered to the universities.

[MUSIC]

EZRA KLEIN: Imagine Biden didn’t get his Super Tuesday surge or that he bobbled it somehow, and Bernie had won the primary, and then had won the presidency. And I think we should expect it kind of would have been a sort of similar-sized win to Joe Biden, given how he performed.

What do you think looks differently today if Bernie Sanders was president, but also had a 50-50 Democratic Senate Majority and a relatively slim House Majority? How does the counterfactual play out?

BHASKAR SUNKARA: Well, governing the United States is extremely hard nowadays. Obviously, you covered a lot of this in your book, but there’s so many choke points. There’s so many veto points in American politics, that it is very hard to govern.

I think the difference is, Sanders had a sense of what mass politics was. He had a sense that in order to break the gridlock, sometimes you had to just tell people, speak to them earnestly, tell them why things are stalled, tell them to go rally and organize and call their neighbors. In other words, try to inject this new force into American politics, so that when Washington was stuck, we were calling upon the outsiders to unstick Washington.

And I think that’s something that Bernie — I’m cautious saying this — but Bernie had in common with Donald Trump, in that Trump was not a very successful politician, as far as instituting new policies for his cause — and for that, I’m grateful — but he did try to mobilize his supporters to do things. He did try to have mass rallies.

He was constantly in the media talking to the American people. Thankfully, in my mind, he did not convince too many of them to support his causes. But I do think Bernie would have tried similar tactics to reach ordinary people, try to talk to them, try to tell them, you’re an agent and policies.

There’s a joke about Biden, but I think it’s really true — that sometimes when you hear him complaining about things wrong in the country, you kind of just feel like he’s the leader of Canada or something. He’s just looking at the United States and being like, who’s in charge of this thing? You know? So many things are not working. It’s a disaster. And I feel like with Bernie, at least there would have been this attempt to repoliticize American politics.

EZRA KLEIN: Oh, it’s really funny, that last point, because I almost see it exactly differently. And it gets to the piece in that issue by Natalie Shure, on “The End of the A.O.C. Honeymoon.” So it always seems to me that because the US is so difficult to govern, and because even when you win, you win so little power, compared to what it would mean if you won in Canada or you won in the U.K., a very central problem for politicians is, how do you explain what you can’t do?

How do you lead a government that you don’t actually control, particularly if, say, Republicans have the House or the Senate, or I guess if you’re Donald Trump, if Democrats have the House or the Senate. And I think a problem for many liberals — for Joe Biden, for Barack Obama — is that they often kind of own the failures of government, right?

It’s their government, their party, and they try to convince you that what’s happening is still pretty good, even though it’s not what they promised and maybe not what you wanted.

I think something Donald Trump was always very good at was, even though he didn’t get much done, he never really acted to his own side like the guy in charge. To the extent that running against deep state had a kind of genius to it, the genius was that it severed Trump for some responsibility for what wasn’t happening.

He was trying to fight the government he ran. You couldn’t really hold him fully responsible for what it did. I think Bernie has always been actually quite good, as somebody who has worked very coalitionally with the Democratic Party and has been involved in passing a lot of bills that from the Bernie Sanders perspective are very compromised.

I think Sanders has always been very good at saying, hey, look, that was progress, but it is still unacceptable progress. Like, it isn’t something we should really be proud of. It’s just a step on the path. He always seems still pretty mad about how government works.

And that A.O.C. piece is interesting to me, because it talks about A.O.C. having to navigate some of these exact same tensions, now being part of a House Majority at the moment that cannot do everything she wants it to do, that cannot do everything it wants to do — and some of the left becoming alienated from her as she tries to operate more pragmatically in that context, rather than symbolically.

But this always seems to me to be the very deep problem. And I think also it would have been very difficult for Sanders if he’d become president, that — what do you do when you’re the person in charge, you’re in power, but you can’t wield nearly as much power as the people who put you there thought you would or hoped you could?

BHASKAR SUNKARA: The left has always been thinking about what we can do with the balance of forces on the ground, what we are going to be able to accomplish or not. I think when you’re in Congress, a lot of your mentality is going to be more coalitional, because you’re in — you’re one piece of a much larger body, and you’re trying not to get locked out.

And I think A.O.C. has made the strategic choice to be, one, a registered Democrat, unlike Bernie, because that makes her more competitive in a deep blue district. And also, she made a decision that she was going to try to get onto committees and to play ball with the Democratic Party leadership on certain key issues than pick her spots otherwise.

I think that’s a rational choice. But then, the question is, what is distinct about what you’re offering? Like, what’s the difference between an A.O.C. and a, let’s say, Nancy Pelosi? Well, I certainly think that there’s a difference, and I support A.O.C., and I’m very critical of Nancy Pelosi.

But is it just that Nancy Pelosi wants to go 50 percent towards a goal, and A.O.C. wants to go 70 percent or 80 percent towards the goal? Or is there a qualitative difference between Democratic Socialist politicians and liberal politicians? So I think there should be a qualitative difference in terms of our rhetoric, our worldview and the type of even welfare state we’re trying to construct.

So I think that’s really what the critique of A.O.C. should be about. It shouldn’t be, oh, she wasn’t intense enough about pushing through this. She wasn’t disruptive enough when she was in power. It’s more just like, is there something actually different in the worldviews that separates the squad from the rest of the Democratic party, or are they just a part of a Democratic party continuum that always has existed?

EZRA KLEIN: I think that brings us back to the question of the left social base. Because how different the politicians are is also going to reflect what constituencies they are responsive to, where the support comes from, who they’re listening to, who they’re around.

And “Jacobin” commissioned and wrote up in this issue a pretty interesting survey of ***working-class*** voters and their political preferences, both substantively and aesthetically, in a bunch of key states. So can you tell me a bit about that survey’s findings? What you learned from it?

BHASKAR SUNKARA: I think what we learned from that survey was that ***working-class*** voters are attracted to a bread-and-butter economic messaging, but that doesn’t mean we have to ignore issues of race and racism. We could even use words like “structural racism,” but it does make sense to foreground material, economic concerns, and that also, there is a certain type of Democratic party rhetoric, I think, that has written off whole swaths of the country as being deep red states, Trump country, in which there’s a lot of voters in these areas that I think can be won over to the party if it seems like the party is actually offering them something.

And I think part of the goal is to say that there’s multiple roads to building a welfare state, and the one that is probably the easiest one comes from actually building a base across all races and backgrounds of ***working-class*** people. That doesn’t mean that you don’t want any votes in the suburbs, or you’re just going to ignore every single electoral calculus.

It’s just, if you’re going to say, like Chuck Schumer did infamously a few years ago, that for every vote you lose in Pittsburgh or in the rust belt, you’re going to pick up a couple of votes in the suburbs of Philadelphia, from more middle-class voters — I think that’s an extremely defeatist way to go about politics. So I think a lot of what we’re looking for is proof that ***working-class*** voters have a distinct profile and are very much open to redistributionist candidates.

EZRA KLEIN: I thought the survey, at least as I read it, posed some real challenges to the way a lot of left politics has evolved. And so I saw three. So one, as you say, ***working-class*** voters are very responsive to bread-and-butter issues, to economic messaging.

But they’re not wildly more redistributive, certainly, than the more highly educated voters. And I think actually, in a lot of respects, we see evidence that they’re somewhat less so. And then, the non-voters are somewhat less liberal even still. The view that non-voters are this unbelievably left mass that simply needs to be mobilized by a sufficiently socialist or radical message — that doesn’t really come out.

And then, third — and I think this is a really genuinely interesting thing you all did in the survey as you began testing different ways of phrasing the same appeal — that there is very much a preference for what you might call a more ***working-class*** aesthetic, a preference for less academic language, a preference for candidates who talk and present in a certain way, that I think is kind of not the way a lot of left candidates, particularly when they come out of the more educated segments of the movement, do. Do you want to talk through how you understood those pieces of the survey?

BHASKAR SUNKARA: Yeah, I think that the real challenge to the Bernie worldview is that there was a massive bloc of non-voters willing to just come out, and all you needed was an outsider candidate, and you would re-engage these people. And I think that Bernie’s strategy did not really bring a new voting block to fore in the last election cycle.

And I think this survey kind of confirms that it’s really complicated to get people who are out of the political process into the political process. And having a candidate say the right things isn’t a magic solution to it. I think the real way in which you get people into the political process is through a lot of organizing, a lot of really expensive, time-consuming organizing. It’s not a rhetorical trick.

The ***working-class*** aesthetic thing is kind of common sense — to me, at least. But it makes sense that people want their candidates to be teachers. They want their candidates to speak in a way that’s familiar with them. They want their candidates to be postal workers.

They want their candidates to be people that seem far more relatable than someone with an academic background or someone with a perfectly credentialized background, like a lawyer. You know, we’ve had many, many generations of lawyers as politicians in the United States.

I think it really should remind us that there is an audience out there that just cares about, more or less, the same things. They care about having good health care. They care about jobs.

They care about security in their neighborhoods. They want to see candidates that are speaking to them in common-sense rhetoric.

And there’s kind of a populist baseline in the United States, to our voting bloc, that it would be a grievous error to ignore.

So I think that when it comes to middle-class voters in suburbs, it’s not that you don’t want these people to vote for you. It’s, are you going to tailor your rhetoric to their concerns, or are you going to talk vaguely about democracy? Are you going to foreground certain social issues, or are you just going to have one rhetoric for all people, then hope that those people in the suburbs go with you, because of how far right the Republican Party has moved on social and cultural and economic issues, too?

EZRA KLEIN: It gets to a problem, I think, both for the left, and then more broadly for the Democratic party, as both have become more educationally polarized, and both have become more concentrated among, sort of, high-education voters, particularly among their activists and very influential classes, which is — I do think it is a well-understood fact among the whole left-of-center in American politics that representational politics is important.

But that’s usually thought of in terms of race and gender — to some degree, in terms of sexuality. It’s not nearly as often thought of in terms of class. And there’s a lot of evidence — the political scientist Nick Carnes, has done a lot of work on this — about how white-collar elected officials have gotten over the however many decades.

And you know, you’re going to source your candidates from the people who are in your party or the people who are in your movement. And to the extent you want to build a more ***working-class*** movement, you actually do need ***working-class*** representation. I think that’s one of the lessons of that survey.

But I think you see it in a lot of places. I think it’s one reason that if you looked at polling in 2019, a lot of Bernie Sanders voters had Joe Biden as their second choice, and a lot of Joe Biden voters had Bernie Sanders as their second choice. Because the two candidates read aesthetically sort of similarly.

I mean, they were kind of cranky older white guys with a somewhat more ***working-class*** aesthetic than, I think, where the Democratic party’s gone, if you compare them to, say, an Elizabeth Warren, say. And that just gets harder to find those candidates as your party depolarizes around education.

And there’s not nearly as much of a push, like, a frustration in the party, when ***working-class*** candidates are less represented than there would be if other kinds of experiences or groups were less represented. And I think that’s probably a mistake.

BHASKAR SUNKARA: Beyond that, too, when you have weak parties, like a weak party structure, you need candidates that can self-finance their own campaigns and have easy access to money. So it becomes a lot easier in a primary, if you’re a corporate lawyer and you have access to a bunch of other friends with money, and former clients with money, and you’re from that world, to think about running a campaign than if you’re an insurgent who’s well-liked in your local community but don’t have access to those networks.

So a lot of this is, how are you giving these candidates money to support them? What networks are they drawing on? Are they able to get not just endorsements, but funds from unions?

Are groups like the Democratic Socialists of America able to assemble the funds to help some of these upstarts? And in certain areas like New York City, they have been, but that’s not the case in most places.

EZRA KLEIN: But it’s interesting, because that doesn’t seem to me to be, at any level, an insoluble problem if somebody really wanted to solve it. I mean, when you think about the money sloshing around politics — including the left of politics, because there are funders from celebrities, to the guy who runs the Dr. Bronner’s soap company, to lefty rich people who get into this.

I mean, I’ve always thought it’s very interesting that A.O.C.’s first chief of staff and one of the core people who helped recruit her was a very early employee of the tech finance firm, Stripe. So I don’t think it’s the case that there is no money.

You could really imagine $10, $20, $50 million being put into a group that is simply doing ***working-class*** candidate recruitment, and funding super PACs, given the way our system actually works now, that helps those candidates out in their elections.

And you know, there are a lot of House elections in this country that are not that expensive — certainly, a lot of state legislature and Senate and mayoral, and so on, elections that aren’t that expensive. You guys have a piece in this issue about a socialist candidate in Buffalo who ends up losing. And the take on that is that the establishment drops a bunch of money against her.

But it also just wasn’t that much money, you know. You could have imagined, certainly, as much or more money coming from other areas. So I wonder why you think those organizations haven’t really been built.

BHASKAR SUNKARA: Well, I think some of them are being built. Like I said, in New York State, we have several socialist members of the assembly. We have state senators that have backgrounds as teachers and nurses and so on, that have gotten funds through the Democratic Socialists of America and a host of other forces like the Working Families Party.

And beyond those funds, they’re able to have access to huge amounts of volunteers to do canvassing. They tend to get a lot of media buzz, such as Democratic Socialism still kind of had this luster post-Bernie about it, and they were able to get out there in the media.

I actually do think — and I would agree it’s possible. It’s about, at the national level, actually making sure that there are unions, and there are groups willing to put the money into candidate recruitment, and finding these people, and running them, when sometimes they’re going against establishment candidates willing to play ball with the left.

You know, why does Chuck Schumer not have a credible challenge from the left coming? Well, that’s probably because we have a lot of unions in New York State that are very powerful, and Chuck Schumer is willing to go along with them.

It’s pretty risky to spend money on these long-shot campaigns. Obviously, once in a while, you find a candidate like Fetterman in Pennsylvania. You find someone who has both a ***working-class*** aesthetic and has progressive policies, but beyond Fetterman, it’s hard to say who at the national level there is, after Bernie, that has that kind of mass appeal, that you could imagine running in a presidential election, and having that kind of platform like Bernie had the last two cycles.

[MUSIC]

EZRA KLEIN: So then, I want to move from this question of how the left is composed, to if it is able to win power, what it’s able to deliver, or even what the Democratic Party as currently composed is able to deliver. Because we’ve been talking about your issue on the left in political purgatory, but the issue that just came out is, as I say, very, very relevant to my interests, which is, you guys have a — you call it the infrastructure issue.

And I’ve been doing these pieces about the difficulties that liberalism has building and supply side progressivism.

And I see this issue as very much trying to think about, how do you create a socialism that builds? How do you how do you deal with the question that when the federal government spends money on the kinds of infrastructure projects the left supports and wants to see a lot more of, it isn’t getting as much for that money.

It isn’t getting things done as quickly, as well, on budget, as other countries, other rich countries with more unions than we have and bigger percentage of G.D.P. governments than we have are. So tell me a bit about this. What do you see as the problem to building infrastructure in America?

BHASKAR SUNKARA: I think part of the problem — and just to give some numbers behind what you’re saying, we have an article in that issue, by Elizabeth Henderson and Jared Abbott, that noted that the cost-per-mile of rail and recent projects in Madrid is around $140 million per mile. In L.A., it’s something like a half-billion dollars per mile.

The root of the problem, I think, is in part in American federalism. We have a ton of competing stakeholders. We have agencies. We also have just different rules at federal, state, and local levels.

We tend to institute things. Like, in 1970, we instituted the National Environmental Policy Act. But instead of just having that environmental review whenever we do new construction, being enforced through experts and civil society, we’ve let it be enforced through civilian lawsuits.

So you end up with this weird situation where you don’t have just a transit agency empowered to make construction with a review process, with a limited period of civilian discussion, and with a limited period for potential litigation. You just have this very protracted, prolonged period with a lot of discussion and a lot of extra costs. And as a result, we just kind of don’t have the expertise at quickly building transit, because it’s a muscle we haven’t used in a while.

And it’s all a far cry from what we used to do. You know, the original Tennessee Valley Authority, the New Deal program, cost just $75 million at the time. And today, that’s around $1.6 billion today. That program, still, to this day, the T.V.A. employs around 10,000 people directly, indirectly employs tens of thousands more, generates power for 10 million people.

It’s still the largest publicly owned energy provider in the country. And that was done by $1.6 billion. You know, you could imagine the scale of what even the infrastructure bill we passed would be if we were able to actually push direct state planning and investment, and cut through some of this bureaucracy.

EZRA KLEIN: One thing I think is interesting here, at least as I’ve been trying to follow the threads of this among liberals and try to understand how we went from being able to build as much as we did in the mid-20th century to as little as we’re able to now, is confronting or realizing that there is a divided soul on the left, inside liberalism, however you want to draw that circle. And so on the one hand, I think the stereotype is that this side of the political spectrum believes in big government, wants to give government a lot of power, wants government to build things, and it’s the right that fears government doing things.

But there is a real strain inside liberalism inside the left that fears government, that fears government being captured, that remembers and thinks about Robert Moses building these highways through Black communities, Rachel Carson and thinking about how much construction in that era was done without any real thinking about the environmental consequences — and so built a lot of structures, laws that are, in fact, about hobbling government, about forcing it to hear the complaints of groups, making it possible for people to sort of throw themselves in front of the government with a lawsuit and actually get it to stop until their concerns are heard out in a court of law.

How do you think about those ideological tensions? Because I do think they’re real. Like, how do you think about the question of the left that is afraid of government power, not the one that is confident in it?

BHASKAR SUNKARA: I think it’s easy to focus on what government action gets wrong and mistakes made in the past through government action, but we often don’t think about the cost of inaction. 45 percent of Americans don’t have access to public transit at all. These are people who are disproportionately poor.

They’re in rural areas. They’re really suffering, and there’s no real political power that they’re wielding about this issue. Built environments in those areas are built towards needing car ownership at a time the cars are really expensive and car and gas prices are really expensive. And it’s just a hidden cost, a hidden burden on American workers that we don’t really think about.

So I think that’s one thing — foregrounding the cost of inaction, not just the cost of actions. But I think all of this is due to a mismatch we have in the United States between having not really mass membership democracy in the sense of — in Spain, when they’re constructing something in Madrid, yes, there’s a very limited period, compared to the U.S., for public discussion of issues.

But there is a period. There can be discussion. There can be review. There’s just more trust the environmental reviews have been done by the state, so there’s trust in the material brought to them, which I think that, as part of funding and healing our civil service in the U.S., we have very much the expertise to do the same sort of reviews through our experts.

But also, people are connected with political parties in more intense ways that might be advocating for these changes. They’re connected with mass membership unions that have been consulted in the construction process. And all these parties at a mass level are stakeholders, but stakeholders without the same veto power as we have in the U.S., where we have kind of small-scale democracy.

We have do-it-yourself democracy. We have civic groups. We have lawsuits. We have all sorts of community groups that wield power, and these are just a handful of people who are the most engaged and most active. And often through a lawsuit, they’re able to slow down a process.

EZRA KLEIN: One way I’ve heard you frame this, which I thought was interesting, was that America, compared to peer countries, has a very thick civic democracy and a thin associational democracy. You want to talk about that for a minute?

BHASKAR SUNKARA: So yeah, this goes back to what I was saying before, which is that in the United States, people don’t feel they don’t get a party membership card. They don’t feel like it means something to be a Democrat. They don’t feel like they can knock on the door of their representative or city councilor or feel like they have some sort of say in the program of their party.

They don’t feel like they’re really tied into their union, if they are members of a union at all. They, in other words, feel like the way in which they could exercise agency when they are involved is through lawsuits. It’s through being members of a small-scale civil association or environmental association that is going to just stop a project, freeze everything, until they could fully understand what’s going on.

So there is democracy. There are avenues for them to stop things, but it’s at a fragmented, local scale, instead of a mass scale. And part of this is rooted in just, at times, historically, a rooted distrust in the state, distrust in state actors, distrust that these experts conducting environmental reviews might be bought and captured by some corporation or some special interest, that they aren’t truly giving dispassionate information.

I think in other countries, there’s a lot more trust there. Now, what we can’t really fix in the short term is the fact that we’re going to have different regulations at the federal level, at the state level, sometimes at the local level. And companies bidding on these projects are going to have a more complicated time navigating that.

So it becomes harder sometimes to take a scheme that’s used to build one set of rail in one state and apply it to another process and system in another. And that’s kind of a problem of American federalism that plagues us as a country.

EZRA KLEIN: I’ll ground this in an example that I’ve just been poking around over the past couple of days. So in 2019, New York passed congestion pricing in New York City, so that money will go to mass transit improvements. This has been a long multi-multi-multi-year fight that had been defeated a bunch of times.

But in 2019, Cuomo agrees on it. De Blasio agrees on it. The New York legislature agrees on it. Then, it turns out that because some of the roads in New York City were financed in part by the federal government, and you can’t just build a toll on a road financed by the federal government without their agreement, exemptions, et cetera, so now, you need the federal government to sign off.

So Trump hates Cuomo. They drag their feet. Nothing happens for a year or two. Then, Biden is elected. Pete Buttigieg becomes Secretary of Transportation.

You know, they say, of course we’ll work with you on this. New York is a blue state. It’s full of their allies. Congestion pricing is good for the climate. It’s good for mass transit. It’s worked in Stockholm and London.

So they start going forward, and they give New York an exemption from the normal environmental impact review, and they can just do the lighter environmental assessment, which — the deal they strike includes 20 meetings and extensive consultation with Jersey and Connecticut. And so the timeline on that is 16 months.

And then, the Federal Highway Administration looking over the assessment sends back 430 technical questions and comments, slowing everything down. And I’m sure a lot of these comments and questions are reasonable, right? The Federal Highway Administration is full of capable, smart people.

And at the same time, this thing is going to open up, maybe at the end of 2023, maybe later, maybe never. You know, the government promised to do something, and it’s still not doing it. The mass transit improvements it would have been able to build are going to be that much later, if they ever happen. So how do you understand that story, from the left perspective? What do you think should go differently in it, if anything?

BHASKAR SUNKARA: Well, I think in my mind, democracy elections should have consequences, and policies should have consequences, too. So it’s a problem in part of too many different stakeholders and too much mediation getting in away from elected governments being able to pursue policies that are going to, of course, have some consequences.

And if they turn out to be mistakes, people can get together and vote for a new set of electeds that can pursue a new policies to reverse course. But instead, we just have stagnation. And you have not just agencies. I think different levels of agencies having different concerns and having to mediate it happens in a lot of different democracies, but in the U.S., on top of it, you also have very powerful N.G.O.s, you have civil society groups.

So mixed together, you have competing stakeholders in a way that I don’t think you have elsewhere. Now, what I would want to build in the United States isn’t just more liberalism, more money spent on more things. What we want to do, I think, is push the type of state-led planning that shifts investment decisions, that thinks about the economy as a whole.

So in other words, take the example of Nordic democracy. You had a system that tried to shape investment priorities, largely through the mechanism of centralized wage bargaining. So if you want to build a high-productivity society, they said, well, we’re going to make sure that in certain sectors, we are pushing up the level of wages to encourage capitalists to invest in more labor-saving technology.

And you do that through the mechanisms not necessarily of the state, but of unions. But then, when certain firms go out of business, the less efficient firms, well, then you have the state scoop in through active labor market policies and retrain those people, some of them, and other of them will join expanding firms at the top of the market, the most efficient firms.

In other words, in that case, what they were able to build was not just a system that said, well, we want to just spend a whole lot more money and deliver more of the same, somewhat uneven social services we currently have. They said, well, we want to create a new system that will create a higher-wage, more productive society. Then, we want to tax the hell out of everyone to build a welfare state on that basis.

You could agree with it, or you could not agree with the model. But they had a kind of vision and a plan. And right now, I wonder whether even my favorite politician in the world, you know, Bernie Sanders, even people I greatly respect, like A.O.C. and Ilhan Omar — whether they have a real vision of the type of welfare state they want to construct and how to construct it, or whether their vision is simply taking existing programs and spending more money on it.

EZRA KLEIN: Well, I do think this gets to this very core tension. You had drawn on this distinction between civic and associational democracy. One way I’ve been thinking about this issue is between centralized and decentralized ways of wielding and checking power.

And on the left, particularly, I think there’s a very deep tension between a preference for centralized ways of wielding power and decentralized ways, particularly, of checking power. And towards the end of that key infrastructure piece in the issue of “Jacobin,” you guys quote Ethan Elkind, who’s a climate expert at U.C. Berkeley, saying, I think it’s about making sure transit agencies have more sovereignty over the decision-making authority and process.

So I’ve heard this from a lot of transit experts, that this is an argument for more centralization, more autonomy, and check the results, as you said earlier, through elections. And on the other hand, the left is very committed to small-d democracy, believes very deeply in this kind of organizing and hearing from people, in a lot of meetings, in a lot of opportunities to participate, in a lot of opportunities for groups to come into a City Council meeting or a board of supervisors’ meeting, and register that you don’t understand how this project is going to affect us.

And I think you see that in all these campaigns you talked about and inside the souls of all these politicians you talked about. I think if you listen to the rhetoric of a Sanders or an A.O.C. or an Ilhan Omar, it’ll kind of shift between this need for bigger government and this need for much more representation, consultation, community involvement. And so I’m curious how you think about managing that collision of values.

Because I think people often don’t want to think that there is a tension there, right? We should be able to have — like, wouldn’t making government more participatory make it better? But if you believe, as I think sometimes this issue implies you do, that you need more centralisation, more decision-making that just can happen, then I think you’re suggesting it may not be that easy.

BHASKAR SUNKARA: Yeah, I think there’s long been a tension between reconciling at least expertise and democracy. And I think the way you square the circle is by saying, there should be democracy in the form of people feeling like they can influence elections. So that’s one form of democracy, and obviously, these bureaucrats aren’t unaccountable.

They’re accountable to elected officials, and these officials have a party affiliation. They are connected to their base. If they pursue unpopular policies, that can’t exist.

And also, I think it’s a matter of trusting the experts, in the sense of — this is actually where I’m well known as an anti-identitarian leftist, but I think this is where representation actually does matter. Having experts who might come from ***working-class*** backgrounds, might be Black or Brown, might have some sort of connection with the communities in which they’re making decisions might lead them to think not just in terms of the macrorationality of the U.S. economy as a whole, but being able to weigh the particular interest of areas affected by construction projects.

So if the Major Deegan is going to make it a lot easier to commute from Westchester to Manhattan, but it’s also going to destroy some really important ***working-class*** neighborhoods in the Bronx and leave a huge legacy, you know, I think that decision doesn’t mean that the model of having an empowered bureaucracy is wrong. It means that the bureaucracy was not conducting the right sort of reviews, and the politicians that empowered them were not held to account.

So I think that there is a delicate balancing act. But right now, we have a system that is actively hurting people through inaction. So again, I think that there’s a little bit too much focus on the after-effects of construction and new projects.

And I think that that’s less benefiting poor and ***working-class*** people, so much as benefiting N.G.O.s and other groups and individuals in society that make livings off lawsuits and off blocking things from being constructed. I don’t actually see this as a core ***working-class*** demand, nor do I think that the type of democracy that you get at a community meeting about environmental impact is particularly the most rich type of democracy.

I think a lot of this could be solved by having better trained, more empowered experts accountable in other ways. And of course, in places like Spain, as Jared and Elizabeth Henderson point out in that article, they do have review processes and community involvement. They’re just more tightly time-delineated.

EZRA KLEIN: Let me end by asking you a question, too, about your work and your role. So you founded “Jacobin,” which I think has been central in creating some of the resurgence on the left. You’re not Bernie Sanders, but in terms of the intellectual effort, I think it’s been a pretty important piece of it.

You’ve recently also taken over as president of “The Nation,” which is one of the more venerable left journals in the country or magazines in the country. And at the same time, I hear in you a frustration that the left has become a little bit too much a space of educated folks who like talking about lefty ideas, as opposed to more of a ***working-class*** movement with a more diverse social base.

So how do you think about that tension in your own work, or how do you think about the vehicles you have a hand in being part of that work? Like, how, as a member of the educated scribbler class, do you work on making the left less beholden to the educated scribbler class?

BHASKAR SUNKARA: Well, I guess I’m pleased with the role I have, because I think that I view the existing base as a left as a conduit or a route to a mass base for this politics. I think the ideas of Democratic socialism belong not just to the people who hold them today but belong to, in the future, to millions of people, who I hope will hold them.

You know, I think the idea of building a world without forms of exploitation and oppression, a world where people can live in at least some material comfort and feel like they’re real stakeholders in a society in a real way — this is something that I think that should be mainstream politics. And as long as there’s inequality in society, I think a politics that calls for more equality and calls for a more even distribution of power and resources should be mainstream.

So I think publications like “Jacobin,” publications like “The Nation,” have a role popularizing left-wing ideas. And I think that they have a role calling for a type of politics and a rhetoric that can, in the future, captivate millions of people like Bernie Sanders was able to captivate in his campaign. So I would not be very satisfied if this was it, not just because of an aesthetic preference, because I feel like we shouldn’t be just talking to ourselves in little salons, but because I think that the modern left arose in conjunction with the mass ***working class*** in the 19th century for a reason.

Because there’s actually a group of people out there who have not only the material interest, but actually have the power to change the world. I don’t think that a handful of people writing or speaking truth to power have that power. So I would love to see a left that continues to follow the lessons of the Sanders campaigns, and continues to evolve from them, and actually wins.

But it’s a very complicated question, in part because we have such a hollowed-out civil society. We don’t really have the avenues of popular politics that we used to, and we’re stuck, basically, just with election campaigns. And it’s a tricky thing to try to regenerate civil society when it doesn’t really exist anywhere.

It’s not just a problem of the left. It’s a problem of the entire political spectrum. It’s particularly bad for the left, because we actually need to mobilize a lot of people to get things done, whereas if you’re on the right, you could find a way to elect a few of the right people, get the few of the right court appointments, and you could probably carry out a lot of your program without having millions of people actively behind you.

EZRA KLEIN: I think that’s a good place to end. So always a final question — what are three books you would recommend to the audience?

BHASKAR SUNKARA: I think that everyone in the audience — this is very on-brand, too, but I think everyone should read Michael Harrington. Harrington, for most of the mid-century, was the most prominent American socialist. His adversary, William F. Buckley, actually once introduced him that way.

Then, he very quickly added that that’s like being the tallest building in Topeka, Kansas. But I recommend you read his last book that he wrote when he had cancer, “Socialism: Past &amp; Future.”

I also think that at least what drew me to the left was reading history and having a sense of the long arc of history, which I’m not so certain nowadays bends towards justice, but I think it always helps. Eric Hobsbawm’s “The Age of Extremes,” but his whole set of four books on modern history, I would highly recommend. I think that would be a great, great starting place.

Then, for the third book, you know, I really think everyone should read my book, “The Socialist Manifesto.” Because I haven’t plugged that in a long time —

EZRA KLEIN: Oh, you can’t do your own books as one of the three. Not allowed.

BHASKAR SUNKARA: I’m just kidding. No, I think for the third book, I would really recommend that people read Adolph Reed’s recent political memoir. I’m not sure if he who would like it described as a memoir, but it’s called “The South.” It just came out from Verso Books, and I just finished reading it.

It’s a really excellent discussion about contemporary politics, about also his past growing up in the Jim Crow South, and how it informs his current political worldview. So it’s by the political scientist Adolph Reed, and it’s called, “The South.”

EZRA KLEIN: Bhaskar Sunkara, thank you very much.

BHASKAR SUNKARA: Thanks for having me, Ezra.

EZRA KLEIN: “The Ezra Klein Show” is produced by Annie Galvin, Jeff Geld and Roge Karma; fact-checking by Michelle Harris and Kate Sinclair; original music by Isaac Jones; mixing and engineering by Jeff Geld; audience strategy by Shannon Busta. Our executive producer is Irene Noguchi. Special thanks to Kristin Lin and Kristina Samulewski.

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**End of Document**



[***‘Enola Holmes 2’ Review: A Clever Force of Nature***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:66S7-F7G1-DXY4-X316-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

November 2, 2022 Wednesday 17:06 EST

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**Section:** MOVIES

**Length:** 356 words

**Byline:** Beandrea July

**Highlight:** Millie Bobby Brown delivers an understated, playful performance in this young-adult mystery sequel.

**Body**

Millie Bobby Brown delivers an understated, playful performance in this young-adult mystery sequel.

Enola Holmes is back, and she’s ready for both her first official case as a detective and, work schedule permitting, some romance. Millie Bobby Brown delivers an understated, playful performance in the follow up to the Netflix young-adult mystery [*“Enola Holmes.”*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/22/movies/enola-holmes-review.html) This time around, the director Harry Bradbeer and the screenwriter [*Jack Thorne*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/09/04/theater/jack-thorne-his-dark-materials.html) forgo prolonged dialogue when Enola breaks the fourth wall, making more room for Brown’s intense looks and physical gestures to resonate.

Working in the shadow of her famous brother, Sherlock (Henry Cavill), Enola realizes that independent, professional women are treated more like suspects than like trusted investigators in Victorian England. So it makes sense that her first case comes from a fellow young woman, Bessie (Serrana Su-Ling Bliss), who needs to track down a missing co-worker at a matchstick factory where women workers are mysteriously dying of typhus. (This plot point was inspired by the women who orchestrated the [*1888 Match Girls Strike in London*](https://www.bl.uk/learning/timeline/item106451.html).)

[Video: [*Watch on YouTube.*](http://youtube.com/embed/KKXNmYoPkx0)]

Sherlock himself is working on a case of stolen government funds, and the siblings eventually discover their cases are in fact linked. As Enola finds she can hold her own, both alongside and without her brother, a sheltered girl gives way to a young woman who embraces the literal and figurative fighter in her, finding solidarity with ***working-class*** women in the fight for women’s rights in the process. As Edith, a suffragist leader and jiu-jitsu master played by a steadying Susan Wokoma, proclaims in the film: “You can’t control Enola. She’s a force of nature.”

Speaking of the movie’s well-choreographed fight scenes, when Enola’s mother, Eudoria (a delightful Helena Bonham Carter), and Edith band together to beat the heck out of grown-men assailants, one can’t help but cheer on this Y.A. feminist tale as a welcome addition to the Sherlock Holmes universe.

Enola Holmes 2

Rated PG-13 for moderate violence. Running time: 2 hours 9 minutes. [*Watch on Netflix*](https://www.netflix.com/title/81406219).

This article appeared in print on page C9.

**Load-Date:** November 3, 2022

**End of Document**



[***Driven To Push Limits, Even If 'Terrified'***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6967-KJD1-DXY4-X063-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

September 17, 2023 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section AR; Column 0; Arts and Leisure Desk; Pg. 84; FALL PREVIEW

**Length:** 1196 words

**Byline:** By Zachary Small

**Body**

Jade Kuriki-Olivo's guided tour through her apartment on the Lower East Side ended in the bedroom, where the performance artist spends most of her time. Tropical vines crawled along the walls and into a giant lantern hanging opposite a tapestry of green synthetic fur. She burned incense and described her room above a busy Greek restaurant as a sanctuary.

For an interview about her upcoming exhibition at the New Museum, ''Nothing New,'' which begins Oct. 12 and runs through Jan. 14, 2024, the artist donned a camouflage outfit with green leaves attached. She then hopped onto the bed and crouched into the shape of a bush -- as if cloaking herself from the spotlight would negate its halo. Kuriki-Olivo, 34, who also uses the pseudonym Puppies Puppies, will certainly grab attention this fall, when she transforms the museum lobby into a 24/7 surveillance operation tracking her experience as a transgender woman.

''I'm terrified,'' Kuriki-Olivo said, ''but I really can't watch the trans community suffer and not make work about that. I find in my spirit that I don't have a choice.''

The trapdoor of visibility has become a common theme in her work, demonstrating how transgender people survive a period of heightened surveillance and restrictions that has coincided with a period of increased public acceptance. She has experienced that paradox firsthand, including last summer when she exhibited a nude sculpture of herself as part of Art Basel in Switzerland on a plinth labeled ''woman.'' Conservative groups were outraged and Kuriki-Olivo said she started receiving death threats after people online found her home address. She withdrew from a series of exhibitions for her safety, passing the opportunities onto other artists.

''The organizers ended up hiring a security guard to protect the sculpture,'' she recalled. ''And I watched from across the street as people would purposefully have their dogs pee on it.''

Details of the New Museum exhibition are still being negotiated with officials, but the artist described a scenario where she lives in the museum's lobby for several months inside a glass display with windows she can fog to obstruct the viewer's gaze. She wants the space to resemble a Zen garden -- a homage to her Japanese mother -- and plans on developing a repatriation project for Taíno artifacts in memory of her Puerto Rican father, whose ashes are kept in a box on her night stand.

''We are trying to flatten the distinction between her bedroom and the institution,'' said Vivian Crockett, a curator organizing the show at the New Museum.

The artist has also been toying with riskier concepts, including the creation of an indoor cannabis farm and a method for continuing her sex work during the exhibition, which helps pay her rent. She also wants to livestream herself in the rare moments when she is outside the museum, sharing her perspective through a camera feed linked to television monitors in the lobby.

''I describe my role as a mediator between the artist and the institution,'' Crockett said, describing the negotiations within the museum to realize Kuriki-Olivo's vision. ''Sometimes it feels like I'm also the medium, speaking on behalf of the artist.''

Earlier in her career, Kuriki-Olivo drew inspiration from popular culture. She organized a 2015 exhibition on the Minions from ''Despicable Me,'' seeing the yellow monsters as caricatures of the ***working class***. That same year, she picketed an art fair dressed as SpongeBob SquarePants, holding a sign that depicted the cartoon in the loving embrace of his neighbor, Squidward. And during her breakthrough performance at the 2017 Whitney Biennial, the artist dressed as Lady Liberty with a drooping crown and crestfallen eyes. It became one of the first works categorized in the museum's permanent collection as performance art.

Her attempts to find herself in these everyday objects stems from a childhood of isolation. Raised in the suburbs of Dallas, Kuriki-Olivo struggled to feel comfortable in an environment where she felt the need to suppress parts of her identity for safety reasons.

''I was scared early on of speaking, that my voice was too soft for a boy,'' she recalled. ''At night, in the small space between consciousness and unconsciousness, I would pray to God with every cell in me that I would wake up with a vagina.''

Finding herself in seemingly banal objects was an act of survival, recalling the kind of body politics expressed by queer artists like Felix Gonzalez-Torres, who created meaning from strings of lights and hard candies. Recent works have also shown Kuriki-Olivo's preoccupation with the brutality of death. In 2009, she was diagnosed with a malignant brain tumor, which was removed the following year but has remained present as a theme in her work. Nearly a decade later, she created a ghoulish sculpture described as a portrait of the artist after brain surgery. For a 2019 performance at Galerie Francesca Pia in Zurich, she lay inside a satin coffin.

''I'm scared of the pain the future has in store for this deteriorating body,'' said Kuriki-Olivo from underneath her green camouflage. Later during the interview, she stripped the leaves from her body, lounging nude on the mattress where she entertains clients and performs for webcam sites. She said she has found inspiration from the boundary-pushing artists Marina Abramovic and On Kawara, and in the trans activist Sylvia Rivera.

Curators described Kuriki-Olivo as someone who unsettles institutions; even the most progressive bastions of the art world walk a difficult line between showcasing diverse artists and tokenizing them.

''Jade really challenged us,'' said Pati Hertling, director of Performance Space New York. When the venue offered Kuriki-Olivio a commission, she instead asked to program a gala honoring trans women of color. The project involved many sex workers and ran late into the night -- far beyond the normal hours for Performance Space staff. Moreover, the women to whom the artist extended an invitation to perform were skeptical that the institution would actually pay them.

''There is still a lot of work needed to create a relationship of neutral trust,'' Hertling said; the event was an important turning point for her nonprofit. ''I am very thankful for Jade to give us the opportunity to fail in certain ways and learn to move forward.''

But when she heard about what Kuriki-Olivo had planned for the New Museum, Hertling's heart skipped a beat. Four months of 24/7 surveillance would take an emotional toll on the artist, not to mention raising concerns for her own safety.

''Jade takes on a lot, and it's a responsibility that weighs heavily on her shoulders,'' Hertling said. ''It will not be an easy piece. She is going to be exhausted and emotionally at the limit of what she can take.''

Kuriki-Olivo agreed. Sitting in her bedroom with the sounds of the rainforest playing from a speaker on her night stand, she explained it all.

''Sometimes, I wish that I didn't have to make work about my identity,'' she said. ''But I just keep telling myself that you have to be hypervisible, because it means something different to hide.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/07/arts/design/jade-kuriki-olivo-puppies-puppies-new-museum.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/07/arts/design/jade-kuriki-olivo-puppies-puppies-new-museum.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: The performance artist Jade Kuriki-Olivo, also known as Puppies Puppies, who will transform the New Museum's lobby into a 24/7 surveillance operation tracking her experience as a transgender woman. Below left, Kuriki-Olivo performed as ''Liberty (Liberté)'' at the 2017 Whitney Biennial. Below right, she exhibited a nude sculpture of herself as part of Art Basel in Switzerland in 2022. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY CAMILA FALQUEZ FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

UPPIES PUPPIES AND BALICE HERTLING, PARIS

GALERIE FRANCESCA PIA, ZURICH

GALERIE BARBARA WEISS, BERLIN

HANNAH HOFFMAN GALLERY, LOS ANGELES

PHOTO BY BILL ORCUTT

PUPPIES PUPPIES AND BALICE HERTLING, PARIS

GALERIE FRANCESCA PIA, ZURICH

GALERIE BARBARA WEISS, BERLIN

HANNAH HOFFMAN GALLERY, LOS ANGELES. PHOTO BY VINCENT BLEBOI) This article appeared in print on page AR84.

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**End of Document**



[***Feeling Heat From Biden, Ticket Giants Yield on Fees***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68GC-DMR1-JBG3-60F5-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

June 16, 2023 Friday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section B; Column 0; Business/Financial Desk; Pg. 3

**Length:** 854 words

**Byline:** By Ben Sisario and Zolan Kanno-Youngs

**Body**

Live Nation and SeatGeek said they would show customers the full cost of concerts, after the White House's complaints that ''junk fees'' for tickets and hotel stays can mislead consumers.

Under pressure from the Biden administration, some of the biggest companies that handle ticketing for concerts and other live events announced on Thursday that they will make it easier for consumers to see the full price of tickets they want to buy, including the fees that can often add more than 30 percent to the total cost of an order.

Live Nation, the world's largest concert company, said it would begin introducing ''all-in pricing'' -- showing consumers the full price up front -- at the venues it controls, which include more than 200 amphitheaters, clubs and other spaces in the United States. Ticketmaster, which is owned by Live Nation, said it would make this tool available to other venues and promoters as well. Those changes are expected beginning in September.

SeatGeek, a major vendor for reselling tickets that also works for major venues and sports teams like the Dallas Cowboys, said it too would begin introducing a feature that would reveal to consumers the full price of a ticket.

Those changes come as the Biden administration has stepped up its pressure on the entertainment and travel industries to rein in what it calls ''junk fees.'' Before beginning a round table at the White House with executives from Live Nation, SeatGeek, Airbnb and other companies on Thursday, President Biden framed the crackdown on surcharges as a way to appeal to the ***working class*** -- a major theme of his re-election campaign.

''These hidden charges that companies sneak into your bill make you pay more without you really knowing it initially,'' Mr. Biden said. ''Junk fees are not a matter for the wealthy very much but they're a matter for working folks like the homes I grew up in.''

As Mr. Biden spoke, a screen showed an example of a ''service charge'' of $12.99. But for the most in-demand concerts, those fees can be many times higher. For one Drake concert, for example, a screenshot ricocheted around social media in March showing that for two tickets costing $544, three surcharges -- service fee, facility charge and order fee -- added another $541, nearly doubling the total cost.

Ticketing, and questions of competition and consumer fairness in the entertainment industry, became hot-button issues in Washington after a botched presale in November for Taylor Swift's Eras Tour. Ticketmaster's system was overrun with bots, and many fans reported that tickets they had selected disappeared from their online shopping charts.

At a Senate Judiciary hearing in January, Live Nation came under harsh, bipartisan attack, with senators openly calling the company a monopoly. The Justice Department has separately been investigating Live Nation for potential violations of the consent decree that was a condition of the company's merger with Ticketmaster in 2010; among the terms in that agreement were that Live Nation cannot threaten venues with retaliation for not using Ticketmaster as their official ticket vendor.

But the extent to which the most recent promises by Live Nation and SeatGeek would substantially change the ticket market are unclear. The concert industry is complex, with pricing and fees controlled by various parties that have little incentive to reduce their take -- especially with live music rebounding after its near-disappearance during the Covid-19 pandemic, and ticket sales now reaching record highs.

The changes by Live Nation and SeatGeek do not lower prices or include any commitment to reduce surcharges, which are often set by venues; those companies are simply promising to disclose fees as part of a ticket's total cost.

After Mr. Biden's State of the Union address in February -- at which he said, ''We can stop service fees on tickets to concerts and sporting events and make companies disclose all the fees upfront'' -- Live Nation proposed federal legislation that, among other things, would mandate all-in pricing.

Without all competitors held to the same standard, many executives in the ticketing world say, those that comply voluntarily would be put at a competitive disadvantage, since other venues and ticketing services could lure customers by advertising lower prices, only to reveal surcharges once a customer completes a transaction.

Senator Richard Blumenthal, a Democrat of Connecticut who is a sponsor of a bill called the Junk Fee Prevention Act, offered a mixed review of Live Nation's pledge of transparency.

''Live Nation-Ticketmaster's announcement is a step in the right direction,'' Mr. Blumenthal said in a statement, ''but no substitute for legislation to provide consumers with transparency and prevent companies from imposing ridiculous junk fees.''

Still, Mr. Biden said that all the companies he had gathered for the round table were ''voluntarily committed to 'all-in' upfront pricing,'' and he called it a victory.

''This is a win for consumers in my view,'' Mr. Biden said, ''and proof that our crackdown on junk fees has real momentum.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/15/arts/music/live-nation-ticketmaster-junk-fees.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/15/arts/music/live-nation-ticketmaster-junk-fees.html)

**Graphic**

This article appeared in print on page B3.

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[***This Lightning Rod Has a Few Regrets***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:699V-7541-JBG3-610K-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

October 4, 2023 Wednesday

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**Section:** Section C; Column 0; The Arts/Cultural Desk; Pg. 1; NONFICTION

**Length:** 1353 words

**Byline:** By Dwight Garner

**Body**

In his memoir ''The Controversialist,'' Martin Peretz reflects on his long tenure as publisher and editor of The New Republic.

THE CONTROVERSIALIST: Arguments with Everyone, Left Right and Center, by Martin Peretz

''When you talk about politics,'' the critic Irving Howe said, ''you should stand.'' Martin Peretz quotes this line early in ''The Controversialist,'' his new memoir, as a style of moralizing he was never crazy about. But the observation suits him. Peretz writes as if he were pacing around a dining-room table, ego and self-loathing fighting it out in his head.

For nearly four decades, Peretz (everyone calls him Marty) was the kibitzing, buttinsky publisher and editor in chief of The New Republic, which was the most vital opinion magazine in America for stretches of the 1980s and '90s. He taught for five decades at Harvard, which he treated like his magazine's farm team.

He knew nearly everyone who mattered in the intertwined worlds of journalism, academia and government. Martin Luther King Jr. came to his house for dinner; he was Al Gore's first phone call after Gore, his protégé, officially lost the 2000 election; Yo-Yo Ma played at his birthday parties; Norman Mailer punched him in a Provincetown restaurant. This is scratching the surface of the surface.

Peretz married Anne Devereux Labouisse, an heir to the Singer sewing machine company fortune. When he wasn't invited to the best arguments, he bought his way in. He liked open letters and fiery petitions. He wore his controversial brand of Zionism as if it were a beret. He was the kind of guy who, if everyone at a memorial service was asked to keep it to five minutes, would go on for 20.

I find myself slipping into the past tense. Peretz is, circa right now, at least 64 percent canceled. The official end came in 2010, when he was blogging (''a mistake,'' he writes). He made several expedient comments, in the context of a larger argument, including that Muslims may not be worthy of First Amendment protections and that ''Muslim life is cheap.'' The indignation did not let up for a long time. He writes about the aftermath:

The invasion of Iraq, which I backed, is a disaster; the financial system that my friends helped build has crashed; my wife and I are divorced; The New Republic is sold after I feared going bust -- and here I am in my white suit walking across Harvard Yard, surrounded by students: ''Harvard, Harvard, shame on you, honoring a racist fool.'' The racist fool is, apparently, me. It's a sodden coda, one I don't quite grasp, or believe.

More was to come. His iteration of The New Republic did not fare well, in the rearview mirror, under the inquisitive searchlights of #MeToo and Black Lives Matter. The magazine's longtime literary editor, the lion-maned Leon Wieseltier, who left in 2014, was accused three years later of sexual harassment during his time at The New Republic. The magazine's decision to publish an excerpt from Charles Murray's third-rail-gripping 1994 book ''The Bell Curve,'' in part about racial differences in I.Q., continues to elicit reproof. Add to this the fabrications and plagiarism of the writers Stephen Glass and Ruth Shalit, and The New Republic of the Peretz era can in retrospect begin to resemble, to many, a leaky, disreputable ghost barge.

Peretz is sorry about some of these things. He quickly apologized, he notes here, for his ''wild and wounding'' language about Muslims. He regrets ''not recognizing the plight of the Black underclass in the pages of The New Republic.'' He regrets (''regret is not a big enough word'') supporting the invasion of Iraq. But he defends the decision to publish Murray (''Murray is a person who matters'') alongside dissenting opinions, and he stands by Wieseltier, ''an intellectual who is also a man of the senses.'' He writes: ''The truth is that Leon may have been disrespectful to women, but he has also respected them and their work.'' He notes that Wieseltier's new magazine, Liberties, publishes Martha Nussbaum, Helen Vendler and Louise Glück.

He'd much rather talk about his magazine's high points, such as Andrew Sullivan's landmark cover story making the conservative case for gay marriage in 1989. They also include publishing the reporting that led to Samantha Powers's book ''A Problem From Hell: America and the Age of Genocide,'' which won a Pulitzer Prize in 2003.

He's proud too, of gathering a group of some of the era's liveliest thinkers, writers and editors, including Michael Kinsley, Hendrik Hertzberg and Charles Krauthammer. Kinsley was the reason I adored the magazine. He had a nearly Martian intelligence, and the dryness of his wit turned his opponents into pillars of salt. Office high jinks are recounted, such as the time Krauthammer had the password of a master hard drive permanently changed to ''Kemp,'' after the conservative congressman Jack Kemp, whom Hertzberg loathed.

The punch from Mailer arrived in Peretz's solar plexus after The New Republic reviewed Mailer's novel ''The Gospel According to the Son'' (1997), which reworked the life of Jesus Christ. It was a brutal review, by James Wood. The cover of the issue depicted Mailer on a cross, with the headline ''He Is Finished.''

''The Controversialist'' is well-written, chewy with anecdote and often very funny. It is hard to sound like yourself when you are writing, but Peretz manages to do so. He grew up in the Bronx, at a time when New York ''was not really a melting pot: It was more like a TV dinner.'' His father owned a pocketbook factory and was a landlord.

Peretz got into Princeton but backed out after he realized that, as a Jew, he'd never be admitted into the college's elite eating clubs. He attended Brandeis instead, where his classmates included Abbie Hoffman and Louise Lasser. His professors included C. Wright Mills and Philip Rieff. He loved the ferment of the place. He writes about his dawning awareness that he was sexually attracted to men.

Peretz grew a beard and got a job teaching at Harvard. He was in Mailer's West Village apartment (long before the magazine crucified him) on the night Mailer stabbed his second wife. He married Labouisse, who was ''astoundingly, alienatingly rich.'' They became famous for their dinner parties in Cambridge. They had a long, skinny table, so everyone was right in one another's faces. Talk had to be general, a single conversation. No peeling off.

William F. Buckley Jr. edited The National Review, if his memoir ''Overdrive'' can be believed, from a never-ending series of planes, trains, automobiles and sailboats. Peretz traveled more serenely, but he was ''where you should be all the time,'' to quote the Carly Simon lyric. There are a lot of sentences in this book such as, ''Anne and I were having a party in Truro the next night, and first to arrive were Diana and Lionel Trilling,'' and ''Al called me in Italy, at the villa of I Tatti.''

Some scores are settled. He refers to the political theorist Judith Shklar as someone ''who knew Yiddish but was still no fun to talk to.'' The sociologist Barrington Moore Jr. is ''an adherent of the ***working class*** whose most troubled times were when the motor on his yacht was not working.'' Susan Sontag never thanked him for helping pay for her medical expenses when she was ill with cancer, Peretz complains, and worse, Sontag put his wife down by telling her, ''You are a very good homemaker.'' And so on.

Peretz has a sense of humor about himself. When Egypt and Syria launched a surprise attack on Israel in October 1973, he was on the Cape. He immediately called Simcha Dinitz, Israel's ambassador to America, and asked, ''What's going on?'' Dinitz replied: ''What's going on is too important for me to be talking to you now.''

Peretz misses his power perches. He misses the arena. He doesn't like what's happening to America's politics and media. But he has his memories. About his life and times, he comments, ''They were thick eras, and I was in the thick of them.''

THE CONTROVERSIALIST: Arguments with Everyone, Left Right and Center | By Martin Peretz | 351 pp. | Wicked Son | $28

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/02/books/review/martin-peretz-controversialist.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/02/books/review/martin-peretz-controversialist.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO This article appeared in print on page C1, C2.

**Load-Date:** October 4, 2023

**End of Document**



[***The Pandemic Hit the Working Class Hard. The Colleges That Serve Them Are Hurting, Too.***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:62BR-6VR1-DXY4-X45V-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Section:** US; politics

**Length:** 1791 words

**Byline:** Stephanie Saul

**Highlight:** The community colleges largely serving low-income, Black and Latino students are reeling, and experts worry that inequality in education will increase.

**Body**

The community colleges largely serving low-income, Black and Latino students are reeling, and experts worry that inequality in education will increase.

The coronavirus pandemic has been uniquely hard on America’s ***working class***, causing [*higher unemployment*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2021/03/09/business/economy/covid-employment-demographics.html) among people without college degrees and eliminating low-wage jobs by the millions. Now, the education system created to help those very workers also is in jeopardy.

Colleges of all types are struggling under the shadow of the [*coronavirus*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2021/03/09/business/economy/covid-employment-demographics.html), but the nation’s community college system has been disproportionately hurt, with tens of thousands of students being forced to delay school or drop out because of the pandemic and the economic crisis it has created.

Enrollment is down by 9.5 percent at the more than 1,000 two-year colleges in the United States compared with numbers from last spring, according to preliminary figures from the [*National Student Clearinghouse*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2021/03/09/business/economy/covid-employment-demographics.html), a nonprofit organization that found a similar drop last fall. That is more than double the loss experienced by four-year schools.

Community college enrollment among Black and Hispanic students has declined even more sharply, with a 19 percent drop from fall 2019 to fall 2020 among Black students and a 16 percent drop among Hispanic students. Of the nation’s five million students enrolled at community colleges, about 40 percent are Black or Latino and nearly half are low-income, according to the American Association of Community Colleges.

“Many of our students come to college with challenges,” said Tracy D. Hall, president of Southwest Tennessee Community College in Memphis. “Now you add a pandemic to that, it just exacerbates it.”

Community colleges, a vast majority of which are state-run schools, have historically provided a low-cost alternative for students who lack financial backing from their parents or academic preparation for four-year colleges. They also are a critical training ground for students seeking jobs in local businesses, from auto mechanics and welders to dental hygienists. About 27 percent of the nation’s more than 17 million college students are enrolled in two-year programs.

President Biden, whose wife, Dr. Jill Biden, is a professor at a community college, has cited the importance of community colleges to educational equity. In the coming weeks, he is expected to propose making [*two-year schools free*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2021/03/09/business/economy/covid-employment-demographics.html) as part of the [*$3 trillion rebuilding plan*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2021/03/09/business/economy/covid-employment-demographics.html) that he [*began rolling out on Wednesday*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2021/03/09/business/economy/covid-employment-demographics.html).

By arranging free tuition for many, though possibly not all, students, the Biden plan would also free up other forms of federal aid to low-income students, such as Pell Grants, to pay for things like housing, food or books, according to congressional aides who have been briefed on aspects of the proposal. [*Food and housing insecurity*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2021/03/09/business/economy/covid-employment-demographics.html) are often cited as major reasons for low-income students to drop out of college.

Over all, community colleges in Tennessee have lost about 10 percent of their total enrollment, mirroring the national figures. Southwest, a two-year public school with seven locations in the western part of the state, has lost 19 percent of its enrollment in the past year, making it one of the most profoundly affected of Tennessee’s 13 community colleges.

At Southwest, about 800 Black men have paused their studies. Now there is concern that the pandemic will permanently derail their educational paths, along with low-income and minority students across the country — potentially deepening educational inequities with white students.

“It’s depressing,” said Russ Deaton, executive vice chancellor of the Tennessee Board of Regents, which oversees community colleges in the state. “A lot of the students we’ve lost were loosely tethered to higher education anyway. It didn’t take much to push them out of the education path.”

Many community college students are adults — the average age is 28 — and even before the pandemic, they struggled to stay in school, juggling academic work with financial pressures, child care needs and even homelessness. [*Before the pandemic, statistics*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2021/03/09/business/economy/covid-employment-demographics.html) showed that at least 40 percent of students at community colleges left school before earning a certificate or degree.

For these students, the pandemic upset an already difficult balancing act, leaving many just plain exhausted. For Corey Ray Baranowski — a 33-year-old father of five children, age 5 months to 11 years old — the breaking point came last year.

Before the health crisis, Mr. Baranowski and his wife juggled their large family, several jobs and studies at Jackson State Community College, another school that was hit hard by the pandemic, in Jackson, Tenn., 90 miles northeast of Memphis.

The dominoes started tumbling last spring, when the pandemic reached his small community of Lexington, Tenn.

First, the school system where both Mr. Baranowski and his wife, a photographer, had worked as substitute teachers shut down. Then, that same day, their three school-age children were sent home to learn remotely. Their community college also suspended in-person classes.

“It was unsettling,” Mr. Baranowski recalled. He and his wife, then expecting their fifth child, struggled to keep up their own schoolwork while making sure the children did theirs, overloading the family’s home computer capacity — and their multitasking skills.

“There were some bologna sandwiches and peanut butter and jelly going on, trying to manage money,” Mr. Baranowski said. Overwhelmed, he dropped two classes last spring and decided not to re-enroll this year.

But in August, Mr. Baranowski found a job at a juvenile correctional center. The couple hopes to return to college next fall.

“My goal is to graduate and become a teacher,” he said.

As George Pimentel, the president of Jackson State, puts it, “Many of our students have just hit the pause button.”

Community colleges normally lose students during boom times when jobs are plentiful, then see enrollment increase during economic downturns as unemployed people seek training for new careers — as happened after the recession of 2009.

So why is there currently an enrollment bust during a downturn? One theory is that the relief packages enacted by Congress, combined with the hope that jobs will return swiftly once the pandemic is over, have made those who are unemployed less apt to enroll in community colleges to retrain for new careers.

“There’s always been a sense that jobs are going to come back as soon as the numbers go down, so why would you start a degree program?” said Doug Shapiro, executive research director for the National Student Clearinghouse.

Another theory is that many of the skills taught at community colleges do not transfer well to online teaching formats. Rushton W. Johnson, vice president of student affairs at Pellissippi State Community College in Knoxville, Tenn., which has had a 15 percent enrollment decline since last spring, says the pandemic was a “perfect storm” for community colleges.

“It’s impossible to learn to weld, drive a truck, cook, draw blood, wire a network online, without handling the equipment and tools,” Mr. Johnson said.

While many low-income students in Tennessee can attend community college tuition-free by using federal and state grants, job disruptions have made it difficult for many to pay for basic living expenses.

Last spring, Katie Dollar, 25, could no longer afford rent when the game arcade where she was working closed because of the pandemic. She packed up and returned home to live with her father, with plans to continue her studies at Pellissippi online.

But the balky satellite internet service at her father’s rural Tennessee farm made it impossible for her to participate in remote classes. “Livestreaming classes was not an option,” Ms. Dollar, a theater student, said.

She decided not to enroll in the fall, but she is back in school this semester after landing a job at a Trader Joe’s and a new apartment.

Enrollment declines have been particularly steep among first-year students who have never attended college at all, including high school graduates of 2020. Freshmen enrollment dropped by 19 percent at community colleges in Tennessee.

The pandemic has also blown a hole in community college budgets, forcing layoffs in some cases. The financial hit to community colleges has been exacerbated by state funding cuts aimed disproportionately at two-year colleges, according to [*a recent study*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2021/03/09/business/economy/covid-employment-demographics.html) by the State Higher Education Executive Officers Association. Southwest is facing a budget shortfall — more than $10 million — and is hoping to be rescued with funds from the $1.9 trillion stimulus package signed this month by Mr. Biden.

Of the nearly $40 billion that is allocated for colleges in the bill, an estimated $12.7 billion will go to community colleges, according to the American Association of Community Colleges.

With its main campuses in Memphis, a predominantly Black city, Southwest is expected to receive about $12 million from the stimulus package.

Dr. Deaton, of the Tennessee Board of Regents, said that aggressive outreach to students could be the key to encouraging many of them to re-enroll. Community colleges throughout the state are already working to lure back the students who had their education disrupted by the pandemic.

Southwest has begun such outreach, convincing 80 Black male students to return. It also purchased 3,500 laptops for students, installed wireless internet coverage in a parking lot and provided hot spots in some homes to encourage students to stay enrolled.

But Southwest has yet to persuade Charles Moore to come back.

A year ago, Mr. Moore, 20, was supporting himself by waiting tables while studying criminal justice at Southwest. Then the coronavirus spread to the United States and his plans for a college degree fell apart.

First his employer, the Olive Garden, laid him off. When his campus shut down and shifted to remote classes, he struggled to adapt to learning online. He was able to get a new job in security, but it required him to commute into Mississippi, leaving him little time to do his schoolwork. In May, he dropped out.

Mr. Moore says he wants to be a sheriff’s deputy, a job that does not require a college degree. So amid the uncertainty and unpredictability of the pandemic, he has made no immediate plans to return to school.

But he still thinks about campus life, about being exposed to new people and ideas, about getting “that college experience.”

“It felt like I was headed toward something,” he said.

PHOTOS: Corey Ray Baranowski, center, made the honor roll at Jackson State Community College in fall 2019. He did not enroll this semester.; Charles Moore’s new job in security meant longer hours, forcing him to drop out of Southwest Tennessee Community College, above. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY WHITTEN SABBATINI FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** June 2, 2021

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[***Ticket Giants, Under Pressure From Biden, Promise Transparency on Fees***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68G6-XRR1-DXY4-X0VR-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

June 15, 2023 Thursday 20:43 EST

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**Section:** ARTS; music

**Length:** 850 words

**Byline:** Ben Sisario and Zolan Kanno-Youngs

**Highlight:** Live Nation and SeatGeek said they would show customers the full cost of concerts, after the White House’s complaints that “junk fees” for tickets and hotel stays can mislead consumers.

**Body**

Live Nation and SeatGeek said they would show customers the full cost of concerts, after the White House’s complaints that “junk fees” for tickets and hotel stays can mislead consumers.

Under pressure from the Biden administration, some of the biggest companies that handle ticketing for concerts and other live events announced on Thursday that they will make it easier for consumers to see the full price of tickets they want to buy, including the fees that can often add more than 30 percent to the total cost of an order.

Live Nation, the world’s largest concert company, said it would begin introducing “all-in pricing” — showing consumers the full price up front — at the venues it controls, which include more than 200 amphitheaters, clubs and other spaces in the United States. Ticketmaster, which is owned by Live Nation, said it would make this tool available to other venues and promoters as well. Those changes are expected beginning in September.

SeatGeek, a major vendor for reselling tickets that also works for major venues and sports teams like the Dallas Cowboys, said it too would begin introducing a feature that would reveal to consumers the full price of a ticket.

Those changes come as the Biden administration has stepped up its pressure on the entertainment and travel industries to rein in what it calls “junk fees.” Before beginning a round table at the White House with executives from Live Nation, SeatGeek, Airbnb and other companies on Thursday, President Biden framed the crackdown on surcharges as a way to appeal to the ***working class*** — a major theme of his re-election campaign.

“These hidden charges that companies sneak into your bill make you pay more without you really knowing it initially,” Mr. Biden said. “Junk fees are not a matter for the wealthy very much but they’re a matter for working folks like the homes I grew up in.”

As Mr. Biden spoke, a screen showed an example of a “service charge” of $12.99. But for the most in-demand concerts, those fees can be many times higher. For one Drake concert, for example, a [*screenshot*](https://twitter.com/z_duane/status/1636067397663612931) ricocheted around social media in March showing that for two tickets costing $544, three surcharges — service fee, facility charge and order fee — added another $541, nearly doubling the total cost.

Ticketing, and questions of competition and consumer fairness in the entertainment industry, became hot-button issues in Washington after a [*botched presale in November*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/11/17/arts/music/taylor-swift-tickets-ticketmaster.html) for Taylor Swift’s Eras Tour. Ticketmaster’s system was overrun with bots, and many fans reported that tickets they had selected disappeared from their online shopping charts.

At a [*Senate Judiciary hearing in January*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/01/24/arts/music/ticketmaster-taylor-swift-senate-hearing.html), Live Nation came under harsh, bipartisan attack, with senators openly calling the company a monopoly. The Justice Department has [*separately been investigating Live Nation*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/11/18/technology/live-nation-ticketmaster-investigation-taylor-swift.html) for potential violations of the consent decree that was a condition of the company’s merger with Ticketmaster in 2010; among the terms in that agreement were that Live Nation cannot threaten venues with retaliation for not using Ticketmaster as their official ticket vendor.

But the extent to which the most recent promises by Live Nation and SeatGeek would substantially change the ticket market are unclear. The concert industry is complex, with pricing and fees controlled by various parties that have little incentive to reduce their take — especially with live music rebounding after its near-disappearance during the Covid-19 pandemic, and ticket sales now reaching record highs.

The changes by Live Nation and SeatGeek do not lower prices or include any commitment to reduce surcharges, which are often set by venues; those companies are simply promising to disclose fees as part of a ticket’s total cost.

After Mr. Biden’s State of the Union address in February — at which he said, “We can stop service fees on tickets to concerts and sporting events and make companies disclose all the fees upfront” — Live Nation proposed federal legislation that, among other things, would mandate all-in pricing.

Without all competitors held to the same standard, many executives in the ticketing world say, those that comply voluntarily would be put at a competitive disadvantage, since other venues and ticketing services could lure customers by advertising lower prices, only to reveal surcharges once a customer completes a transaction.

Senator Richard Blumenthal, a Democrat of Connecticut who is a sponsor of a bill called the Junk Fee Prevention Act, offered a mixed review of Live Nation’s pledge of transparency.

“Live Nation-Ticketmaster’s announcement is a step in the right direction,” Mr. Blumenthal said in a statement, “but no substitute for legislation to provide consumers with transparency and prevent companies from imposing ridiculous junk fees.”

Still, Mr. Biden said that all the companies he had gathered for the round table were “voluntarily committed to ‘all-in’ upfront pricing,” and he called it a victory.

“This is a win for consumers in my view,” Mr. Biden said, “and proof that our crackdown on junk fees has real momentum.”

This article appeared in print on page B3.

**Load-Date:** June 15, 2023

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[***Rashida Tlaib, Censured by the House, Is Praised and Condemned at Home***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69MF-05R1-DXY4-X274-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

November 13, 2023 Monday 15:09 EST

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**Section:** US; politics

**Length:** 1784 words

**Byline:** Charles Homans

**Highlight:** The Democratic congresswoman from the Detroit area and the only Palestinian American in the House faces a complicated landscape in her district.

**Body**

The Democratic congresswoman from the Detroit area and the only Palestinian American in the House faces a complicated landscape in her district.

For more than a month, the suburbs of Detroit have played host to vigils where victims of the war between Israel and Hamas are commemorated with prayers, candles and tearful speeches.

But those vigils have told starkly differing stories about the war, and also about Rashida Tlaib, who represents the area and is the only Palestinian American in Congress.

At a gathering in solidarity with Israeli hostages last week at Adat Shalom synagogue, Jeremy Moss, a Democratic state senator from Southfield, a suburb with a large Jewish population in Ms. Tlaib’s district, spoke with concerned constituents. “I had so many people coming up to me saying that they don’t feel seen, heard, represented,” he said.

The following night, in the majority Arab American enclave of Dearborn, at a memorial for Palestinian casualties of the Israeli invasion of Gaza, speakers denounced the [*censure*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/07/us/politics/tlaib-censure-house-israel-gaza.html) of Ms. Tlaib in Congress for her statements on the conflict.

Khalid Turaani, a Palestinian American activist, compared Ms. Tlaib’s censure to that of Joshua Reed Giddings, a congressman and abolitionist who was censured by his House colleagues in 1842 for introducing resolutions opposing the slave trade.

“I guess history is repeating itself,” Mr. Turaani, who leads the Michigan Task Force for Palestine, told the crowd.

Since Hamas’ surprise attack on Israel on Oct. 7, no American politician save for President Biden has featured more centrally in arguments over the Israel-Hamas war than Ms. Tlaib. Since her election in 2018, the congresswoman, who has family living in the West Bank, has been the leading voice for Palestinian rights in Congress.

This year, thanks to a redistricting shake-up, she began representing one of the largest Arab American communities in the country, as well as parts of the largest Jewish community in the Detroit area. The war has put her in the increasingly difficult position of representing both constituencies, whose views of the conflict are both deeply personal and often extraordinarily difficult to reconcile.

Interviews in Ms. Tlaib’s district revealed a split-screen view of the war in Gaza and laid bare the grievances that have shaped it. It is a particularly acute version of the national debate over the conflict, rooted in family histories of the Holocaust and personal experiences of lost lives and land since the advent of Israeli statehood.

The divide would pose a formidable challenge for any politician. But for Ms. Tlaib, who has staked out a position that alienates many of those constituents, it could be unbridgeable.

After the Oct. 7 attack, in which Hamas attackers killed about 1,200 people and took about 240 hostages, Ms. Tlaib was one of 10 House members who [*voted against*](https://www.axios.com/2023/10/25/house-resolution-condemning-hamas-attack-israel) a [*resolution*](https://www.congress.gov/118/bills/hres771/BILLS-118hres771eh.pdf) to condemn Hamas and reaffirm $3.3 billion a year in U.S. military assistance to Israel.

On Nov. 3, she [*posted a video*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/03/world/middleeast/rashida-tlaib-biden-israel-palestinians.html) on social media accusing President Biden of supporting the “genocide of the Palestinian people” and including footage of demonstrators chanting “from the river to the sea,” a [*pro-Palestinian slogan*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/09/us/politics/river-to-the-sea-israel-gaza-palestinians.html) that many see as calling for not only the restoration of Palestinian land claims but also the eradication of Israel.

Ms. Tlaib has said she saw it as “an aspirational call for freedom, human rights and peaceful coexistence, not death, destruction or hate.” In a statement released shortly before the censure vote, she vowed to “continue to work for a just and lasting peace that upholds the human rights and dignity of all people, centers peaceful coexistence between Israelis and Palestinians, and ensures that no person, no child has to suffer or live in fear of violence.”

Ms. Tlaib’s defense of the slogan drew [*condemnation*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/08/world/middleeast/rashida-tlaib-palestine-israel.html) from the Biden administration, as well as [*criticism*](https://www.clickondetroit.com/news/local/2023/11/07/michigan-congresswoman-rashida-tlaib-faces-backlash-over-social-media-comments/) from Michigan’s attorney general, Dana Nessel, and disavowal from Gov. Gretchen Whitmer, both Democrats.

On Tuesday, 22 of Ms. Tlaib’s Democratic colleagues joined House Republicans in passing a [*resolution*](https://docs.house.gov/billsthisweek/20231106/Tlaib%20Censure%20McCormick.pdf) to censure her and accusing her of “calling for the destruction of the state of Israel.” Democratic Majority for Israel, a group led by the Democratic pollster Mark Mellman, is [*running television ads*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/02/us/politics/rashida-tlaib-israel-ads.html) in the Detroit area criticizing Ms. Tlaib.

“I think Congresswoman Tlaib is radically out of step with her colleagues in Congress, radically out of step with the Democratic Party, and radically out of step with Democrats in Michigan,” Mr. Mellman said. “We hope she will change her views, and if not, perhaps somebody might be interested in running against her.”

Pro-Israel groups like Mr. Mellman’s have in recent elections spent millions targeting pro-Palestinian House candidates in Democratic primaries, though Ms. Tlaib has easily won her two re-election bids. But shifts in Michigan’s political geography have sharpened both support for and resentment of her foreign policy views among her constituents.

After the state’s redistricting commission redrew Michigan’s congressional map two years ago, Ms. Tlaib decided to shift from the state’s Detroit-centered 13th Congressional District to the neighboring 12th, which on the new map spans western Detroit and a dozen outlying suburbs.

The new 12th District — which, like the 13th, is overwhelmingly Democratic — includes many of the same constituents. It also includes communities that have been uniquely polarized by the war. In the southeastern corner of the district is Dearborn, a ***working-class*** city whose population of nearly 110,000 is [*over half Arab American*](https://www.freep.com/story/news/local/michigan/wayne/2023/09/26/arab-americans-now-a-majority-in-dearborn-new-census-data-shows/70929525007/). It has long been a hub for pro-Palestinian activism.

“We’re very angry here,” said Amer Zahr, a local lawyer and activist. “If Biden walked into Dearborn right now, he would be persona non grata.”

The district also encompasses several affluent communities in Oakland County, a sprawling suburban area north of Detroit that is home to most of the region’s Jewish population.

Two days after the Hamas attack, more than 2,000 people [*gathered*](https://www.fox2detroit.com/news/more-than-2000-attend-congregation-shaarey-zedek-with-prayers-for-israel) at Congregation Shaarey Zedek, a prominent Conservative synagogue in Ms. Tlaib’s district, for a fund-raiser organized by the Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Detroit that raised $1.5 million for humanitarian aid to Israel. Ms. Whitmer and Ms. Nessel attended, as did Senator Gary Peters, and Representatives Haley Stevens and Shri Thanedar, who now represents Ms. Tlaib’s former district. Ms. Tlaib did not attend.

In an email, Aaron Starr, the congregation’s rabbi, said Ms. Tlaib “has chosen not to reach out, and she has responded to my efforts to communicate with her with misleading form letters.” He accused her of “siding with the terrorist organization Hamas.”

To her detractors, it was the first of many slights.

“I was hopeful that she was going to represent the whole district,” said Pamela Lippitt, a communications coach in Southfield, who is Jewish and active in pro-Israel causes. “But she just — she doesn’t represent me.”

Mr. Moss noted that even some of Ms. Tlaib’s most reliable congressional allies on Palestinian concerns, such as [*Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez*](https://ocasio-cortez.house.gov/media/press-releases/statement-rep-ocasio-cortez-violence-israel-and-palestine) and [*Ilhan Omar*](https://twitter.com/IlhanMN/status/1710730202353934338) of Minnesota, clearly condemned Hamas quickly after the attack. Ms. Tlaib did not, though in an interview with the Detroit Free Press four days later she [*described*](https://www.freep.com/story/news/politics/2023/10/11/rashida-tlaib-israel-hamas-war-crimes/71148560007/) the attack as “a war crime just like the collective punishment of Palestinians right now is a war crime.”

“I think what’s happening to children in Gaza is a travesty. Jewish pain doesn’t negate Palestinian pain,” Mr. Moss said. “But Jews are also in pain, and acknowledgment of that is what’s been missing.”

Since the start of the Israeli counterattack that according to the Gaza Health Ministry has killed over 10,000 people, more than 4,100 of them children, those with a personal stake on the other side of the conflict have levied the same complaint against Ms. Tlaib’s critics.

“People are losing focus about what’s important here,” said Emad Shehada, a Palestinian American physician in West Bloomfield, who said that 20 members of his extended family had been killed in Gaza since the Israeli campaign began. “People are being killed. And the most important thing is to stop that.”

In Dearborn, Ms. Tlaib has been hailed as a hero by many of her constituents. “She’s sticking up for human rights,” said Abe Bachir, a 59-year-old mechanic.

To Mr. Bachir, who is Lebanese American, Ms. Tlaib’s censure called attention to how little voice Arab Americans have in Congress.

“She’s the only Palestinian there, so it’s one-sided, you know?” he said. But “she’s got the backing of the world.”

Over the past decade, the cause of Palestinian rights and statehood has gained traction across the Democratic electorate’s left wing, and Mr. Turaani and other activists say they intend to wield the issue in the 2024 election against a party that they believe has broadly deserted them.

It has already jolted local Democratic politics. This month, planned appearances by Ms. Whitmer and Jocelyn Benson, the secretary of state, at events in the Detroit area were canceled shortly after Mr. Zahr and others organized demonstrations against them.

An [*Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research poll*](https://www.pbs.org/newshour/politics/americans-divided-over-israel-response-in-gaza-to-hamas-attacks-ap-norc-poll-shows) conducted early this month found a majority of Democrats skeptical about the war in Gaza, with 58 percent saying they viewed Israel’s counterattack as excessive.

Neither Dearborn nor the Oakland County suburbs are demographically representative of Ms. Tlaib’s district, which is more than 43 percent Black and remains rooted in Detroit, with most household incomes below the national median and the second-highest poverty rate of any district in the state.

Ulysses Nash, a recently laid-off auto assembly line worker from Inkster, a suburb west of Detroit, said he was sympathetic to the Israelis in the conflict and did not support a cease-fire. But he also questioned the American funding for the war, when that money could be spent at home.

“I’m not saying it’s not important,” Mr. Nash said. Still, he said, “we need to send billions here to save our own people. People are on the streets right now.”

Audio produced by Tally Abecassis.

Audio produced by Tally Abecassis.

PHOTOS: At vigils and marches in the Detroit area, support for the Palestinian cause is strong. A national survey found that 58 percent of Democrats view Israel’s counterattack in Gaza as excessive. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY VALAURIAN WALLER FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES; JEFF KOWALSKY/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE — GETTY IMAGES; SARAH RICE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES); Representative Rashida Tlaib, the only Palestinian American in the House, serves large Jewish and Arab American populations. (PHOTOGRAPH BY JOSE LUIS MAGANA/ASSOCIATED PRESS) (A15) This article appeared in print on page A1, A15.

**Load-Date:** November 15, 2023

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[***A Shrinking Margin***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:66F7-TGV1-JBG3-6191-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

September 21, 2022 Wednesday 13:11 EST

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**Section:** BRIEFING

**Length:** 1836 words

**Byline:** David Leonhardt

**Highlight:** Democrats lost ground with Hispanic voters in 2020. It doesn’t seem to have been a blip.

**Body**

Democrats lost ground with Hispanic voters in 2020. It doesn’t seem to have been a blip.

In Barack Obama’s 2012 re-election campaign, he won the Hispanic vote over Mitt Romney by 40 percentage points — 70 percent to 30 percent, according to Catalist, a political research firm. Four years later, Hillary Clinton did even better, beating Donald Trump by 42 percentage points among Hispanic voters.

But then something changed.

The economy [*became even stronger*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/05/09/opinion/trump-economy-unemployment-wages.html) at the start of Trump’s presidency than it had been during Obama’s. The Democratic Party [*moved further to the left*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/11/15/us/politics/barack-obama-2020-dems.html) than it had been under Obama. Trump turned out to have [*a macho appeal*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/14/us/politics/trump-macho-appeal.html), especially to some Hispanic men. And some Hispanic voters [*became frustrated*](https://equisresearch.medium.com/post-mortem-part-two-the-american-dream-voter-66dd6f673d1e) with the long Covid shutdowns.

Whatever the full explanation, Hispanic voters have moved to the right over the past several years. As a group, they still prefer Democrats, but the margin has narrowed significantly. In 2020, Joe Biden won the group by only 26 percentage points. And in this year’s midterms, the Democratic lead is nearly identical to Biden’s 2020 margin, according to [*the latest New York Times/Siena College poll*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2022/09/18/upshot/times-siena-poll-hispanic-crosstabs.html) — a sign that the shift was not just a one-election blip:

The problem for Democrats is that winning the Hispanic vote by only 26 points may not be enough for the party to accomplish its main goals.

“Let’s not forget that 2020 levels of Hispanic support were nearly catastrophic for Democrats,” Nate Cohn, The Times’s chief political analyst, told me. It [*helped cost the party House seats*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/21/us/miami-hispanic-voters.html) in California, Florida and Texas and allowed Republicans to win statewide races comfortably in Florida and Texas. It nearly helped Trump win re-election.

Democrats need to do better with Hispanic voters (or reverse some of their recent losses [*with white voters*](https://www.nytimes.com/2016/06/10/upshot/there-are-more-white-voters-than-people-think-thats-good-news-for-trump.html)) to build solid congressional majorities. The party currently controls the Senate by only a single vote, and Republicans are favored to take control of the House in this year’s midterms.

“The whole theory of Democrats really benefiting from demographic change rests on them winning the Hispanic vote [*by a wide margin*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/05/04/us/census-news-republicans-democrats.html),” Nate says. Without a better showing, Democrats probably cannot flip [*Florida*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/03/us/elections/big-gains-among-latinos-in-the-miami-area-power-trump-to-victory-in-florida.html) or [*Texas*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/07/us/texas-democrats-red-blue.html), even as they face a growing Republican threat in the Midwest because of the continuing drift of white voters away from Democrats.

In today’s newsletter, I’ll explore why a meaningful minority of Hispanic voters also appears to be shifting right.

As you think about the data below, I encourage you not to focus all of your attention on which answers receive support from most respondents. Remember that Democrats don’t merely need to win Hispanic voters; the party needs to do so handily. When only a narrow majority of Hispanic voters favors the Democratic position, it’s a sign that Republicans could seize on the issue to gain voters.

Who’s switching?

Nate tried to figure out which Hispanic voters were moving right by creating a subgroup of poll respondents: people who said they had voted for a mix of Democrats and Republicans in recent elections and said they were planning to vote Republican this year.

This subgroup made up 17 percent of all Hispanic voters. More were registered as Democrats than Republicans, despite their voting intentions this year. They were even more heavily skewed to the ***working class*** (with about 80 percent not having a bachelor’s degree) and the young (with almost 60 percent under 45) than Hispanic voters as a whole. More than half were men, but the group also included many women.

By a wide margin, people in the subgroup said that the Democratic Party had moved too far left on social issues. By an even wider margin, they said that economic issues like jobs, taxes and the cost of living would influence their 2022 voting more than social issues like guns, abortion and democracy would.

At the root, the Hispanic voters drifting to the right appear to be pocketbook voters, focused more on their daily lives than divisive national debates.

From left to right

Looking more broadly at all Hispanic adults, I find the below chart to be helpful. It shows 10 questions from the poll, ranked from liberal to conservative, based on the responses from Hispanic respondents:

On the issues at the top of the chart, Democrats seem to be in a stronger position, including abortion, climate change and student debt. On the issues at the bottom, Hispanic adults support the progressive position less strongly than they support the Democratic Party, suggesting the party may be vulnerable.

Neither gun policy nor immigration, for example, are as strong of an issue for Democrats as many people might assume. “I know this country is a country of immigrants, but they should immigrate in a legal way,” Amelia Alonso Tarancon, 69, who lives outside Fort Lauderdale, Fla., told The Times.

The most nuanced issue may be the economy. On the one hand, Hispanic Americans say that the Democrats are the party of the ***working class*** and agree with many Democratic positions. And yet the issue is still a problem for the party.

My colleague [*Jennifer Medina*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/07/10/briefing/mayra-flores-texas-democrats.html), who’s based in California and covers politics, told me that she thought Democrats’ identity as the ***working-class*** party cut both ways. “I’ve spoken to several Latinos, particularly men, who have told me a version of this: ‘I grew up hearing that Democrats were the party of the poor. But I don’t want to be poor, so I became a Republican,’” Jennifer said. Many of them, she added, run small businesses.

Another problem for Democrats, according to the poll, is that many voters — across racial groups — appear to be unaware of the substance of the economic policies that Biden and Democrats have enacted on infrastructure, health care, energy and more. Many of these policies appear to be [*too subtle and complex*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/04/21/briefing/biden-invisible-government-american-rescue-plan.html) for voters to understand.

([*This recent story*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/18/us/politics/latino-vote-polling.html) — by Jennifer, Jazmine Ulloa and Ruth Igielnik — goes into more detail on the strengths of both the Republican and Democratic Parties among Hispanic voters.)

The bottom line

For much of the past few decades, Hispanic voters supported the Democratic Party so strongly that many people came to think of them as a safe Democratic constituency, along with Black voters, Jewish voters and secular college graduates. Instead, Hispanic voters appear to fall somewhere between these reliably progressive groups and ***working-class*** whites — and have become a crucial swing group in American politics.

More politics

* These charts show why it will be [*hard for Democrats to retain control*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2022/09/21/us/politics/gop-house.html) of the House.

1. The special master in the Mar-a-Lago case expressed [*skepticism toward Trump’s claims*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/20/us/politics/trump-declassification-documents.html) that he declassified the documents.
2. Nonprofit groups that register voters say they [*lack the funding this year*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/20/us/politics/voter-registration-fundraising.html) to do their work.

THE LATEST NEWS

War in Ukraine

* As Russia suffers losses, Vladimir Putin said in a speech that he would [*call up roughly 300,000 additional soldiers*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2022/09/21/world/russia-ukraine-war-putin/buffeted-by-war-putin-gives-a-rare-address-to-the-russian-nation?smid=url-share).

1. Kremlin-backed officials in eastern and southern Ukraine announced [*referendums on joining Russia*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/20/world/europe/russia-annex-ukraine-referendum.html). The U.S. has said any such vote would be a farce.
2. The war dominated the [*first day of the U.N. General Assembly*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/20/world/europe/unga-russia-ukraine-macron-erdogan.html), with heads of state addressing the violence and rising energy prices.

Other Big Stories

* A health panel recommended that doctors screen [*all adult patients under 65 for anxiety*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/20/health/anxiety-screening-recommendation.html).

1. The Justice Department charged dozens of people in Minnesota with [*stealing $240 million for a sham program*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/20/us/politics/pandemic-aid-fraud-minnesota.html) purporting to feed hungry children.
2. New York City will install [*security cameras in all subway cars*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/20/nyregion/nyc-subway-security-cameras.html), expanding a program that began after a mass shooting on a train this spring.
3. Hurricane Fiona [*continues to gather strength and is battering Caribbean islands*](https://www.nytimes.com/article/tropical-storm-fiona-hurricane.html). Most of Puerto Rico remained without power.

Opinions

Wildfires. Extreme heat. [*On the West Coast, climate change is ruining summer*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/21/opinion/wildfires-climate-change-summer.html), Emma Pattee writes.

Treating migrants as political props is un-American, but Biden needs [*a plan to secure the border*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/20/opinion/desantis-migrants-marthas-vineyard.html), Bret Stephens argues.

Puerto Rico [*needs help again*](https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2022/09/20/lin-manuel-luis-miranda-puerto-rico-hurricane-help/), Lin-Manuel Miranda and his father, Luis Miranda, write in The Washington Post.

MORNING READS

A trove of belongings: What Ernest Hemingway [*left in Sloppy Joe’s Bar 80 years ago*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/21/arts/ernest-hemingway-archive-penn-state.html).

New York City restaurants: Is early [*the new late*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/20/t-magazine/eating-early-new-york-restaurants.html)

Nostalgia: The second coming of [*the appletini*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/19/dining/drinks/martini-appletini-lemon-drop.html).

A Times classic: How [*racist redlining shaped cities*](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/08/24/upshot/how-redlinings-racist-effects-lasted-for-decades.html).

Advice from Wirecutter: [*Turn off your phone’s location access*](https://www.nytimes.com/wirecutter/blog/turning-off-phone-location-access/).

Lives Lived: The Los Angeles Dodgers shortstop Maury Wills stole 104 bases in 1962, eclipsing Ty Cobb’s 1915 record and transforming the game. Wills [*died at 89*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/20/sports/baseball/maury-willis-dead.html).

SPORTS NEWS FROM THE ATHLETIC

One shy: Aaron Judge is [*on the brink*](https://theathletic.com/3614028/2022/09/20/aaron-judge-home-run-yankees/) of matching Roger Maris’ American League home run record after hitting his 60th shot of the season in the Yankees’ thrilling 9-8 win last night, which included a Giancarlo Stanton walk-off grand slam.

As the LIV turns: LIV golfers sent a letter yesterday asking for the rebel league’s tournaments to count for Official World Golf Ranking (points), another turn in a saga that has fractured golf. Unless a rare exception is made, [*the new tour doesn’t match OWGR standards*](https://theathletic.com/3612343/2022/09/20/liv-golf-world-ranking-status/) for qualification.

The N.F.L.’s next great pass rusher? Micah Parsons is drawing comparisons to Lawrence Taylor in just his second season. He has four sacks through two games and [*is the favorite*](https://theathletic.com/3611551/2022/09/20/cowboys-micah-parsons-nfl-awards/) to win Defensive Player of the Year.

ARTS AND IDEAS

Bad Bunny keeps climbing

Bad Bunny earned 10 nominations from the [*Latin Grammy Awards yesterday*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/20/arts/music/latin-grammy-nominations.html), the most of any artist. It’s no surprise: Look anywhere in entertainment and you’ll probably see him.

Hollywood? He had a role in the summer blockbuster “Bullet Train.” The charts? His new album, “Un Verano Sin Ti,” has been the No. 1 record in the U.S. for 11 weeks this year. You can even spot him on the beach with Snoop Dogg in a Corona commercial. “He keeps breaking records and climbing skyward,” [*Rolling Stone wrote*](https://www.rollingstone.com/music/music-live-reviews/bad-bunny-yankee-stadium-tour-review-1234582710/).

PLAY, WATCH, EAT

What to Cook

This chocolate mousse is [*made in a blender*](https://cooking.nytimes.com/recipes/1020831-blender-chocolate-mousse).

What to Watch

The [*new Hulu comedy “Reboot”*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/20/arts/television/reboot-hulu.html) pokes fun at TV’s obsession with bringing back past shows.

What to Read

“Getting Lost,” a diary by the French writer Annie Ernaux, [*recounts an all-consuming Paris romance*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/19/books/annie-ernaux-getting-lost.html).

Late Night

Trevor Noah says Ron DeSantis is [*stealing Trump’s thunder*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/21/arts/television/trevor-noah-trump-desantis.html).

Now Time to Play

The pangram from yesterday’s Spelling Bee was bathroom. Here is [*today’s puzzle*](https://www.nytimes.com/puzzles/spelling-bee).

Here’s [*today’s Mini Crossword*](https://www.nytimes.com/crosswords/game/mini), and a clue: Yolk holder (three letters).

And here’s [*today’s Wordle*](https://www.nytimes.com/games/wordle/index.html). After, [*use our bot*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2022/upshot/wordle-bot.html) to get better.

Thanks for spending part of your morning with The Times. See you tomorrow. — David

P.S. “We announce the establishment of the People’s Republic of China,” Mao Zedong said [*73 years ago today*](https://www.nytimes.com/1949/09/22/archives/communist-regime-set-up-for-china-interim-rule-is-announced-in.html).

Here’s [*today’s front page*](https://static01.nyt.com/images/2022/09/21/nytfrontpage/scan.pdf).

“[*The Daily*](https://www.nytimes.com/thedaily)” is about migrants. On “[*The Argument*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/21/opinion/after-dobbs-feminism-beyond-the-gender-binary.html),” what does it mean to be a transgender feminist?

Matthew Cullen, Lauren Hard, Lauren Jackson, Claire Moses, Ian Prasad Philbrick, Tom Wright-Piersanti and Ashley Wu contributed to The Morning. You can reach the team at [*themorning@nytimes.com*](mailto:themorning@nytimes.com).

[*Sign up here to get this newsletter in your inbox*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing).

PHOTO: Eric Trump in 2020 at a Latinos for Trump event in Phoenix. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Adriana Zehbrauskas for The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** April 27, 2023

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[***Gene Therapy For Sickle Cell Clears Hurdle***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69HT-CY81-JBG3-61Y4-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

November 1, 2023 Wednesday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; National Desk; Pg. 1

**Length:** 1637 words

**Byline:** By Gina Kolata

**Body**

The decision by an advisory committee may lead to Food and Drug Administration approval of the first treatment for humans that uses the CRISPR gene-editing system.

A panel of experts said on Tuesday that a groundbreaking treatment for sickle cell disease was safe enough for clinical use, setting the stage for likely federal approval by Dec. 8 of a powerful potential cure for an illness that afflicts more than 100,000 Americans.

The Food and Drug Administration had previously found that the treatment, known as exa-cel and jointly developed by Vertex Pharmaceuticals of Boston and CRISPR Therapeutics of Switzerland, was effective. The panel's conclusion on Tuesday about exa-cel's safety sends it to the F.D.A. for a decision on greenlighting it for broad patient use.

Exa-cel frees patients from the debilitating and painful effects of this chronic, deadly disease. If approved, the Vertex product would be the first medicine to treat a genetic disease with the CRISPR gene-editing technique.

It could also be the first of a series of new options to cure the excruciating illness. By Dec. 20, the F.D.A. will decide on a second potential cure for sickle cell, a gene therapy devised by the company Bluebird Bio of Somerville, Mass.

Sickle cell disease is caused by a gene mutation that makes blood cells misshapen, so that they resemble sickles or crescents. It affects millions of people worldwide, most of whom have African ancestry. The misshapen cells get stuck in blood vessels, causing strokes, organ damage and episodes of agonizing pain as muscles are starved of oxygen.

Sickle cell's toll starts early in life. Evelyn Islam of Milwaukee, now 8, had 22 blood transfusions and had to have her spleen removed before she was 3. ''Gene therapy is our last hope for a cure,'' said her mother, Melissa Nicole Allen.

But the new gene therapies will come too late for many.

Ashley Valentine, a co-founder of the national advocacy group Sick Cells, had to take three months off from work in 2016 to help her brother Marqus deal with symptoms of sickle cell. When he had a hip replacement in 2018, her father ended up accepting a layoff from his job to help care for him.

''And that's just us,'' she said.

Marqus died in 2020, at age 36, from a stroke caused by sickle cell.

New treatments like the one that was endorsed on Tuesday are expected to cost millions of dollars per patient, though Vertex has not yet said what it will charge. But lifelong care for patients with the disease is also enormously expensive, costing the health care system an estimated $3 billion a year.

It's not yet clear how many people will seek the new therapy. The new therapies are also not easy to endure and come with hardships for patients, who will have to undergo chemotherapy and spend more than a month in the hospital. Family members are affected too -- they may need to take time off work during the most intensive phase of the treatment.

Additionally, most Americans with sickle cell are Black and may not trust a health care system that has often failed to provide the most basic preventive and therapeutic care for those with the disease. Some with sickle cell are anxious about undergoing a medical treatment that is on the cutting edge of biotechnology.

But for doctors who have spent years watching patients suffer, and many parents who have seen their children endure years of agony, there is elation at what lies ahead.

''We are finally at a spot where we can envision broadly available cures for sickle cell disease,'' said Dr. John Tisdale, director of the cellular and molecular therapeutics branch at the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute and a member of the advisory committee.

Dana Jones of San Antonio wants her daughters Kyra, 18, and Kami, 20, to have a chance at one of the new therapies. Both had strokes that left them with learning disabilities -- injuries that could probably have been avoided if they had been given a screening test and treatment long known to prevent nine out of 10 strokes in children with the disease. Kyra is now in intensive care as doctors try to control her pain.

Ms. Jones is overwhelmed by the possibility that her daughters could be cured.

''It is my prayer that Kami and Kyra can be cured of this awful disease and finally be able to truly live,'' she said.

A New Treatment and a New Technology

The cause of sickle cell has been known for nearly 70 years, but research lagged, a situation many say occurred at least in part because so many patients were Black and from poor and ***working-class*** families.

There are a number of treatments to reduce sickle cell's impact. Some patients are able to get bone marrow transplants that can cure the condition. But that requires finding a donor and, after the transplant, taking drugs to prevent the body from rejecting the foreign cells.

In recent years, a number of biotechnology companies have tried novel approaches. While Bluebird Bio is advancing its gene therapy technique, Vertex and CRISPR Therapeutics focused on the gene-editing system CRISPR-Cas9, which can home in on specific areas of DNA and turn genes on or off. CRISPR has allowed researchers to disable genes to assess their importance in biomedical research. But until now it has not been used as a treatment for patients with a genetic disease.

To treat sickle cell, CRISPR snips a piece of DNA in bone marrow stem cells. That frees a blocked gene to make a form of hemoglobin that normally is produced only by a fetus. The fetal gene directs the production of hemoglobin that does not form into the sickle shape. In clinical trials, patients no longer had the complications of sickle cell disease and no longer needed blood transfusions.

But there is a concern that CRISPR could inadvertently snip a piece of DNA in the wrong part of a patient's genome. That might disrupt a gene and cause a blood cancer.

No such issues have turned up in the clinical trials, but the Vertex trial involved only 44 patients, and just 30 have been followed for at least 16 months. The company did extensive comparisons of patients' DNA with that of people in large databases asking how likely such CRISPR misfires could be.

Vertex said it plans to follow clinical trial patients for 15 years. The company's data were sufficiently reassuring that the expert committee said on Tuesday they saw no reason to hold the treatment back.

There can always be additional studies, noted committee member Alexis Komor, a professor of chemistry and biochemistry at the University of California, San Diego. But, she said, that would be ''expecting perfection at the expense of progress.''

Dr. Joseph Wu of Stanford added, ''We all agree that the benefits outweigh the risks. These patients are quite sick and this is a good therapy.''

Scot Wolfe of the University of Massachusetts Chan Medical School said, ''We want to be careful not to let the perfect be the enemy of the good.''

''There is a huge unmet need,'' he added.

If It's Safe, Who Gets It?

Vertex estimates that 20,000 people could be eligible for its treatment, and says Medicaid and private insurers have suggested a willingness to pay for it.

''There is almost no way they could not pay,'' said Dr. David Williams, chief of the division of hematology and oncology at Boston Children's Hospital.

Dr. Williams, who has consulted for Vertex and Bluebird Bio, added that insurers pay ''$3 million a pop'' for other gene therapies produced by Bluebird Bio for the diseases thalassemia and adrenoleukodystrophy. With sickle cell, and its large number of Black patients, he said, there is an issue of ''equity in access and the tremendous medical need.''

Some people with the disease may not be eligible, depending on the F.D.A.'s decisions. They could include young children with sickle cell and older patients whose bodies have been so damaged that the treatment could pose heightened risks.

Kevin Wake of Kansas City, Mo., hopes he is not too old, at 55, or too damaged. He has had three strokes caused by the disease.

The treatments, though curative, are difficult.

Patients first have eight weeks of blood transfusions followed by a treatment to release bone marrow stem cells into their bloodstream. The stem cells are then removed and sent to the companies to be treated. Next, patients receive intense chemotherapy to clear their marrows for the treated cells. The treated cells are infused back into the patients, but they have to remain in the hospital for at least a month while the new cells grow and repopulate their marrows.

That treatment ''cannot be delivered at most hospitals,'' said Dr. Alexis Thompson, chief of the division of hematology at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, who consults for Vertex.

Another issue is how quickly Vertex can ramp up production. Each patient's cells must be treated individually in a sterile environment, an arduous prospect.

Stuart Arbuckle, executive vice president and chief operating officer at Vertex, is confident. ''We are launch ready,'' he said. But he added that he did not expect a huge wave of patients immediately.

''This is a pretty big decision for a patient to go through,'' Mr. Arbuckle said.

One of the Vertex clinical trial patients, Marie-Chantal Tornyenu, 22, who is a senior at Cornell University, said patients also had to be prepared for ''mental adjustment'' after treatment.

Ms. Tornyenu said she no longer had the pain crises that plagued her, especially in high school when she was hospitalized nearly every month.

But she has spent much of her life taking precautions and worrying about pain and complications from sickle cell. Those habits are hard to break.

''It's a major learning curve from having sickle cell my whole life,'' she said. ''I'm still struggling with that mind-set -- 'sickle cell is you.'''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/31/health/sickle-cell-fda-cure-crispr.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/31/health/sickle-cell-fda-cure-crispr.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: Dana Jones, left, with her daughter Kyra, now 18, in 2020. Kyra has had strokes, and is currently in intensive care to reduce pain. (PHOTOGRAPH BY ILANA PANICH-LINSMAN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A14) This article appeared in print on page A1, A14.

**Load-Date:** November 1, 2023

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[***Who's That Lonely Man There in the Corner?***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:689X-1N71-JBG3-634H-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

May 26, 2023 Friday

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**Section:** Section C; Column 0; Movies, Performing Arts/Weekend Desk; Pg. 5; CRITIC'S PICK

**Length:** 789 words

**Byline:** By Naveen Kumar

**Body**

In Eboni Booth's new play, William Jackson Harper performs with astonishing vulnerability as a man alone and adrift.

Maybe you've seen him tucked into the corner of a dive bar, muttering to himself now and then, empty glasses multiplying on his table. And perhaps you've thought -- though, it's just as likely you haven't -- What's up with that guy?

In ''Primary Trust,'' the playwright Eboni Booth zooms in on one such man: He lives in a fictional suburb of Rochester, N.Y., where mai tais are his drink of choice at an unlikely tiki bar named Wally's. He is alone and adrift in this tender, delicately detailed portrait, though surely he has not always been. Listen, and he'll tell you about the moment he almost drowned and how he learned to keep his head above water.

''Primary Trust,'' which opened at the Laura Pels Theater in Manhattan on Thursday, finds Kenneth (William Jackson Harper, of ''The Good Place'') approaching 40 when the bookstore where he's worked for 20 years closes shop. (The owner, played by Jay O. Sanders, needs cash for surgery.) But Kenneth has never found a job on his own; social workers helped him get his current one some years after he was orphaned.

Much of this back story Kenneth relays himself, addressing the audience, in the director Knud Adams's graceful production for Roundabout Theater Company, from what resembles a miniaturized model of a provincial square. (The scaled-down set is by Marsha Ginsberg, and the elegant lighting is by Isabella Byrd.) In 15 years, Kenneth explains, all this will be leveled and replaced by condominiums. The municipal motto -- ''Welcome Friend, You're Right on Time!'' -- feels laden with uncertain melancholy: It could be a salutation from the threshold of death.

Mordant subtext and typically empty sentiments are among the ways Booth demonstrates that language can convey deep pain one minute and ring utterly hollow the next, usually in the service of capitalism. In contrast to Kenneth's confessional narration are the rote greetings of a carousel of servers at Wally's (all played by April Matthis, including one who becomes a fast and flirtatious friend) and the sales pitches Kenneth later lobs at customers (also played by Matthis) after he lands a teller position at a local bank. (''Primary Trust'' doubles as the name of Kenneth's new employer, and an abbreviated metaphor for what was lost when his mother died.)

As in her superstore dark comedy ''Paris,'' presented by Atlantic Theater Company in 2020, Booth again probes the half-dread of ***working-class*** Black characters in a one-freeway-exit corner of the Northeast. And though Kenneth's Blackness is an underlying aspect of his experience, it is not the acute source of his alienation. His foundational trauma, and his longtime coping mechanisms, are gradually revealed (early on it becomes clear that Bert, his near-constant companion played by Eric Berryman, is imaginary), and he begins to reach through the cracks of his isolation to discover good, decent people.

Harper, who is onstage for nearly all of the production's 95 minutes, performs with astonishing ease and vulnerability, particularly given the depths he is asked to plumb in monologues directly to the audience; he lends the currents flowing through Kenneth's interior life extraordinary subtlety and immediacy. Booth's one-man study is wonderfully vivid, but there's only so much emotional engagement that the unburdening of feelings, rather than their enactment or discovery, can inspire. Her other characters are far more loosely sketched: Sanders and Matthis turn small roles, rich with concise, sideways detail, into four-course meals, paradoxically making them feel underused.

The production's play on perspective and proportion, with people as tall as buildings, enhance the undertones in Booth's work that question who, and what, we pay attention to and why. Do New Yorkers, for example, who Kenneth remarks ''step over human beings sleeping in the street,'' think about places like this, or about why someone might be drinking for two at happy hour and talking to no one?

Throughout the production a bell, like the ones that summon unseen workers from behind service counters, dings repeatedly, sometimes seemingly incessantly, variously marking the reset or passage of time. It feels like a disruption -- an unexplained and overused device that interrupts the flow of life. Maybe it's actually a wake up call, and not just for the man who's been living in a daze.

Primary TrustThrough July 2 at the Laura Pels Theater, Manhattan; roundabouttheatre.org. Running time: 1 hour 35 minutes. Primary TrustThrough July 2 at the Laura Pels Theater in Manhattan; roundabouttheatre.org. Running time: 1 hour 35 minutes.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/25/theater/primary-trust-review.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/25/theater/primary-trust-review.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: Eric Berryman, far left, and William Jackson Harper in ''Primary Trust,'' at the Laura Pels Theater. (PHOTOGRAPH BY SARA KRULWICH/THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page C5.

**Load-Date:** May 26, 2023

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[***Hochul and Adams Unveil Their Vision For 'New New York'***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:673B-XKG1-DXY4-X0Y8-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

December 15, 2022 Thursday

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; National Desk; Pg. 17

**Length:** 1080 words

**Byline:** By Jeffery C. Mays and Nicole Hong

**Body**

The leaders want to turn commercial districts into 24-hour live-and-work spaces, recognizing that the pandemic has fundamentally changed the city.

Gov. Kathy Hochul and mayor Eric Adams unveiled a reimagined vision for a ''New New York'' Wednesday, while acknowledging that the pandemic has fundamentally changed New York City.

The plan, titled ''New New York: Making New York Work For Everyone,'' suggested that reinvigorating the city's commercial districts by transforming them into 24 hour live-and-work spaces was key to the city's future.

''The pandemic caused us to rethink everything. How we work, where we work, how we get around, how we spend our time, our lives and where our priorities are,'' Ms. Hochul said during a speech before civic and business leaders at Cipriani Wall Street. ''We're truly not living in the same New York that we were in March of 2020.''

The proposal was sparse on details such as funding or even timelines, but was still intended to serve as a statement of joint priorities from the city and state, as well as a reflection of Ms. Hochul's and Mr. Adams's ability to collaborate better than their predecessors had.

The report acknowledged that hybrid work is here to stay, a shift in tone from the initial position of Mr. Adams, who has repeatedly urged workers to return to their offices and famously scolded them for ''staying home in your pajamas all day.''

Midtown should be made more appealing to commuters with public space improvements, like creating more pedestrian-only plazas around Grand Central Terminal, and implementing a more automated trash collection system on par with cities like Paris and Barcelona, according to the report.

The plan also recommended modernizing outdated regulations to make it easier to convert office buildings into residential apartments, saying a tax incentive should be offered to promote the creation of affordable housing in particular.

Mr. Adams, who has spent much of his first year in office seeking to reduce crime and disorder in the city, continued to press his message.

''The prerequisite to our prosperity is public safety and justice. They go together,'' Mr. Adams said at the event, hosted by the Association for a Better New York. ''We must be safe as a city. And you can't be safe as a city if you continue to allow people who are violent in our city to return to our streets and inflict violence on innocent people.''

Although foot traffic across the city's business districts has almost fully recovered to prepandemic levels, office occupancy has lagged far behind. Since Labor Day, offices in the New York City area have been about half full, according to Kastle Systems, an office security firm.

Subway ridership on weekdays is only about 63 percent of comparable periods in 2019. In Midtown and Lower Manhattan, the city's two largest business districts, spending at restaurants and bars is still about 35 percent below prepandemic levels, the report said.

The slow rebound in New York City's hospitality sector has been a major reason that the city's private-sector jobs recovery has trailed the nation's throughout the pandemic.

But Mr. Adams made a point of underscoring the importance of high-income earners as a key part of the city's recovery, and sought to avoid proposals that benefited the ***working class*** at the expense of high earners.

''To continually attack high income earners where 51 percent of all taxes are paid by two percent of New Yorkers, it blows my mind when I hear people say, 'So what if they leave?''' the mayor said. ''No, you leave.''

While the mayor received the loudest applause from the crowd when talking about public safety and protecting high-income earners, the report's lack of details and its proposal to use tax incentives to help the transition from office to residential space drew criticism from others.

Carolyn Martinez-Class, a campaign coordinator for the Invest in our New York Coalition, a group that wants to raise money for programs to help lower income New Yorkers by raising taxes on the wealthy, said that while the report recognized the struggles of ***working class*** New Yorkers, it did not focus enough on things that could help, such as funding child care or housing vouchers.

''We know that in the budget process the governor has outsize power to make determinations about how state funding is used,'' Ms. Martinez-Class said.

The leaders of the panel that developed the report, Robin Hood chief executive Richard Buery and former Sidewalk Labs chief executive Dan Doctoroff, both talked about the need for equity in the plan and using congestion pricing to fund the redevelopment of streets in commercial districts that are turned into 24-hour live-and-work neighborhoods.

Although business districts outside Manhattan have recovered much faster, like Fordham Plaza in the Bronx or Long Island City in Queens, Manhattan's central business districts make up a disproportionately large share of the city's economy.

The report said 18 percent of the city's property tax revenue comes from Manhattan's business districts, money that is used to fund infrastructure and schools. The report cited how the lack of affordable housing has become a major barrier to the city's growth, saying the soaring cost of living has made it more difficult for companies to attract and retain workers.

This fall, homelessness in New York City reached a record high, and average rents in the city have risen 40 percent since 2010, the report said. In some parts of New York City, the population grew more than twice as much in the last decade as the number of new housing units, the report said.

To alleviate the housing shortage, the panel proposed changes to existing laws by embracing many priorities of pro-development advocates, including removing some state limits on residential building size and legalizing basement homes.

The report notably did not include proposals that many on the left had lobbied for, including stricter rent regulation and more expansive rental assistance.

Nathan Gusdorf, executive director of the Fiscal Policy Institute, said the mayor's recent cuts to agency budgets -- along with the governor's opposition to raising taxes on the wealthy -- will make the proposals in the report difficult to achieve.

''The report identifies key policy areas that are essential for a full economic recovery but is largely silent on the need for new revenue,'' Mr. Gusdorf said.

Mihir Zaveri contributed reporting.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2022/12/14/nyregion/adams-hochul-ny-plan.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/12/14/nyregion/adams-hochul-ny-plan.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: Mayor Eric Adams speaking on Wednesday about the plan titled ''New New York: Making New York Work For Everyone.'' (PHOTOGRAPH BY HIROKO MASUIKE/THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A17.

**Load-Date:** December 15, 2022

**End of Document**



[***Why We Need an Expanded Child Tax Credit***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:677M-B581-JBG3-60CW-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

January 4, 2023 Wednesday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; Editorial Desk; Pg. 21; LETTERS

**Length:** 457 words

**Body**

Summary summary summary

To the Editor:

Re ''Don't Expand the Child Tax Credit,'' by Scott Winship (Opinion guest essay, Dec. 21):

Dr. Winship writes that while a short-term bump in the child tax credit has been shown to reduce child poverty, the long-term consequences are likely to be a disincentive for parents to work. This trope has been a conservative talking point going back to the Reagan administration.

The glaring omission in Mr. Winship's analysis is the cost and unavailability of reliable, quality day care for low-income and single parents.

The Times recently published a hand-wringing article about the cost of day care, which can reach heights beyond that of college tuition. A Nov. 17 article in Fortune magazine bemoaned the frequency with which parents miss work for lack of child care, especially during winter flu and cold seasons.

When are conservatives going to see the elephant in the room? The problem is the cost and availability of child care, not parents' inherent unwillingness to work if they receive a benefit in the form of a child tax credit from the government.

Meredith WattsSan Francisco

To the Editor:

If the money from the tax credit enables a ***working-class*** parent to quit or reduce the hours of a undervalued, low-paying job and stay home to nurture and raise their children, to avoid the stress and anxiety of dealing with unreliable child care and transportation, what's so wrong with that? Let them enjoy the same options more financially secure parents enjoy.

Iris Lee StolerBrooklyn

To the Editor:

As Scott Winship explains in his essay, the expanded Child Tax Credit dramatically reduced child poverty in 2021. The monthly payments also reduced food insecurity and lessened parent financial stress.

But I disagree with Mr. Winship on one key point -- the expanded Child Tax Credit wouldn't dramatically change parents' work behavior. Findings from the 2021 University of Chicago study he mentions have been rebutted by the libertarian-leaning Niskanen Center and other researchers. Evidence from the similar tax benefits in Canada also found no negative employment effects among parents.

If anything, a permanently expanded Child Tax Credit would, in the long run, support employment outcomes for parents and children. Providing additional cash to families improves outcomes in school, health and even future earnings.

In fact, the tax credit helped some parents work more hours. The payments allow parents to afford the transportation and child care needed to work.

The expanded Child Tax Credit supports children, families and our economies -- in both the short and long term.

Ashley BurnsideWashingtonThe writer is a senior policy analyst at the Center for Law and Social Policy.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/01/03/opinion/letters/the-benefits-of-an-expanded-child-tax-credit.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/01/03/opinion/letters/the-benefits-of-an-expanded-child-tax-credit.html)

**Graphic**

This article appeared in print on page A21.

**Load-Date:** January 4, 2023

**End of Document**



[***A Lightning Rod Defends His Legacy (and Has a Few Regrets); Nonfiction***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:699F-GY71-JBG3-645F-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

October 2, 2023 Monday 11:45 EST

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**Section:** BOOKS; review

**Length:** 1342 words

**Byline:** Dwight Garner

**Highlight:** In his memoir “The Controversialist,” Martin Peretz reflects on his long tenure as publisher and editor of The New Republic.

**Body**

In his memoir “The Controversialist,” Martin Peretz reflects on his long tenure as publisher and editor of The New Republic.

THE CONTROVERSIALIST: Arguments with Everyone, Left Right and Center, by Martin Peretz

“When you talk about politics,” the critic Irving Howe said, “you should stand.” Martin Peretz quotes this line early in “The Controversialist,” his new memoir, as a style of moralizing he was never crazy about. But the observation suits him. Peretz writes as if he were pacing around a dining-room table, ego and self-loathing fighting it out in his head.

For nearly four decades, Peretz (everyone calls him Marty) was the kibitzing, buttinsky publisher and editor in chief of [*The New Republic*](https://newrepublic.com/), which was the most vital opinion magazine in America for stretches of the 1980s and ’90s. He taught for five decades at Harvard, which he treated like his magazine’s farm team.

He knew nearly everyone who mattered in the intertwined worlds of journalism, academia and government. Martin Luther King Jr. came to his house for dinner; he was Al Gore’s first phone call after Gore, his protégé, officially lost the 2000 election; Yo-Yo Ma played at his birthday parties; Norman Mailer punched him in a Provincetown restaurant. This is scratching the surface of the surface.

Peretz married Anne Devereux Labouisse, an heir to the Singer sewing machine company fortune. When he wasn’t invited to the best arguments, he bought his way in. He liked open letters and fiery petitions. He wore his controversial brand of Zionism as if it were a beret. He was the kind of guy who, if everyone at a memorial service was asked to keep it to five minutes, would go on for 20.

I find myself slipping into the past tense. Peretz is, circa right now, at least 64 percent canceled. The official end came in 2010, when he was blogging (“a mistake,” he writes). He made several expedient comments, in the context of a larger argument, including that Muslims may not be worthy of First Amendment protections and that “Muslim life is cheap.” The indignation did not let up for a long time. He writes about the aftermath:

The invasion of Iraq, which I backed, is a disaster; the financial system that my friends helped build has crashed; my wife and I are divorced; The New Republic is sold after I feared going bust — and here I am in my white suit walking across Harvard Yard, surrounded by students: “Harvard, Harvard, shame on you, honoring a racist fool.” The racist fool is, apparently, me. It’s a sodden coda, one I don’t quite grasp, or believe.

More was to come. His iteration of The New Republic did not fare well, in the rearview mirror, under the inquisitive searchlights of #MeToo and Black Lives Matter. The magazine’s longtime literary editor, the lion-maned Leon Wieseltier, who left in 2014, was [*accused three years later of sexual harassment*](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/10/24/arts/leon-wieseltier-magazine-harassment.html) during his time at The New Republic. The magazine’s decision to publish an excerpt from Charles Murray’s third-rail-gripping 1994 book “The Bell Curve,” in part about racial differences in I.Q., continues to elicit reproof. Add to this the fabrications and plagiarism of the writers Stephen Glass and Ruth Shalit, and The New Republic of the Peretz era can in retrospect begin to resemble, to many, a leaky, disreputable ghost barge.

Peretz is sorry about some of these things. He quickly apologized, he notes here, for his “wild and wounding” language about Muslims. He regrets “not recognizing the plight of the Black underclass in the pages of The New Republic.” He regrets (“regret is not a big enough word”) supporting the invasion of Iraq. But he defends the decision to publish Murray (“Murray is a person who matters”) alongside dissenting opinions, and he stands by Wieseltier, “an intellectual who is also a man of the senses.” He writes: “The truth is that Leon may have been disrespectful to women, but he has also respected them and their work.” He notes that Wieseltier’s new magazine, Liberties, publishes Martha Nussbaum, Helen Vendler and Louise Glück.

He’d much rather talk about his magazine’s high points, such as Andrew Sullivan’s landmark cover story making the conservative case for gay marriage in 1989. They also include publishing the reporting that led to Samantha Powers’s book “A Problem From Hell: America and the Age of Genocide,” which won a Pulitzer Prize in 2003.

He’s proud too, of gathering a group of some of the era’s liveliest thinkers, writers and editors, including Michael Kinsley, Hendrik Hertzberg and Charles Krauthammer. Kinsley was the reason I adored the magazine. He had a nearly Martian intelligence, and the dryness of his wit turned his opponents into pillars of salt. Office high jinks are recounted, such as the time Krauthammer had the password of a master hard drive permanently changed to “Kemp,” after the conservative congressman Jack Kemp, whom Hertzberg loathed.

The punch from Mailer arrived in Peretz’s solar plexus after The New Republic reviewed Mailer’s novel “The Gospel According to the Son” (1997), which reworked the life of Jesus Christ. It was a brutal review, by James Wood. The cover of the issue depicted Mailer on a cross, with the headline “He Is Finished.”

“The Controversialist” is well-written, chewy with anecdote and often very funny. It is hard to sound like yourself when you are writing, but Peretz manages to do so. He grew up in the Bronx, at a time when New York “was not really a melting pot: It was more like a TV dinner.” His father owned a pocketbook factory and was a landlord.

Peretz got into Princeton but backed out after he realized that, as a Jew, he’d never be admitted into the college’s elite eating clubs. He attended Brandeis instead, where his classmates included Abbie Hoffman and Louise Lasser. His professors included C. Wright Mills and Philip Rieff. He loved the ferment of the place. He writes about his dawning awareness that he was sexually attracted to men.

Peretz grew a beard and got a job teaching at Harvard. He was in Mailer’s apartment (long before the magazine crucified him) on the night Mailer stabbed his second wife. He married Labouisse, who was “astoundingly, alienatingly rich.” They became famous for their dinner parties in Cambridge. They had a long, skinny table, so everyone was right in one another’s faces. Talk had to be general, a single conversation. No peeling off.

William F. Buckley Jr. edited The National Review, if his memoir “[*Overdrive*](https://www.nytimes.com/1983/08/07/books/eight-rich-and-busy-days.html)” can be believed, from a never-ending series of planes, trains, automobiles and sailboats. Peretz traveled more serenely, but he was “where you should be all the time,” to quote the Carly Simon lyric. There are a lot of sentences in this book such as, “Anne and I were having a party in Truro the next night, and first to arrive were Diana and Lionel Trilling,” and “Al called me in Italy, at the villa of I Tatti.”

Some scores are settled. He refers to the political theorist Judith Shklar as someone “who knew Yiddish but was still no fun to talk to.” The sociologist Barrington Moore Jr. is “an adherent of the ***working class*** whose most troubled times were when the motor on his yacht was not working.” Susan Sontag never thanked him for helping pay for her medical expenses when she was ill with cancer, Peretz complains, and worse, Sontag put his wife down by telling her, “You are a very good homemaker.” And so on.

Peretz has a sense of humor about himself. When Egypt and Syria launched a surprise attack on Israel in October 1973, he was on the Cape. He immediately called Simcha Dinitz, Israel’s ambassador to America, and asked, “What’s going on?” Dinitz replied: “What’s going on is too important for me to be talking to you now.”

Peretz misses his power perches. He misses the arena. He doesn’t like what’s happening to America’s politics and media. But he has his memories. About his life and times, he comments, “They were thick eras, and I was in the thick of them.”

THE CONTROVERSIALIST: Arguments with Everyone, Left Right and Center | By Martin Peretz | 351 pp. | Wicked Son | $28

PHOTO This article appeared in print on page C1, C2.

**Load-Date:** October 4, 2023

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[***Made in U.S.: Solar Firm Bucks Odds***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:699D-CV11-DXY4-X0N3-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

October 2, 2023 Monday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section B; Column 0; Business/Financial Desk; Pg. 1

**Length:** 1404 words

**Byline:** By Ivan Penn

**Body**

For more than two decades, workers at a factory in Perrysburg, Ohio, near Toledo, have been making something that other businesses stopped producing in the United States long ago: solar panels.

How the company that owns the factory, First Solar, managed to hang on when most solar panel manufacturing left the United States for China is critical to understanding the viability of President Biden's efforts to establish a large domestic green energy industry.

Mr. Biden and Democrats in Congress last year authorized hundreds of billions of dollars in federal incentives for manufacturing solar panels, wind turbines, batteries, electric cars and semiconductors. The efforts amount to one of the most expansive uses of industrial policy ever attempted in the United States.

As a result, many companies, including First Solar, have announced the construction of dozens of factories, in total, around the country. But nobody is entirely sure whether these investments will be durable, especially in businesses, like battery or solar panel manufacturing, where China's domination is deep and strong. Chinese manufacturers enjoy lower labor costs, economies of scale and incentives from a government eager to control industries critical to fighting climate change.

First Solar survived the shift of most manufacturing to China in part because its panels do not use polysilicon, a material found in most panels and now made almost entirely in China. But it has not been an easy ride, and the company has struggled at times, especially after the 2008 financial crisis.

''They're sort of a unicorn,'' said Michael Heben, director of the Wright Center for Photovoltaics and Innovation at the University of Toledo, who has worked with First Solar. ''It's been a rocky history. The revenues have been pretty lumpy.''

Some analysts warn that efforts to make solar panels in the United States are misguided. Even in the best of times, the business yields modest profits and does not employ a lot of people. It would be better to import panels from low-cost producers to quickly shift from fossil fuels to renewable energy, said Jenny Chase, a solar analyst at Bloomberg New Energy Finance.

''Solar panels would have been cheaper,'' Ms. Chase said, if policymakers did not insist on domestic manufacturing. ''In the United States, even with the manufacturing boom, it will still be expensive.''

But many lawmakers and corporate executives insist that the United States should make solar panels. They contend that it would be unwise for the country and allies like the European Union and Japan to remain dependent on China for such an important technology. Supply chain chaos during the pandemic, and the growing economic hostility between Beijing and Washington, highlighted the huge risks.

One thing is certain: The world will need many more solar panels to eliminate greenhouse gas emissions. The capacity of solar power installed worldwide needs to be at least 20 times as big as today and possibly as much as 70 times, energy experts said.

''We are going to need very large amounts of photovoltaics around the world,'' said Nancy Haegel, director of the National Center for Photovoltaics at the National Renewable Energy Laboratory. ''While it's a very ambitious goal, it is also achievable given the growth of photovoltaics in recent years.''

First Solar's chief executive, Mark Widmar, said he was confident that his company and others could quickly expand U.S. production. The company, which is based in Tempe, Ariz., is building its fifth U.S. factory in Louisiana. It is already expanding in Ohio, where it has three plants, and building one in Alabama. It also has factories in Vietnam and Malaysia and is working on one in India.

''It's daunting,'' Mr. Widmar said at the Perrysburg factory when describing the company's plans. ''It's really a David versus Goliath.''

Mr. Widmar, 58, who grew up in a ***working-class*** family in South Bend, Ind., about two and a half hours from Perrysburg, said he was motived by a desire to create U.S. jobs and extend America's lead in technology.

He was the first in his family to attend college -- his father worked in a mailroom, and his mother was a secretary -- earning degrees in accounting and finance from Indiana University.

Soon after becoming chief executive seven years ago, Mr. Widmar said, he pushed his engineers to roll out a new generation of solar panels that would generate more energy at a lower cost per watt. The move was risky because it required removal of old equipment and a big investment in new machinery, a switch that sharply reduced production in 2018.

''I said, 'Let's leapfrog,''' Mr. Widmar said. ''A lot of C.E.O.s wouldn't have made that decision. I knew we had to grow.''

First Solar began in 1990 as Solar Cells, founded by Harold McMaster, an inventor and businessman who was a pioneer in producing tempered glass, which is used in skyscrapers and solar panels.

In the 1990s and 2000s, the solar panel business was growing fast in the United States, Europe and Japan. But like many boom industries, it soon hit hard times, and many companies, including Solyndra, which the Energy Department backed during the Obama administration, shut down.

At the same time, the Chinese government and Chinese companies doubled down on the technology. They greatly expanded panel manufacturing, helping to drive down costs sharply.

First Solar, which benefited from investments by Walmart's founding Walton family, survived in part by quickly scrapping plans to expand production. That saved the company from having to sell panels at a steep loss, according to a case study by the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington.

It also helped that First Solar's panels were different from most Chinese panels. Instead of silicon, the company used a proprietary thin film of cadmium telluride.

One thing that helped sustain First Solar was strong growth in Europe, where many countries, particularly Germany, offered generous subsidies to encourage the use of solar power.

Yet First Solar has not been immune to the industry's ups-and-downs. The company lost more than $100 million in 2019 before earning about $400 million each in 2020 and 2021. Last year, it lost $44 million, which the company attributed to the volatile cost of freight and shipping.

Mr. Widmar said the Inflation Reduction Act, Mr. Biden's signature climate law, set the stage for a growing domestic solar manufacturing industry. But he worries that the law could become ''a political football'' -- a real threat given that some Republican lawmakers have sought to repeal all or parts of the legislation.

He also said the United States must protect domestic producers from what he described as unfair Chinese competition. ''If we are to have a diverse, competitive and sustainable solar manufacturing industry, China's anticompetitive behavior must be addressed,'' he said.

One of First Solar's advantages, Mr. Widmar said, is that it is not as exposed to the use of forced labor, which human rights groups and U.S. government officials say is common in China's western Xinjiang region.

In August, First Solar revealed that it had uncovered the use of forced labor by subcontractors at its plant in Malaysia. The subcontractors had forced immigrant workers to pay fees to get jobs and had withheld wages and passports. Mr. Widmar said he was determined to publicize the findings, compensate the workers and get the subcontractors to return their passports.

''I'm an auditor by nature," Mr. Widmar said. ''I've always felt in order to sleep at night you always have to do what's right.''

Human rights activists worry that as manufacturers ramp up solar panel production, forced labor, sometimes referred to as ''modern slavery,'' will become more common. Walk Free, a human rights group based in Australia, estimates that 50 million people around the world lived under forced-labor conditions in 2021, about 10 million more than in 2016.

Michael Carr, executive director of the Solar Energy Manufacturers for America, a trade group, said more domestic manufacturers like First Solar were needed to ensure that the United States had a secure supply of panels untainted by forced labor.

''The module manufacturing in the United States is starting to happen,'' Mr. Carr said. But, he added, ''our international competitors have built up a really sizable lead.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/26/business/energy-environment/first-solar-panels-biden-ira.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/26/business/energy-environment/first-solar-panels-biden-ira.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Scenes from a First Solar panel factory in Perrysburg, Ohio, at left and above. Below, the company's chief executive, Mark Widmar. The manufacturer has managed to hang on when most solar panel production has gone to China. ''It's daunting,'' Mr. Widmar said of the company's expansion plans. ''It's really a David versus Goliath.'' (PHOTOGRAPHS BY DANIEL LOZADA FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (B5) This article appeared in print on page B1, B5.

**Load-Date:** October 2, 2023

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[***Panel Says That Innovative Sickle Cell Cure Is Safe Enough for Patients***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69HN-TFX1-JBG3-61T2-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

October 31, 2023 Tuesday 23:02 EST

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**Section:** HEALTH

**Length:** 1658 words

**Byline:** Gina Kolata

**Highlight:** The decision by an advisory committee may lead to Food and Drug Administration approval of the first treatment for humans that uses the CRISPR gene-editing system.

**Body**

The decision by an advisory committee may lead to Food and Drug Administration approval of the first treatment for humans that uses the CRISPR gene-editing system.

A panel of experts said on Tuesday that a groundbreaking treatment for sickle cell disease was safe enough for clinical use, setting the stage for likely federal approval by Dec. 8 of a powerful potential cure for an illness that afflicts more than 100,000 Americans.

The Food and Drug Administration had previously found that the treatment, known as exa-cel and jointly developed by Vertex Pharmaceuticals of Boston and CRISPR Therapeutics of Switzerland, was effective. The panel’s conclusion on Tuesday about exa-cel’s safety sends it to the F.D.A. for a decision on greenlighting it for broad patient use.

Exa-cel frees patients from the debilitating and painful effects of this chronic, deadly disease. If approved, the Vertex product would be the first medicine to treat a genetic disease with the CRISPR gene-editing technique.

It could also be the first of a series of new options to cure the excruciating illness. By Dec. 20, the F.D.A. will decide on a second potential cure for sickle cell, a gene therapy devised by the company Bluebird Bio of Somerville, Mass.

Sickle cell disease is caused by a gene mutation that makes blood cells misshapen, so that they resemble sickles or crescents. It affects millions of people worldwide, most of whom have African ancestry. The misshapen cells get stuck in blood vessels, causing strokes, organ damage and episodes of agonizing pain as muscles are starved of oxygen.

Sickle cell’s toll starts early in life. Evelyn Islam of Milwaukee, now 8, had 22 blood transfusions and had to have her spleen removed before she was 3. “Gene therapy is our last hope for a cure,” said her mother, Melissa Nicole Allen.

But the new gene therapies will come too late for many.

Ashley Valentine, a co-founder of the national advocacy group Sick Cells, had to take [*three months off from work*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/01/17/health/sickle-cell-cure-brings-mix-of-anxiety-and-hope.html) in 2016 to help her brother Marqus deal with symptoms of sickle cell. When he had a hip replacement in 2018, her father ended up accepting a layoff from his job to help care for him.

“And that’s just us,” she said.

Marqus died in 2020, at age 36, from a stroke caused by sickle cell.

New treatments like the one that was endorsed on Tuesday are expected to cost millions of dollars per patient, though Vertex has not yet said what it will charge. But lifelong care for patients with the disease is also enormously expensive, costing the health care system an estimated [*$3 billion a year*](https://www.valueinhealthjournal.com/article/S1098-3015(18)33183-8/fulltext).

It’s not yet clear how many people will seek the new therapy. The new therapies are also not easy to endure and come with hardships for patients, who will have to undergo chemotherapy and spend more than a month in the hospital. Family members are affected too — they may need to take time off work during the most intensive phase of the treatment.

Additionally, most Americans with sickle cell are Black and may not trust a [*health care system that has often failed*](https://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMp2022125) to provide the most basic preventive and therapeutic care for those with the disease. Some with sickle cell are anxious about undergoing a medical treatment that is on the cutting edge of biotechnology.

But for doctors who have spent years watching patients suffer, and many parents who have seen their children endure years of agony, there is elation at what lies ahead.

“We are finally at a spot where we can envision broadly available cures for sickle cell disease,” said Dr. John Tisdale, director of the cellular and molecular therapeutics branch at the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute and a member of the advisory committee.

Dana Jones of San Antonio wants her daughters Kyra, 18, and Kami, 20, to have a chance at one of the new therapies. [*Both had strokes*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/05/23/health/sickle-cell-black-children.html) that left them with learning disabilities — injuries that could probably have been avoided if they had been given a screening test and treatment long known [*to prevent nine out of 10 strokes*](https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jama/fullarticle/1902235) in children with the disease. Kyra is now in intensive care as doctors try to control her pain.

Ms. Jones is overwhelmed by the possibility that her daughters could be cured.

“It is my prayer that Kami and Kyra can be cured of this awful disease and finally be able to truly live,” she said.

A New Treatment and a New Technology

The cause of sickle cell has been known for nearly 70 years, but research lagged, a situation many say occurred at least in part because so many patients were Black and from poor and ***working-class*** families.

There are a number of treatments to reduce sickle cell’s impact. Some patients are able to get bone marrow transplants that can cure the condition. But that requires finding a donor and, after the transplant, taking drugs to prevent the body from rejecting the foreign cells.

In recent years, a number of biotechnology companies have tried novel approaches. While Bluebird Bio is advancing its gene therapy technique, Vertex and CRISPR Therapeutics focused on the gene-editing system CRISPR-Cas9, which can home in on specific areas of DNA and turn genes on or off. CRISPR has allowed researchers to disable genes to assess their importance in biomedical research. But until now it has not been used as a treatment for patients with a genetic disease.

To treat sickle cell, CRISPR snips a piece of DNA in bone marrow stem cells. That frees a blocked gene to make a form of hemoglobin that normally is produced only by a fetus. The fetal gene directs the production of hemoglobin that does not form into the sickle shape. In clinical trials, patients no longer had the complications of sickle cell disease and no longer needed blood transfusions.

But there is a concern that CRISPR could inadvertently snip a piece of DNA in the wrong part of a patient’s genome. That might disrupt a gene and cause a blood cancer.

No such issues have turned up in the clinical trials, but the Vertex trial involved only 44 patients, and just 30 have been followed for at least 16 months. The company did extensive comparisons of patients’ DNA with that of people in large databases asking how likely such CRISPR misfires could be.

Vertex said it plans to follow clinical trial patients for 15 years. The company’s data were sufficiently reassuring that the expert committee said on Tuesday they saw no reason to hold the treatment back.

There can always be additional studies, noted committee member Alexis Komor, a professor of chemistry and biochemistry at the University of California, San Diego. But, she said, that would be “expecting perfection at the expense of progress.”

Dr. Joseph Wu of Stanford added, “We all agree that the benefits outweigh the risks. These patients are quite sick and this is a good therapy.”

Scot Wolfe of the University of Massachusetts Chan Medical School said, “We want to be careful not to let the perfect be the enemy of the good.”

“There is a huge unmet need,” he added.

If It’s Safe, Who Gets It?

Vertex estimates that 20,000 people could be eligible for its treatment, and says Medicaid and private insurers have suggested a willingness to pay for it.

“There is almost no way they could not pay,” said Dr. David Williams, chief of the division of hematology and oncology at Boston Children’s Hospital.

Dr. Williams, who has consulted for Vertex and Bluebird Bio, added that insurers pay “$3 million a pop” for other gene therapies produced by Bluebird Bio for the diseases thalassemia and adrenoleukodystrophy. With sickle cell, and its large number of Black patients, he said, there is an issue of “equity in access and the tremendous medical need.”

Some people with the disease may not be eligible, depending on the F.D.A.’s decisions. They could include young children with sickle cell and older patients whose bodies have been so damaged that the treatment could pose heightened risks.

Kevin Wake of Kansas City, Mo., hopes he is not too old, at 55, or too damaged. He has had [*three strokes*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/01/17/health/sickle-cell-cure-brings-mix-of-anxiety-and-hope.html) caused by the disease.

The treatments, though curative, are difficult.

Patients first have eight weeks of blood transfusions followed by a treatment to release bone marrow stem cells into their bloodstream. The stem cells are then removed and sent to the companies to be treated. Next, patients receive intense chemotherapy to clear their marrows for the treated cells. The treated cells are infused back into the patients, but they have to remain in the hospital for at least a month while the new cells grow and repopulate their marrows.

That treatment “cannot be delivered at most hospitals,” said Dr. Alexis Thompson, chief of the division of hematology at Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia, who consults for Vertex.

Another issue is how quickly Vertex can ramp up production. Each patient’s cells must be treated individually in a sterile environment, an arduous prospect.

Stuart Arbuckle, executive vice president and chief operating officer at Vertex, is confident. “We are launch ready,” he said. But he added that he did not expect a huge wave of patients immediately.

“This is a pretty big decision for a patient to go through,” Mr. Arbuckle said.

One of the Vertex clinical trial patients, Marie-Chantal Tornyenu, 22, who is a senior at Cornell University, said patients also had to be prepared for “mental adjustment” after treatment.

Ms. Tornyenu said she no longer had the pain crises that plagued her, especially in high school when she was hospitalized nearly every month.

But she has spent much of her life taking precautions and worrying about pain and complications from sickle cell. Those habits are hard to break.

“It’s a major learning curve from having sickle cell my whole life,” she said. “I’m still struggling with that mind-set — ‘sickle cell is you.’”

PHOTO: Dana Jones, left, with her daughter Kyra, now 18, in 2020. Kyra has had strokes, and is currently in intensive care to reduce pain. (PHOTOGRAPH BY ILANA PANICH-LINSMAN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A14) This article appeared in print on page A1, A14.

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[***Transcript: Ezra Klein Interviews John Ganz; The Ezra Klein Show***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BNN-G0P1-JBG3-6012-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Body**

Every Tuesday and Friday, Ezra Klein invites you into a conversation about something that matters, like today’s episode with John Ganz. Listen [*wherever you get your podcasts*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/19/opinion/how-to-listen-ezra-klein-show-nyt.html).

Transcripts of our episodes are made available as soon as possible. They are not fully edited for grammar or spelling.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

EZRA KLEIN: From New York Times Opinion, this is “The Ezra Klein Show.”

[MUSIC PLAYING]

I think a lot of Democrats, and even a lot of Republicans, are still a bit agog that Donald Trump is going to be the Republican nominee once again in 2024. After everything he’s said and done, after what he did during Covid, after everything he did to try and overturn the 2020 election, amidst all the criminal trials and scandals and corruption, all the people he has betrayed and insulted and double-crossed — this guy, still.

It’s not like there weren’t alternatives. DeSantis pitched himself as Donald Trump without the wild personality. Maybe what people liked about Trump were the positions, but he was being held back by who he was. At least not on the Republican side, that did not turn out to be the problem for Donald Trump. Vivek Ramaswamy was a younger, more cheerful, more multicultural spin on the Trumpist theme. Neither of them found any real footing. Both of them were missing something.

And I think trying to think about what they were missing is important because there is this endless dialogue about what is the nature of Trump’s appeal. And people keep trying to split him into component parts — the policy, the showman, the vibes, the media.

It can make Trump seem a little too unique. You sometimes hear people describe his connection with his base in quasi-mystical terms. But I think that’s a mistake. I don’t think Trump is that unique. And what is interesting to me about him, in part, is that he puts together a bunch of traits that occur and recur in politicians like him across places and times. You keep having this archetype of the right-wing populist showman, the grinning ethnonationalist strongman.

You see figures like him in other countries. Bolsonaro in Brazil is a lot like Trump. Berlusconi in Italy had a lot of consonances with Trump. Boris Johnson in the U.K. But you’ve also seen a lineage of figures like him in our country. We have a tendency to narrativize politics and campaigns around candidates, around what politicians are offering.

We have more trouble talking about what it is that voters want. One way of thinking about this is we’re better talking about supply in politics than about demand. But there has long been demand for a right-wing populist showman in the United States. That demand has been at times unmet. It has been at times suppressed. These people were not given a candidate to vote for in a two-party system. But it never went away. Perhaps it will never go away.

John Ganz is the author of the excellent Substack newsletter Unpopular Front. In June, he’s publishing “When the Clock Broke: Con Men, Conspiracists, and How America Cracked Up in the Early 1990s.” You can pre-order that now. And he tells this fascinating shadow story of the 1990s. We think now about this much more consensus-oriented politics, Bill Clinton, I mean, sex scandals. But it’s this time of peace and prosperity.

But if you look closely, if you look at the edges, particularly the edges of the Republican Party, something else was pulsing in our politics, growing, gaining strength. You look at David Duke. You look at Pat Buchanan. These politicians who even then were rising to meet it.

And so it is worth looking closely at them, what they tried to do, the kind of response they got, and at Trump, who was watching them closely, who, as you’ll hear, was very aware of their efforts, who really learned something.

As always, my email, the show’s email for feedback, for guest suggestions, for thoughts — [*ezrakleinshow@nytimes.com*](mailto:ezrakleinshow@nytimes.com)

[MUSIC PLAYING]

John Ganz, welcome to the show.

JOHN GANZ: Thanks so much for having me

EZRA KLEIN: So your book and your work on the ’90s begins with David Duke.

JOHN GANZ: Right.

EZRA KLEIN: So who is he? And why is he your launching point?

JOHN GANZ: Well, David Duke was a grand wizard of the Ku Klux Klan. He was a neo-Nazi. And despite his sordid past, he did quite well, especially among white voters. He ran explicitly against the leadership of the Republican Party and beat them.

So Reagan, who was immensely popular in Louisiana among Republicans, among everybody in Louisiana, ran radio ads against him. The entire R.N.C. kind of went to war against him. There was a huge concerted effort by Republicans, and by really the entire political establishment, to stop him. And he said, these people are outsiders, telling you people how to vote. I am a populist. I represent the forgotten white man. And this political establishment doesn’t really understand you anymore.

And he was able — that message resonated with people. And the concerted attack of the Republican establishment on him failed. And this excited a lot of people. And then he was a candidate for the governorship of Louisiana and gave the political establishment quite a scare in late 1991.

EZRA KLEIN: So what then was Duke’s platform? When you look at the issues and his message, what was he really running on?

JOHN GANZ: Duke’s message, strangely enough, was not all that different from conservative Republicans at the time. He was against welfare. He was concerned about crime. He was against affirmative action. He was a little bit more explicit about the racial subtext it was for other Republicans. For him it was more text. And his crowds plainly understood that and were very excited by it.

EZRA KLEIN: But it seems like it was text for him in an interesting way. That he gets at something that becomes very important, I think, in Republican Party politics right around then, and very much now is important, which is that you, the white Christian people, are now the embattled minority.

JOHN GANZ: Yes.

EZRA KLEIN: And there’s a moment in the debate in that governor’s race where he’s asked if he repudiates his neo-Nazi past. And you can hear him make that turn.

^ARCHIVED RECORDING 1^: As a newfound Christian, a born-again, are you here willing now to apologize to the people, the minorities of this state, whom you have so dastardly insulted, Sir?

^ARCHIVED RECORDING 2^: Mr. Duke, you have 30 seconds.

^ARCHIVED RECORDING (DAVID DUKE)^: 30 seconds? Of course I apologize for things that I’ve said that have been intolerant and improper.

^ARCHIVED RECORDING 1^: Do you repudiate the Klan —

^ARCHIVED RECORDING (DAVID DUKE)^: And I do repudiate the Klan —

^ARCHIVED RECORDING 1^: — and the neo-Nazi?

^ARCHIVED RECORDING (DAVID DUKE)^: — or any other racist organization or intolerant organization that exists in the state or this country. I think we’ve all got to work together. But you don’t make up for past discrimination by putting new discrimination on people with these affirmative action programs and policies. And there’s a lot of racism that exist in all communities, not just the white community.

EZRA KLEIN: And then here’s another clip of Duke at a rally the following year. This is now when he’s running for president.

^ARCHIVED RECORDING (DAVID DUKE)^: The government would not tolerate an all-white scholarship program. We can have a Miss Black America, can’t we? But you try having a Miss white America in this country and see what happens.

[APPLAUSE]:

You know, the problem, ladies and gentlemen, is not my background. The problem they find with David Duke is that I say things nobody else will say in American politics, things that must be said.

[APPLAUSE]:

EZRA KLEIN: One thing I think you hear there is there is an essential quality of slipperiness to these guys. There’s always this question of, on what level are they talking? What is the message that they are saying explicitly? And what is the message that they are communicating to the people who know that the thing they really believe is the thing you’re not really allowed to say?

And I feel like they have different strategies for this. With Duke, strangely, I think it took a form of almost gentility. He could rely on his neo-Nazi past, his Ku Klux Klan past to send one message. And then he would be there telling you, I’m not a racist. I just care about equality.

With some other figures, more modern figures maybe, it takes the form of this edgelord humor. Oh, I’m just joking. You’re just humorless.

But there is so often, among these right-wing populists, this shimmering quality of meaning. Are they saying it or are they not saying it? And I’m curious why you think that recurs so often.

JOHN GANZ: Yes, there’s a certain slipperiness to him for sure because he lied an enormous amount. [CHUCKLES] I think a part of it is being a little naughty and obscene and walking right up to the line and sometimes going beyond it. And think that that’s a huge part of it, which is just these people are stopping your enjoyment. They’re somehow preventing you from living the life, saying the things that you really want to say and would make you feel good.

The kind of winking or shimmering you’re talking about where there’s a certain excitement in the fact that he represents something unacceptable and represents something that’s frightening and disconcerting to the people that his constituents want to frighten and disconcert.

Politics is about when you want to get certain things done, you need the ideas to be out there, so you have to push them out into the open somehow. Some of it’s just political rhetoric, which is just saying stuff. [CHUCKLES]

EZRA KLEIN: I want to pick up on that word “excitement.” There is a kind of electric quality to being part of one of these insurgency campaigns.

JOHN GANZ: Yeah.

EZRA KLEIN: And particularly when you’re dealing with these populists, you have this giant middle finger energy of these campaigns. It’s like —

JOHN GANZ: For sure.

EZRA KLEIN: — you’re telling off the liberal establishment. You’re telling off the media establishment.

JOHN GANZ: Yeah.

EZRA KLEIN: You’re telling off the Republican establishment. And there’s a clip I want to play here of Duke at that 1992 rally which captures some of that energy in language that sounds very familiar right now.

^ARCHIVED RECORDING (DAVID DUKE)^: And if we don’t watch out for our country, first and foremost, we will lose our nation. The only people who are really pushing for this new world order, who are they really? A few of the trilaterals, a few of the C.F.R. people, a few of the international conglomerates, international financial concerns. They have no allegiance to America. They have a worldwide network of money. All they care about is their bottom line.

Well, I don’t want a part of a new world order where Americans lose their sovereignty, and their rights and their freedoms. And that’s where we’re going. I say it’s time to put America first in this world.

[APPLAUSE]

EZRA KLEIN: What is that kind of latent energy, that energy that’s not left/right, but just a middle finger to the entirety of the power structure?

JOHN GANZ: I think, basically, one of the biggest energies or features of American politics that, as you said, is not left, right, or center, and it’s not particularly ideological, is a sense among a lot of people of being extremely alienated from the political establishment, feeling that their representatives don’t, in fact, represent them, and that the political establishment — the media, universities are corrupt.

As liberals, we might respond and say, well, they’re not really corrupt because we can point to statistics in America there’s not really much corruption. The word corruption implies something broader than just breaking the law. It’s a sense that they’re self-dealing, that they don’t have the interests of their constituents that they should have at heart, and that they, yeah, are unresponsive.

EZRA KLEIN: And isn’t there something to that feeling?

JOHN GANZ: Yeah, unfortunately, there is. I think that there is a little bit of a crisis in this country that as we get bigger, as the country gets more complicated, these institutions are not particularly responsive to people, particularly people who are not educated. They are not controlled by them. They don’t necessarily respond to their concerns and interests. Sometimes for good reason. But, yes, there is a sense among people that these institutions are alien, and that’s true.

EZRA KLEIN: Well, when you say we’re going through a crisis around this, I do question that a little bit. And I question it in this way that is there ever a time when the dynamic being described here is not true? So the political scientist Larry Bartels distinguishes between this idea of populist waves and populist reservoirs, that, often, when one of these guys wins, you’re like, well, there’s a big populist wave sweeping the world.

But there’s also a way of looking at this, that it’s a reservoir. This feeling is always there. There are always insiders and outsiders, always elites and people who are not the elite, always institutions that you can’t penetrate, always a rural urban divide. And things happen at different moments, often around changes in media structures and communication structures, that make it harder for elites to suppress that dynamic, right?

JOHN GANZ: Yes.

EZRA KLEIN: It makes it harder for the reservoir to get tapped.

JOHN GANZ: Yeah.

EZRA KLEIN: But that it’s always there, and it’s a reason — I mean, we’re starting in the ’90s here, or the ’80s, I guess, with Duke.

JOHN GANZ: Right.

EZRA KLEIN: But you could go backwards. I mean, you could go to George Wallace. You could talk about Huey Long. You can look in other countries. You can look at Mussolini. I think sometimes there’s a tendency to be very present-focused about it.

JOHN GANZ: Oh, for sure. I think that’s a fair point. And I think that the idea of a reservoir is interesting. Obviously populism is a — even before the literal populist movement — as a style has a very long history in American politics as a perennial part of American politics. I do believe, under certain conditions, people’s perception of the political establishment’s lack of response to their concerns, which can be — not necessarily appear rational — becomes more intense.

You see this in the early ’90s when the deleterious effects of Reaganomics become clear and a lot of people’s lives are affected negatively by the changes in the economy. The Cold War breaks down, and that has both an economic aspect and an ideological aspect because its orientation point for American politics goes away. And I think that there’s a sense among some of the people that I research and talk about that we’ve done the work of ending the Soviet Union. Now it’s time to get the Commies at home.

So, yeah, I think there is a constant hum. And there are also people who just have these politics more ideologically and are always trying to create a movement. But I think that under certain conditions that comes to the surface more than others.

EZRA KLEIN: So in the end, what happens to the Duke campaign in Louisiana?

JOHN GANZ: Duke loses by a pretty big margin. There’s a big concerted effort. The business community turns against him. They said, look, this guy becomes governor, economically we’re going to be in tough shape because no one’s going to want to do business with us. A huge Black vote came out to knock him out.

But what people noticed and was remarkable, and maybe his goal in a way, was that he got 55 percent of the white vote in Louisiana, which was pretty remarkable. I mean, there are deeper roots of racist politics in the South, of course. But it was pretty remarkable at that late date for a lot of people that this neo-Nazi won 55 percent of the white vote.

EZRA KLEIN: So after Duke loses, this Libertarian figure, Murray Rothbard —

JOHN GANZ: Yeah.

EZRA KLEIN: — writes an essay called “Right Wing Populism” that takes as its launching point Duke’s loss.

JOHN GANZ: Yeah.

EZRA KLEIN: And it’s very fascinating to read today and very important to your story. So can you explain who Rothbard was and what you found significant in the essay.

JOHN GANZ: So Murray Rothbard, for most of his career, was a little bit of a fringe figure on the right. He’s a Libertarian. He’s an extreme free marketer. He was almost an isolationist. He was too much of a free marketer for the “National Review” set. They made fun of him wanting to privatize lighthouses. He never forgot that. He was opposed to military spending because he believed it built up the welfare/warfare state.

He was a little bit homeless politically for a lot of his life. And he associated himself with the old right, the prewar right of Lindbergh isolationism, America first. He thought this was the true tradition. And he saw, in Duke, a kind of return of that and a way to unseat the conservative and Republican establishment that had shunted him to the side.

EZRA KLEIN: So I had not read the essay until you drew my attention to it. And as I read it, two things about it struck me as important. And the first is this structural argument it makes. Rothbard says right at the beginning that David Duke is only defeated by, quote, “a massive campaign of hysteria, of fear and hate, orchestrated by all wings of the ruling elite, from official right to left.”

And he goes on to say that, quote, “The basic right-wing populist insight is that we live in a statist country and a statist world dominated by a ruling elite, consisting of a coalition of big government, big business, and various influential special interest groups.” So tell me about that basic right-wing populist insight.

JOHN GANZ: Well, I think that that right-wing populist insight maps very closely onto the feeling — I mean, it’s more ideological, but it maps very easily onto the sentiment that we talked about earlier about a sense of alienation from the political establishment. It’s not trying to necessarily go for small government anymore as traditional conservatives wanted to do, but rather grab the reins of power and smash up the things that we don’t like.

EZRA KLEIN: This always feels to me like the thing that separates various kinds of populisms, but particularly right-wing populism in this case, which is the fact that the Republican Party is the enemy, at least the Republican Party before you take it over. Sometimes after you take it over, too.

JOHN GANZ: Yeah.

EZRA KLEIN: But this also makes it very hard to govern in coalition with the Republican Party. I mean, I think you see this in the way that more right-wing populist House Republicans keep deposing Republican speakers. You are at war with what you might otherwise understand is your own political home.

JOHN GANZ: Absolutely. I think that that’s a contradiction that’s sort of hard to square and makes populism hard. It’s an effective political strategy or rhetoric, but, as a system of government, sometimes obviously has problems. But, yeah, the idea of Rothbard and the people around him was that they needed to attack and take over the Republican Party.

Obviously, in 2015, ’16, Trump’s candidacy was the realization of this, which was an attack on the Republican establishment from a figure outside. He’s not part of the leadership of the Republican Party. He very explicitly comes as an outsider and says these people are idiots. They don’t know what they’re doing. They’ve been constantly selling you out. And he immediately electrifies Republicans.

EZRA KLEIN: So is Rothbard in this essay, in this moment, trying to create something new, this new thing of right-wing populism, or does he understand himself as describing something old?

JOHN GANZ: I think he understands himself as describing something old. So in this essay, one of the big inspirations for the strategy that he’s devising or articulating here is Joe McCarthy. So, many conservatives and centrist liberals or right-leaning liberals looked at McCarthy and said, well, we don’t like communism, and we’re worried about this, and we’re Cold Warriors, but he’s so crude, he’s so demagogic, if it was only put nicer.

And Rothbard says, no, you don’t get it. The form, the means that he used, this populist attack on the establishment is exactly the point. That’s what was effective about it. He scared the living shit out of them. And that’s what I like about it. And it was exciting and fun for people.

And he talks about something called — and I think that this is really interesting to think about in terms of Trump. He came up with this in a memo, in the 1950s, when he was working for a right-wing think tank. He called it a populist short circuit — a short circuit. The memo was called “In Defense of Demagogues.”

We need this demagogue figure to go around the mediating institutions, and plug directly into the population that feels the sense of alienation, and go straight to them, and get them excited and rouse them. And I think that obviously Trump resonates with that a lot.

EZRA KLEIN: Yeah, I mean, this is the other piece of the Rothbard essay that I’m interested in — this idea that the form and the content are fused.

JOHN GANZ: Yes.

EZRA KLEIN: He says you need somebody who can, quote, “go over the heads of the media and political elites to reach the ***working class*** directly,” and that that requires, quote, “this inspiring and charismatic political leadership.”

JOHN GANZ: Yeah.

EZRA KLEIN: One of the motivations for this conversation for me is I’ve been interested for a while about why when you see these figures, in different eras and in different countries, is the personality so often similar? We’ll talk about Buchanan. But Trump — you think about Berlusconi in Italy. You think about Bolsonaro in Brazil. I kind of keep going down a list of these people. They often come out of media. Mussolini, of course, comes out of the media.

And there’s often this Barnum and Bailey quality to them. They’re outrageous. They’re showmen. And one popular argument among liberals is that these things actually do not need to be connected. So my friend Matt Yglesias at Substack had this argument about Trump a few weeks ago where he says, look, the thing about Trump is that he was moderating on Medicare, on Social Security, in a way you could add into that the Iraq War. But he was moving to the right on immigration.

And this is actually a popular way to shift the valence — the ideological valence of the Republican Party. And it’s just his vile, crazy persona that kept that from being overwhelmingly effective. And maybe that’s true, right? If you could push somebody like that through the primary and just put them up. Mitt Romney with a different position on Medicare, maybe he wins the election. I don’t know.

But the fact that you always have this combination of characteristics connected to each other makes me believe there’s something about them that need each other. And Rothbard here offers one answer to it at least, which is that if you are going to be doing the populist thing, you can’t rely on any institutional support. And so you need someone who is so electric, from a mass media perspective, that it overwhelms the system’s defenses and creates a direct connection to the voter.

JOHN GANZ: Yeah. I think that there is no separating form and content, as you said. That the figure has to represent the middle finger in order to be effective and get the constituency behind them. I think that Matt is right in the sense that that creates weaknesses too. It builds a constituency. It alienates a lot of other people who might otherwise be amenable to those sorts of things.

But I don’t think it works without the theatrical, outrageous parts of it. And I think that that is part of the reason why people gravitate towards it. I think you speak — you could speak to people, and they may not have very clear ideas about any given policy issue, and yet, what they do believe is that the political establishment sucks, and they like somebody who tells them to fuck off.

EZRA KLEIN: Yeah, I mean, political scientists will tell you — I mean, this is an old finding — that the percentage of voters who have what they call an ideological relationship to politics, it’s a fraction. It’s like nobody.

JOHN GANZ: Precisely.

EZRA KLEIN: And there is this demand for a populist right figure in American politics, in other countries’ politics. It recurs across time and place. I think it’s very important to understand that demand is maybe going up and down but always there at some level, even when it is not being met.

JOHN GANZ: Yeah.

EZRA KLEIN: But the thing that, certainly in America, the Republican Party is always trying to do is control that demand, harness its energy, harness its votes, but for what it wants to do. For Murray Rothbard’s Libertarian agenda, for Paul Ryan’s and the Tea Party is really an effort — what it really wants is to privatize Medicare.

In a way, Donald Trump, I think, understands that energy really well, because he understands that it does want things. I think, specifically, it does want things around immigration and national character.

JOHN GANZ: Oh, sure.

EZRA KLEIN: But when I look at populist right voters, they don’t want Medicare gone.

JOHN GANZ: No.

EZRA KLEIN: They don’t want Social Security gone. They maybe want it just to be for them.

JOHN GANZ: Right.

EZRA KLEIN: The form does seem as or more important than the content. And in fact, the content seems very malleable and one of Trump’s signal characteristics as a political figure is the malleability of his content, how much it will change even rally to rally, or even within a single rally. But that the energy is actually about the middle finger politics is, I think, a much more honest sense of it than where the Republican Party has often been and why the Republican Party keeps getting overwhelmed by it.

JOHN GANZ: Absolutely.

EZRA KLEIN: Because they want to harness it to a policy agenda that it does not share and often does not even care about.

JOHN GANZ: No, and it’s even sometimes opposed to. And that goes back to Duke’s campaign, because he ran against the kind of conservative Democrat turned Republican who was very austerity focused. This is what Trump realizes, unconsciously or consciously.

There’s not a big constituency for some of the things that Republicans are really interested in cutting Medicare and stuff like that, and increasingly interventionism abroad and stuff like that. And then there’s a much broader constituency of people who have right-wing instincts but don’t have very particular views about those issues. So, yeah, I completely agree with what you’re saying.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

EZRA KLEIN: So I want to move here to Pat Buchanan, who I think of as the truest forerunner to Donald Trump. For people who don’t know him, who is he and how does he enter this story for you?

JOHN GANZ: Pat Buchanan is, and was, I suppose, one of the most prominent conservatives in America. He was a protégé in a way of William Buckley. He was part of the early conservative movement. He differed from conservatives in that he went to work in the Nixon administration, which was viewed by conservatives as being centrist, pragmatic, not ideological enough.

But Buchanan saw something in Nixon, the figure, that he had this populist energy. He represented forgotten Americans. So Nixon’s presidency had a very big symbolic importance for Buchanan. And he viewed Watergate as a kind of coup by the establishment against this kind of salt of the Earth, middle American populism that Nixon represented.

He worked in the Reagan administration as communications director. And he said, after that experience, the biggest vacuum in American politics is to the right of Ronald Reagan. And he was on a mission to push American politics to the right.

EZRA KLEIN: I’ve been trying to decide what order to go in with Buchanan because there’s so much to say about him.

JOHN GANZ: Sure.

EZRA KLEIN: He’s actually so overdue for a huge biography.

JOHN GANZ: Yeah.

EZRA KLEIN: But maybe start here — what is his relationship in the story to David Duke?

JOHN GANZ: Well, Pat Buchanan was among a number of people on the right who looked at David Duke’s candidacy and found it very interesting and saw something hopeful there as if it was an indication that their time had come.

EZRA KLEIN: What’s the evidence of that?

JOHN GANZ: The evidence of that is that he wrote it. [LAUGHS] He said, basically, Republicans ought to look at what David Duke is doing and appropriate some of his program, like we did with George Wallace. And he also saw David Duke’s candidacy as the point at which his own candidacy for president might make sense.

David Duke started to get a lot of attention outside of Louisiana as well. He looked as if there were some sort of interest in the rest of the country. And Buchanan looked at this, being a season political insider who had spent so much time in Washington, and said, ah, there’s something going on, I’m going to try to ride this wave as well.

EZRA KLEIN: David Duke actually boasted about that, right? We have a clip of him from this same 1992 rally we played earlier, saying, look at the effect I’m having, look at Pat Buchanan.

^ARCHIVED RECORDING (DAVID DUKE)^: I noticed that more and more of my issues are now becoming the issues of other candidates. And I really like Patrick Buchanan, but I know where he got his ideas to run for politics using my issues. I know where they came from. He did a column about four years ago after I ran for the House of Representatives in Louisiana. And he said that David Duke was showing the Republican Party the way.

EZRA KLEIN: And then it’s weird, on the other side you have Buchanan then saying that David Duke was really the one copying him.

JOHN GANZ: Well, he says both. Pat Buchanan, at one point, says we ought to copy David Duke. And then when they try to connect David Duke to Pat Buchanan, Pat Buchanan goes on T.V. and he says, no, he’s been copying me. I think he’s been reading my old columns. I mean, I think that they mirrored each other in a lot of different ways. But I would say that he looked at Duke as a signal of when to launch his campaign for sure.

EZRA KLEIN: I want to give people a sense for what this felt and sounded like. I have a few clips here, but let’s play the first one from Buchanan’s 1992 campaign announcement.

^ARCHIVED RECORDING (PAT BUCHANAN)^: So today, we call for a new patriotism, where Americans begin to put the needs of Americans first. For a new nationalism, where in every negotiation, be it arms control or trade, the American side seeks advantage and victory for the United States. And the people of this country need to recapture our capital city of Washington from lobbyists and registered agents of foreign powers who are hired to look out for everybody and everything except the national interest of the United States.

EZRA KLEIN: I mean, that sounds pretty damn familiar right now. So when you’re talking about who might sue whom for copyright infringement —

JOHN GANZ: Yes.

EZRA KLEIN: But you may have this, well, was Donald Trump paying attention to any of this? So there’s this other clip I want to show you here, which we found. This is also from the ’92 election. And I find it completely astonishing. It’s like a Rosetta Stone to this whole era. So this is Donald Trump on “Larry King” talking about the possibility of Buchanan running and talking about David Duke.

^ARCHIVED RECORDING (DONALD TRUMP)^: There’s a tremendous amount of hostility in the United States.

^ARCHIVED RECORDING (LARRY KING)^: Anger?

^ARCHIVED RECORDING (DONALD TRUMP)^: It’s anger. I mean, that’s an anger vote. That’s — people are angry about what’s happened. People are angry about the jobs. If David Duke runs, David Duke is going to get a lot of votes. Whether that be good or bad, David Duke is going to get a lot of votes.

Pat Buchanan, who really has many of the same theories, except it’s in a better package — Pat Buchanan is going to take a lot of votes away from George Bush. So if you have these two guys running, or even one of them running, I think George Bush could be in big trouble.

EZRA KLEIN: I mean, this is over 30 years ago. And Trump sees it. He sees it all really clearly. And he even understands the lineage happening. He’s almost complimentary about Buchanan as this better package of this thing that he understands to be politically potent but maybe a little bit too far for the American people.

JOHN GANZ: Trump recently mentioned Pat Buchanan and he said, great guy, conservative guy, great guy. And Buchanan said Trump is the last shot for my ideas or these kinds of ideas. Yeah, I think that he’s a precursor to Trump in many, many ways. Buchanan, although — there is a — I hope I can say this — is a thuggish side to him, he is an educated man and articulate. He quotes poetry in his speeches.

And in fact, some of his allies on the populist right kind of thought he was too much of a highbrow still. And that contributed to the fact that he didn’t really take root. And also still too in love with the Republican Party, which had been his home, and still too in love with the conservative movement that had been his home.

EZRA KLEIN: But Buchanan is interesting, too, because he’s a border-crosser.

JOHN GANZ: Yeah.

EZRA KLEIN: So Buchanan is a genuine extremist, I think it is fair to say. I mean, William F. Buckley, the editor of “National Review,” at some point does this huge long essay trying to decide if Pat Buchanan is an anti-Semite. So there’s that.

But at the same time, Buchanan, while he’s a strange, conservative revanchist, he’s also kind of a media darling. He’s like the in-house paleoconservative, true conservative of “The McLaughlin Group” back then. He eventually becomes the host of “Crossfire” when that show launches — the conservative side of the initial crossfire. He becomes the in-house conservative later on MSNBC.

JOHN GANZ: Sure.

^ARCHIVED RECORDING 3^: Joining us now is my MSNBC political colleague, Pat Buchanan. Pat, it is — it’s been far too long since you’ve been on the show. It’s really nice to see you.

^ARCHIVED RECORDING (PAT BUCHANAN)^: Good to see you.

EZRA KLEIN: When Rachel Maddow’s show launches, there is a segment called “It’s Pat,” where she argues with Pat Buchanan like he’s her racist uncle who she views with affection.

^ARCHIVED RECORDING (RACHEL MADDOW)^: Pat, I think that by advocating that the Republican Party tried to stir up racial animus among white voters here, I think you’re dating yourself. You’re dating yourself.

^ARCHIVED RECORDING (PAT BUCHANAN)^: I say, you know what I think they ought to do, they ought to defend the legitimate rights of white ***working class*** folks who are the victims of discrimination because that’s the right thing to do.

EZRA KLEIN: Buchanan understood something about the media the others didn’t, about the ability to use the fact that it didn’t like people like him but somehow needed people like him at the same time.

^ARCHIVED RECORDING (RACHEL MADDOW)^: Pat Buchanan, MSNBC political analyst, I’m very sorry that we’re out of time. It’s nice to have you back on the show, Pat. Thanks.

^ARCHIVED RECORDING (PAT BUCHANAN)^: I’ve enjoyed it, and as I always do, Rachel.

^ARCHIVED RECORDING (RACHEL MADDOW)^: We will be right back.

JOHN GANZ: Yes, that’s right. He was very good at being the house conservative on T.V. shows, but was extreme, as you mentioned. But also, people did like him. He was very friendly and polite and nice. And all of his hosts that he worked with, all the liberals that he worked with, they said, oh, he’s such a wonderful man. I mean, he, throughout his career, basically, evinces very anti-Semitic ideas. And a lot of his Jewish colleagues said, oh, he would never. He’s such a darling. He’s always been so nice to me.

So I think he could use a lot of charm — politicians need to be able to do this — and turn on the charm when he needed to and make people feel like he wasn’t so scary, which I think Trump does in a different way. So I think he was really very canny. This is the era of the emergence of cable news. And he just knew how to do that so well, to be on a panel show, to be on a talk show, to give great soundbites. Again, he’s a little bit more articulate in a way than Trump. But yes, his use of the media is quite impressive.

EZRA KLEIN: But — and this goes a little bit to the Rothbard thing of recognizing that you need somebody who can, in a way, go around the institutions. But I think it gets at the way the Rothbard thing was wrong, and something that Buchanan understands, that Trump later really understands, which is that you don’t need to get around the institutions. You need to go through the institutions.

JOHN GANZ: Yeah.

EZRA KLEIN: That there’s actually a kind of way you can exploit them.

JOHN GANZ: Yes.

EZRA KLEIN: If you are sufficiently outrageous, if you are good copy — I mean, there’s a famous Les Moonves quote where he’s the head of CBS and he says, “Donald Trump may not be good for the nation, but pretty good for CBS.”

JOHN GANZ: Yeah.

EZRA KLEIN: And Buchanan has this quality a little bit too where, on the one hand, you read the thing he’s saying, and these are the very institutions that are destroying the entire country. And on the other hand, he’s a member in good standing of all of them, collecting a paycheck from all of them.

JOHN GANZ: Right.

EZRA KLEIN: And this ability to be in and out of it at the same time.

JOHN GANZ: Right.

EZRA KLEIN: And Trump understood, and still understands, a kind of essential — there does not need to be a affection for there to be a unity of interest.

JOHN GANZ: Oh, absolutely. I think that back when Rothbard wrote that essay, he was talking about newspapers. And he thought already — he talks about how McCarthy was using T.V. I think it’s different forms of media are more amenable to this, quote unquote, “short circuit” because they have less editorial control, essentially.

EZRA KLEIN: And they’re based on ratings and competition in a different way.

JOHN GANZ: And ratings and competition. Yeah, they build on the need for commercial advantage, and that’s based on showmanship and theatricality, something that Trump is obviously amazing at, and Buchanan had some very good skill at. But he was a news guy. He wasn’t as funny. He wasn’t as outrageous. Trump is an entertainer. Television news is entertainment, but it’s entertainment for the types of people who watch T.V. news. There are types of people who don’t watch the news. And think Trump is entertaining for people who don’t watch the news as well.

EZRA KLEIN: I want to talk, too, about Buchanan’s ideological content. So I don’t remember if I read this book when Trump was running in 2016 or after he won. But I went back and read this book Buchanan published in 2002, called “The Death of the West.” So I want to read you a couple quotes from it that I highlighted.

So here’s one. Buchanan writes, “In 1960, only 16 million Americans did not trace their ancestors to Europe. Today, the number is 80 million. No nation has ever undergone so rapid and radical a transformation. He then goes global in the analysis writing, quote, “In 1960, people of European ancestry were one fourth of the world’s population. In 2000, they were one sixth. In 2050, they will be ⅒. These are the statistics of a vanishing race.”

So this is publishing in 2002.

JOHN GANZ: Right.

EZRA KLEIN: George W. Bush is President. But this is not the conservatism of George W. Bush. This is not exactly a policy agenda. But it is worried about something much more fundamental.

JOHN GANZ: Yeah. Buchanan, as most of these people that we’ve discussed, have a racial consciousness. What they’re worried about is demographic decline of white people, both economically and in sheer numbers. They believe that the core of American civilization is people of white European descent. And the country is no longer America if those are not the dominant people in the country.

I mean, David Duke was a neo-Nazi. So the racism is at the core — at the very core of how he thinks. So I think that there’s no escaping it. And Buchanan, obviously — I’ll just flat out say it — is a racist and antisemite. It’s difficult to argue otherwise at this point.

I think a lot of times when get into arguments about how extreme Trump is or what his politics are, I always go back to — I’m like, well, who got excited about it? Who immediately, when he appeared on the scene, their ears perked up? And it was a lot of people from previously quite marginalized streams of politics — white supremacists, neo-Nazis, et cetera. I mean, Buchanan is in that world a little bit — or a lot a bit.

And they say, finally, this is our breakthrough. Finally someone’s talking like us and is speaking to our concerns. Trump’s appearance on the political scene was a rapturous event for them, a breakthrough.

EZRA KLEIN: I want to get another thing Buchanan is good at doing here because he connects that blood and soil ethnic nationalism.

JOHN GANZ: Sure.

EZRA KLEIN: Then to this other thing that is happening, and is a very powerful and much more, I think, ideologically normalized sense, which is just the sense of disorientation about our society’s changing. So he writes here, again, in this “Death of the West” book, “Millions have begun to feel like strangers in their own land. They recoil from a popular culture that is saturated with raw sex and trumpets hedonistic values.

They see old holidays disappear and old heroes degraded. They see the art and artifacts of a glorious past removed from their museums and replaced by the depressing, the ugly, the abstract, the anti-American. They watch as books they cherished disappear from the schools they attended to be replaced by authors and titles that they’ve never heard of. The moral code that they were raised to live by has been overthrown. The culture they grew up with is dying inside the country they grew up in.”

JOHN GANZ: Yeah.

EZRA KLEIN: And that just feels — I mean, that just is the things people are writing now about wokeness, about DEI, about changes in the schools. Just written in 2002 in a slightly different context.

JOHN GANZ: Absolutely. I mean, it’s the same message. The difference is that now a lot of conservatives would not have associated themselves with Buchanan’s brand, right? And Trump has been this breakthrough. And now pretty much every right-winger in good standing says similar sorts of things.

EZRA KLEIN: I want to get at why this ripens.

JOHN GANZ: Yeah.

EZRA KLEIN: So Duke fails, and fails badly. Buchanan also fails. He runs in 1992. He does not win. George H.W. Bush is the nominee. He runs in 1996. He does not win. And he kind of settles into senescence, as I mentioned before, as not even the big conservative on Fox News.

JOHN GANZ: No.

EZRA KLEIN: He’s a conservative at MSNBC.

JOHN GANZ: Right.

EZRA KLEIN: Like I used to go on “Morning Joe” with that guy.

JOHN GANZ: Right.

EZRA KLEIN: That actually happened in my life. It’s weird.

And it doesn’t work for him.

JOHN GANZ: No.

EZRA KLEIN: Why does Trump succeed where these figures fail?

JOHN GANZ: Partially it’s his style as a showman and his skills that he got from that. I think Trump — I like to say he’s a synthesis, right? He’s a synthesis of different aspects of American politics and culture, one of which is obviously the entertainment industry. He comes from the world of tabloids. He comes from the world of reality T.V. show. This is where a lot of people know him from. And this is where he gets his showmanship.

I think it’s that he was more unambiguously an attack on the establishment and couldn’t be said, oh, this guy’s been hanging around with these people for a very long time. He’s been hanging around with rich people in this country for a very long time. But he was unambiguously an attack on the establishment. He also was no holds barred in his rhetoric, and it really excited people. His speeches, the way his way of talking was fun. The way that Rothbard talks about this, he says it’s got to be rousing, energetic, charismatic. I think the sheer charisma that he had was part of it.

His New York accent conveys a kind of folksy, but highly intelligent, cunning thing to people. And he sounds like he knows what he’s talking about. He is a little bit of a gangster. So I think the archetype of gangsters from movies which we’ve — as being, you know, they’re bad, but they’re good, they’re kind of fun, they know how to get things done, there’s no bullshit with them. We have this very affectionate, almost, picture of gangsters in American culture. And he’s a gangster in a certain way. He’s a little bit of a mobster.

Buchanan doesn’t sound like that. He sounds pretty square. So I think that that’s a huge part of it. And he comes from this kind of semi-legitimate family business where it provides for people. It does kind of corrupt things and cuts corners. I think that actually really appeals to people.

EZRA KLEIN: You’ve written that, quote, “The social character of Trumpism is crucial to understanding him.” What do you mean by that?

JOHN GANZ: It’s strange to think about this, but I think Trump is a family values candidate. And I think that a lot of liberals look at him and say, well, he’s such a horrible father, and he’s got all these divorces and all these children. Yeah, and how could they be so hypocritical? And they used to talk about family values. And now look at Trump.

Trump’s family looks like a lot of American families. There’s divorces. There’s lots of extra kids. He might not like his ex-wife very much. He might not even really like the kids that much. And he still is able somehow to provide for them and look like a big, strong guy.

I think that he represents a kind of family values that are in some ways new because of the change of the family structure because of divorce and because of — in some ways, very old and patriarchal, like he’s Big Daddy. He’s the head of the clan, the C-L-A-N. [CHUCKLES] Yeah. So I think that that appeals to a lot of Americans who want to take care of their families in the same way — their families writ large.

EZRA KLEIN: There’s another thing that I want to bring in here, and I always find this genuinely tricky to talk about among liberals.

JOHN GANZ: Yeah.

EZRA KLEIN: David Duke, not a fun guy.

JOHN GANZ: No.

EZRA KLEIN: You don’t want David Duke at a party.

JOHN GANZ: No.

EZRA KLEIN: Pat Buchanan, not a fun guy.

JOHN GANZ: Not really.

EZRA KLEIN: I don’t think you’d want Pat Buchanan at a party. I’ve met him. He’s fine. But —

JOHN GANZ: Yeah.

EZRA KLEIN: — well, maybe not from my perspective.

JOHN GANZ: I know where you’re going. Yeah.

EZRA KLEIN: But I think it is very hard for liberals to admit that within Trumpism there is a joyousness.

JOHN GANZ: Oh, there’s absolutely an enormous amount of enjoyment in it. It’s an enormous amount of fun. People follow him on the road.

EZRA KLEIN: You got merch, right? You got these fun hats.

JOHN GANZ: Yeah. It’s like — I mean, another thing that’s been brought up intelligently about Trump is professional wrestling.

EZRA KLEIN: Yes.

JOHN GANZ: I think that, yeah, it’s enormous amount of fun to go to those rallies for a lot of people. And he is funny, let’s face it. I remember I had Thanksgiving with my family, all very nice, upper-middle-class liberals. And I said Trump was funny. Oh, no, he’s not funny. He’s not funny. I don’t think he’s funny. Come on. Give me a break. He can be very funny.

EZRA KLEIN: Well, let me pick up on that, though, because I do think this gets to something real and something Trump picks up on well, that Buchanan picks up on well. I used to think about the efforts to create a Fox News of the left. And it never took, ever.

JOHN GANZ: No.

EZRA KLEIN: Because liberals did not want a thing that felt like Fox News. What took was Jon Stewart and Stephen Colbert and Rachel Maddow. When you think about the comedy on the right and the comedy on the left, when you think about the attacks on the right and the attacks on the left, as you were saying, the attack on the right is that you’re not a real American, right? That’s what Bill O’Reilly was always about.

JOHN GANZ: Right.

EZRA KLEIN: The attack on the left is you’re dumb.

JOHN GANZ: Right.

EZRA KLEIN: The left’s humor is irony.

JOHN GANZ: Yes.

EZRA KLEIN: And the right’s humor is the Insult Comic, right?

JOHN GANZ: Yes.

EZRA KLEIN: Trump is fundamentally an Insult Comic. Barack Obama actually is quite funny, but he’s an ironist.

JOHN GANZ: Right.

EZRA KLEIN: And I always talk about this sort of empathic chasm around Trump. I empathically cannot actually embody finding Trump appealing. I do not find the guy appealing. And I do think one of the things here is that it is sometimes hard for liberals to appreciate, given how horrifying many of the things Trump says happen to be, that there’s a deep enjoyment to him —

JOHN GANZ: Oh, sure.

EZRA KLEIN: — if you’re his audience.

JOHN GANZ: Absolutely. And I have to tell you, I don’t know if I should admit this to such a huge audience. I do sometimes get it because I like gangster movies, and I think that shit is funny, and I think that the way they express themselves is very appealing.

There’s a certain type of wise-guy masculinity of Trump, which I do think is entertaining. And I wouldn’t say I could identify with it, but I get the appeal for sure. I mean, it’s the same reason why we like Tony Soprano and stuff like that. It’s like — there’s something atavistic about it. There’s something stupid. You know it’s kind of stupid. But there is a kick that’s there. Yeah.

EZRA KLEIN: And I want to go back here to this idea of the middle finger politics because this feels to me like the trap liberals are in with Trump. That part of what makes him funny is how outraged he makes them.

JOHN GANZ: Oh, for sure.

EZRA KLEIN: That the energy is actually unleashed in the interaction.

JOHN GANZ: Yeah.

EZRA KLEIN: It is — I have a little kid. What is the first joke little kids tell? It is some kind of complete nonsensical setup, and then the joke is “poop.”

JOHN GANZ: Right.

EZRA KLEIN: The absolute joke is a little bit of shock value.

JOHN GANZ: Oh, for sure.

EZRA KLEIN: Like, can you believe I just said that? Can you believe we’re saying that together?

JOHN GANZ: Yeah.

EZRA KLEIN: At a much more elevated level, a lot of the energy, it seems to me, in a Trump rally, when I watch them, is this can you believe we’re doing it together and then the response, right? If there was never a response, if my kid didn’t think I would ever have a response to him saying naughty words, it wouldn’t be funny.

JOHN GANZ: Right.

EZRA KLEIN: He doesn’t find the word “bagel” funny, even though it’s kind of a funny word to say.

JOHN GANZ: Yeah, there has to be a reaction.

EZRA KLEIN: There has to be a reaction. And that feels like the deep bind, that you’re trapped in this interaction with it.

JOHN GANZ: Well, yeah, OK. I think Trump’s insight, and the insight with a lot of these people — and this might be the key populist insight — is that there’s something obscene about power and you have to be able to walk up to the line and go past it. Trump is obscene. He says obscene things and people love it.

I do think that this is what happens with the way populist politicians campaign, though, which makes it hard to say, well, just don’t react. They do two things. They have a very effective little tactic, which is, well, if they get reacted to, they play off that. And if they don’t get reacted to, they take it a little farther and see what happens.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

EZRA KLEIN: So that’s the supply side of Donald Trump, the aesthetics of Donald Trump.

JOHN GANZ: Sure.

EZRA KLEIN: I’m curious if you think, though, that there was a change in the reservoir, a ripening also of the issues. When you think about what Buchanan is talking about here — and elsewhere he talks a lot about this change in morals, in culture, in this idea of what equality is and what it means. He talks a lot about how the West is being made to feel that it’s racist and everything that is achieved is ill-gotten.

JOHN GANZ: Right.

EZRA KLEIN: Is something also happening as — you have Barack Obama who becomes president. I’m very much of the opinion there’s no Donald Trump without Barack Obama.

JOHN GANZ: Oh, of course.

EZRA KLEIN: How much is also — I mean, the thing Buchanan is a little bit early on, this sense of white people, of Christian people beginning to feel like an embattled minority, whether or not they actually are, has matured to a point that it has become a mass politics. And before it was a fractional politics.

JOHN GANZ: Well, absolutely. I mean — and I like to point this out — how did Trump get started in politics, right? Birtherism. What is birtherism? Obama’s not really a citizen.

^ARCHIVED RECORDING 4^: As you’re about to see, Donald Trump is not backing away from the firestorm of controversy he ignited this week on “The View” when he called out the President of the United States about his birth certificate.

^ARCHIVED RECORDING (DONALD TRUMP)^: So there is something very strange going on. He spent a lot of money to keep this out of print. There’s something very, very strange going on — a lot of legal fees. Why can’t he produce a birth certificate?

^ARCHIVED RECORDING 4^: You’ve never seen George W. Bush’s birth certificate, have you?

^ARCHIVED RECORDING (DONALD TRUMP)^: No, I haven’t, but I’m sure he has one. And I guarantee he was born here. And I hope that Barack Obama was born here.

JOHN GANZ: The core of Donald Trump’s entire politics from then until now is certain people — and this is why some people respond to it — is certain people are not really American citizens. What is denying the election? Certain people’s votes — the election is stolen. Yeah, well, no, it’s just that certain people’s votes don’t really count and aren’t real.

So the core of Trump is narrowing the idea of American citizenship down to a certain type of person, which is obviously racialized. Certain people are citizens — real citizens. Other people aren’t really. I think that’s at real core of it. Like, yeah, you were saying Paul Ryan looked at the Tea Party and said, oh, you know, it’s about cutting Medicare, and so on and so forth.

He said, no, they don’t like Obama. They don’t think Obama is really an American. That’s it. He got that immediately. He says he’s not really American. That’s what he was saying. What he’s constantly saying is these people aren’t really Americans. So there’s that.

The other thing that ripens is that deindustrialization took place. There’s a lot of insecurity. People don’t have the sense of the same kinds of jobs, middle class jobs that they could hope for. They see rural communities, especially, really collapsing and falling apart.

I mean, look, it sounds very big, melodramatic rhetoric to talk about the death of the West or something like that. But I mean, my god, if you look in a lot of the country, they’re ruins. But it was a once great civilization. And there are parts of this country that look ruined.

EZRA KLEIN: I mean, this is the way that Buchanan is too much of an egghead.

JOHN GANZ: Yeah.

EZRA KLEIN: The West is an eggheady way to think about this.

JOHN GANZ: Exactly. And Trump says it — he says crippled America, you know, like — and he says it — right, those are very abstract concepts. And he says, your life sucks. Look at where you live. It looks horrible. He just says it. He says and we’re going to fix things.

I think that that’s really underrated is that people on the right say, oh, urban areas are so horrible and people are afraid to go out on the street. Whatever. But if you go into a lot of rural ex-urban areas, there’s a, I would argue, an ongoing depression, which is missed by economic statistics. And I think that is a huge part of the sense of dissatisfaction that he gets into.

EZRA KLEIN: I do think it’s worth noting here that it’s not true that everybody voting for Donald Trump is left out of the economy. In 2020, he won voters with family incomes of $100,000 or more. And there are a lot of really, really rich people voting for Donald Trump. It is also true that many of the people who vote for him are feeling left out of the economy. They’re certainly feeling left out of this intersection of the economy and the culture.

One way I think income doesn’t capture everything here is, look, you don’t have a lot of poor graduate students voting for Donald Trump. And you do have a lot of people who, say, run local car dealerships. But the people running local car dealerships in smaller cities have a very different relationship to mass culture than the poor graduate students. They do feel like they’re being left out of something.

And so then, if you go back, you do have David Duke making this argument, that the culture is losing itself as a white Christian nation. That if you are now a traditionalist white Christian, that you are fundamentally on the outs. Buchanan picks up on that and says, we are the majority, the forgotten man, the silent majority, and they are betraying our values. They are accepting of homosexuality and pornography and licentiousness, and whatever it might be.

Trump actually then just picks up on the fact that this world, evangelical Christians in particular, now don’t feel like the silent majority. They feel like the embattled minority. I can’t even not bake a cake for a gay wedding kind of thing. And he doesn’t present himself exactly as one of them. He presents himself as the son of a bitch they need defending them.

JOHN GANZ: Yes. Oh, absolutely.

EZRA KLEIN: And that both, I think, reflects a kind of intuition on his part, but also a genuine change, not in the social character of Trumpism, but of the nation. We are a secularizing nation. We are a nation where there are differing power structures. We are a nation where what is OK in 2020 or 2016 is very different than what was OK in 1990 or 1980.

JOHN GANZ: Yeah.

EZRA KLEIN: I always think this is actually very, very, very underplayed is the importance of the sense of Christian religious embattlement in the Trump phenomenon.

JOHN GANZ: Yeah. I think the Christian — evangelical Christian voters and what some people identify themselves as and are becoming more and more identified as Christian nationalists, they’re one constituency that has, I think, a pretty clear instrumental attitude towards Trump in certain ways. They know that he can get through certain conservative policy programs, and they’ve been rewarded for staying loyal to him.

So I think that, in some ways, they have a very instrumental idea of Trump. Again, it goes back to the gangsterism of it, being like, we need a gangster.

EZRA KLEIN: Although, I do think this is something that has changed a bit. I mean, this has been very broadly reported on. But in 2016, the relationship was instrumental. He said he would put our judges on the court.

JOHN GANZ: Yes.

EZRA KLEIN: And 2024, it’s no longer instrumental, right?

JOHN GANZ: No.

EZRA KLEIN: At least not among evangelical Christians as a kind of community. It’s become a deep, like, he is chosen by God as our defender sort of thing.

JOHN GANZ: No, that is absolutely true.

EZRA KLEIN: Something changed there very dramatically.

JOHN GANZ: Yes, there is obviously a lot of people who have a messianic conception of him. And I think that that’s what his politics are plugging into is something mythical, is a sense of American decline, American catastrophe that can be reversed through his power. And a lot of people who had versions of that are becoming seduced to his message and that he’s the deliverer of that. And that’s the strength of his politics.

EZRA KLEIN: One of the things that has been an interesting shift during the Trump years is it’s almost a little bit jarring. Big business was supposed to be a Republican constituency, right? There was still a big sense of material division in American politics. And Democrats were allied with the environmental groups and the racial equity groups, and Republicans had the corporations.

JOHN GANZ: Yeah.

EZRA KLEIN: And over the past six, eight-ish years, that’s shifted. And even the people coming up behind Trump — your Vivek Ramaswamys, your Ron DeSantises, they’re making a lot of their target the corporations, right?

JOHN GANZ: Sure.

EZRA KLEIN: DeSantis versus Disney. This sense of the basic insight of the populist right becoming increasingly the organizing insight of the Republican Party —

JOHN GANZ: Sure.

EZRA KLEIN: — how do you think about that ideological shift?

JOHN GANZ: I think that that’s very interesting, important, and subtle, and hard to tease out sometimes, but I think we can start to do it. So I think that there’s an attack on corporate America so-called woke capital. I do think, though, ultimately the Republicans are never really that unfriendly to business no matter what they say.

And there’s been some indications, from comments from people on Wall Street, that said, you know, because of what happened last time, Trump wins, Trump doesn’t win, it’s not such a big deal. We can really work with this guy.

And the Trump administration, in actual practice, was very good for business interests. Not only just tax cuts. But there was some study done that if you had a direct business connection with Trump, your company saw a market increase in profits after his election. From our perspective, it’s corrupt.

But for a lot of other people, it’s what he’s meant to do. He’s meant to get the economy going in a certain way, which is not stimulus and so on. It’s connecting the right people. It’s making deals happen. And that’s a conception of the economy that is a network of family firms and relationships, not big abstract concepts.

EZRA KLEIN: Well, this gets to a very core part of Donald Trump’s more banal appeal to people, which is, look, David Duke, Pat Buchanan, what the hell do they know about the economy? I think the thing liberals do, where they try to pretend Donald Trump had no business acumen, and, well —

JOHN GANZ: Yeah, he sucks at business.

EZRA KLEIN: — if he just invested the money he got when he was young in the S&amp;P 500, he also would — Trump turned money into branding, and power, and cultural centrality. He represented for years in America what success literally meant.

JOHN GANZ: He was the big money guy.

EZRA KLEIN: He was the big money guy. He had “The Apprentice.” He had “Celebrity Apprentice.” But he also has these buildings. I mean, you can walk around New York today and look at these gigantic buildings with his name on them. He built real things in the real world.

And then because, until 2020, when the pandemic hit, I would say Trump was largely drafting off of the Obama recovery, and then Republicans were happy to spend as much as he wanted. So in addition to the Obama recovery, Republicans stopped cutting spending and just added stimulus into the economy. The economy was pretty good. It’s actually better now than it was then, but it was pretty good.

And so between both the memory of a pretty good economy before the inflation and interest rate hit post-pandemic, and the fact that Trump is still good at performing, still maintains that sense in people that he is maybe this great businessman, that he is somebody who is, in some ways, connected to the fundamental currents of economic success —

JOHN GANZ: Yes.

EZRA KLEIN: — there are a lot of people who don’t like his more outrageous comments, his more horrifying comments, who don’t like Jan. 6, but they just don’t care that much.

JOHN GANZ: No.

EZRA KLEIN: Their relationship to politics is more arm’s length than transactional.

JOHN GANZ: Yeah.

EZRA KLEIN: And they’re like, yeah, Trump, that guy’s good at running economies.

JOHN GANZ: I think that that’s all absolutely correct. I mean, he was the symbol of a rich guy for so long. He was what people knew as a rich guy. I think this is kind of telling is that I have this memory of being a child. And when I was a child, I didn’t really understand any of this stuff. But Donald Trump was in the news a lot. And he was the rich guy, right? And it was Donald Trump, Donald Trump. And then I heard he went bankrupt.

And in my child’s mind, I was sad that Donald Trump went bankrupt because I was like, but he’s the rich guy. It felt like something had been lost in culture or something. I was like, but that symbol is no longer there now. I don’t know where to orient my child mind about it.

And I think that that resonates with a lot of people on a deep level. They’re like, yeah, he’s the rich guy, and I want him to be successful. And if he’s successful, I’ll be successful. I’m in proximity to it. It’ll touch me. That’ll happen. That’s maybe thinking a little too little of people. But I don’t — I think there’s some people out there who think this way. [LAUGHS]

EZRA KLEIN: I do think here you get this difference between the liberal conception of how you want to run an economy, which is, rightly or wrongly, let’s put a bunch of technocratic experts in charge of things, and this populist conception, which is you need to break through to the part where the treasure is kept. And you need a person — I mean, this was always Trump’s appeal, something he said very explicitly.

He has this line I love from 2016 where he says, “I’ve been greedy my whole life. And now I’m going to be greedy for you.” And there is a sense of him as a guy who knows how to work the back rooms. And if you believe the whole thing is corrupt, then what you need is a guy who understands the corruption working on your behalf.

JOHN GANZ: Yes, absolutely.

EZRA KLEIN: And then he does this very explicitly. So I want to play a clip from Trump that gets at two dimensions of this simultaneously, because it both includes one of the really terrible things he said recently that got a lot of liberal outrage attached to it and then also gets at I think him making this argument from a recent rally.

^ARCHIVED RECORDING (DONALD TRUMP)^: If you’re listening, President Xi — and you and I are friends — but he understands the way I deal. Those big monster car manufacturing plants that you’re building in Mexico right now, and you think you’re going to get that, you’re going to not hire Americans, and you’re going to sell the cars to us. No. We’re going to put a 100 percent tariff on every single car that comes across the line. And you’re not going to be able to sell those cars, if I get elected. Now, if I don’t get elected, it’s going to be a bloodbath for the whole — that’s going to be the least of it. It’s going to be a bloodbath for the country. That’ll be the least of it. But they’re not going to sell those cars. They’re building massive —

EZRA KLEIN: I think that clip is really interesting. So on the one hand, people probably heard about Trump saying, if I’m not elected, it’s going to be a bloodbath. And I think in context — I feel like he is — if you’re being —

JOHN GANZ: Fair. [CHUCKLES]:

EZRA KLEIN: — fair, he’s saying this as a very weird way to make a point about how badly America is going to be broadly ripped off.

JOHN GANZ: Right.

EZRA KLEIN: And there is this way in which he gets pulled out of context, and then that looks, to his supporters, like the media is against him.

JOHN GANZ: Right.

EZRA KLEIN: And on the other hand, that is a crazy way to describe that.

JOHN GANZ: Yeah.

EZRA KLEIN: But there’s also this other thing he’s saying, like, where I’m friends with President Xi. He knows how I deal. I’m going to be — I’m going to be the son of a bitch on your side, cutting the good deals for you, being the gangster negotiator on your behalf. And that’s a message he’s pinging at his people right there. And there is power to it.

JOHN GANZ: Absolutely. I think that that’s a key to the conception of business that his supporters have. And it’s not a stupid conception of business. It’s true. I mean, business is a lot of relationships. And Trump has instrumentalized them. He thinks he’s better at it than he probably is.

But there is a correct populist assumption, which they look at elites and they say, well, these people are all friends, and I’m not part of that group of friends. Why do people get involved in politics, right? Let’s say you’re on the make as a businessman — a small-businessman. Well, you get involved in politics, you meet a lot of other people who can help you out. These things are just true in parts of the American system.

In the highest rhetoric, they don’t often get spoken to. And I think that appeals to people too. He’s just talking about how the sausage is made. Sometimes it’s too crude. Sometimes it’s a stupid way of looking at things. Things are more complicated. But he’s willing to tell people the truth from their perception about how things are actually done.

EZRA KLEIN: And then there’s the other side of the bloodbath comment, which is whatever he meant it as in that paragraph, this is a guy who presided over, encouraged a Jan. 6 insurrection that almost literally did have blood. But almost became a true murderous bloodbath in the halls of Congress. And he’s opening rallies with the people who participated in that insurgency singing “The Star-Spangled Banner.”

JOHN GANZ: Well, yeah.

EZRA KLEIN: And there is this question always, I think — and this goes back to this slipperiness of how to take them. You have a quote I really like about Jan. 6. And you write, “From a certain perspective, the critics who say that talking about fascism takes Trump too seriously or correct, it involves too much hocus pocus. It cloaks him in a certain dark grandeur. And it gives everything a Spenglerian gloom that makes him seem bigger than he is. After all, he’s just a crook and a con man, an idiot.

But the phoniness, the bombast, and the ridiculousness was a part of the original thing too. There’s always been a deeply moronic side to fascism. Fascism is perhaps most fundamentally a moron putting on world historical errors, morons trying to make history. What better way to describe Jan. 6? The second biggest mistake is to take it too seriously. But the first biggest mistake is to not take it seriously enough.”

But you don’t really say then, in that piece, where does that leave you? How do you take it?

JOHN GANZ: It’s difficult. I think you constantly have to adjust your judgment of it. Look, the song with the Jan. 6 people, I mean, this turning the fallen of the previous attempts into martyrs after the Feb. 6, 1934 riots, the French parliament, which was one of my favorite comparisons to Jan. 6, there was a concerted effort by the French right to turn the fallen into martyrs and to say this was a moment in which our movement was baptized by fire.

There’s definitely an attempt to raise the people who were at Jan. 6 into martyrs. I mean, that’s very difficult to argue with, I think. But in terms of that question, I would say this. I think that the record of thinking of Trump as a fascist, or a would-be fascist, has a better predictive power than saying that he’s not.

So everyone said, this guy, he’s such an idiot. He’s so weak. He doesn’t really have the political skills, and he definitely doesn’t have the organization. He doesn’t have an SS or an SA or the Blackshirts behind him really. He’s got these idiot militias that are totally disorganized. OK, true. But the people said, well, what would a fascist dictator do? They would try to use their militias to make some kind of extralegal attack on power and try and stay in office, right? Well, he did that.

So I would say that the theory of treating Trump as if there was something seriously consonant with the history of fascism just has a better record as a theory of Trump. I mean, it’s obviously not perfect. It’s obviously not a perfect analogy.

EZRA KLEIN: I actually want to put the literal question of fascism to the side for a second —

JOHN GANZ: Sure.

EZRA KLEIN: — because I think people get really caught up on very specific historical questions there, which is actually an argument you’ve made, I think, quite well. But the point that treating Trump as genuinely dangerous —

JOHN GANZ: Oh, yeah.

EZRA KLEIN: — has a record. And something you said gets at one of my really core concerns right now. Two things. One is that this point that the fact that he sometimes seems a little buffoonish is actually important to understanding how — not why it can’t happen, but why it can.

JOHN GANZ: Yeah.

EZRA KLEIN: Because the buffoonish of these guys going all the way back, right, Mussolini, Hitler, anybody — and I don’t always love the comparisons, particularly as a Jewish person. I think Hitler is a specific comparison. But a lot of the people who have deeply endangered political systems or taken them over in a violent way, one way they got there was people underestimated them for a long time.

JOHN GANZ: Oh, absolutely.

EZRA KLEIN: And they way they got underestimated was they seemed a little bit ridiculous. But the second thing there is you were just saying, one of the critiques made of why it couldn’t go that far with Trump last time was that he didn’t have a strong organization, he could barely run his own administration.

JOHN GANZ: Yeah.

EZRA KLEIN: That’s not where he is now.

JOHN GANZ: Well, I still don’t think that he has — I think there are more people who are willing to do his bidding and would be part of a Trump administration, would be more effective, he doesn’t have vast armies of uniformed men at his disposal to intimidate voters and that sort of thing still. But yeah, he’s a little bit more organized and canny in terms of his danger absurdity level.

I think another thing — even for his supporters, for everybody — I think this is a way that Trump works on everybody — there was an article a while back about why Hasidic Jews like Trump. And they use the Yiddish term haimish, which is like homey, cozy, right? There’s something familiar about Trump, and this also goes back to his New York accent and stuff like that, and his gangsterism, that kind of puts you at ease, because you’re like, it’s familiar. I know this kind of guy. They’re not that dangerous. They’re just —

EZRA KLEIN: It’s pat.

JOHN GANZ: Yeah, it’s pat. You know, like, all right, he’s a little bit outrageous. But it’s not that alien or scary because he’s just like a guy I know from T.V. I know guys like this. I know guys that talk like this. It’s going to be strange to say this. He can drop the menacing, seem a little cute sometimes, and look kind of — and hug people and seem lovable. And he has the ability, I think, to put on the charm and drop people’s defenses.

And I think that that’s what people are responding to a lot is that, hey, it’s just kind of he’s a schmuck. And we know a lot of schmucks.

EZRA KLEIN: But I think this argument for why Trump was underestimated —

JOHN GANZ: Yeah.

EZRA KLEIN: — worked better before Jan. 6 than after. If the question in 2016 was, for a lot of liberals, like, how can people like this guy? He’s saying the most awful things. He seems like this cruel buffoon in many ways. He’s even saying terrible things about Republicans.

JOHN GANZ: Yeah.

EZRA KLEIN: The question in 2024 for a lot of them is, you’ve all seen what he’s capable of. You saw Jan. 6. You saw that mob at the Capitol. You see the criminal cases against him right now. You saw him actually try to intimidate people to overturn the election, not just with a mob, but also calling state election officials.

And yet, if you look at polling, Trump is polling better than he ever has in terms of his matchups with the Democrat, right? There was never a period in any previous election where Trump led. And he’s not been behind for very long in this one, and he’s leading now.

And so there is this thing that I think people thought, well, if people just see what he’s capable of, they just know that we’re right about him. And it didn’t work at all.

JOHN GANZ: No.

EZRA KLEIN: But I’m curious how you read that.

JOHN GANZ: A lot of people just don’t really understand that stuff and don’t give a shit.

EZRA KLEIN: Well, what do you mean who don’t understand it, because it’s not like you need a lot of — you don’t need a postgrad degree to understand a mob at the Capitol.

JOHN GANZ: I don’t know. I think that the amount of people who are aware of what happened is probably smaller than you think it is. The amount of people who conceptualize it in the way that we do, that it was a sincere attempt to overthrow democracy in America, is not as big as we think it is. The amount of people who view it as something positive and what they wanted is probably not huge either.

But I think there are a lot of people who just don’t have a strong view or clear understanding of what happened at all, and don’t care. You see this in history a lot, where there’s moments at which these would-be dictators get to a point where it looks like their coalition is about to collapse. They do something outrageous. They do something really bad. Mussolini did this when he had an opponent killed. And the conservatives who backed him were like, ehh, this is starting to look like it’s not the kind of thing we want to do. And they even say and it looks like he’s about to collapse. And then somehow they politically navigate this situation.

The conservatives say, well, we can still get some things out of him. Now he’s vulnerable. He needs us even more. And now we got him. So we’ll continue to provide support because this actually leaves an opening for us.

Right after Jan. 6, and you’re like, oh, the Republicans are going to finally had enough. No. He’s been able to navigate and get over those waves and breakers several times. He’s lucky, but he has a certain amount of skill and he also has a lot of — he still has a constituency behind him, which they can’t ignore at their peril. Sometimes their literal peril. I don’t know how he becomes dictator, but he definitely wants to. That’s not — that’s not up for debate. It shouldn’t be up for debate.

EZRA KLEIN: So when you then think about the history of how these populist right figures do end up diminished — I mean, some of them just get defeated. Buchanan just doesn’t win. Duke doesn’t win. But in other countries, they do win. Sometimes in other countries they do take over. When you look at history, what do you think this nets out to?

I mean, is it just either they don’t win the first time or they get defeated in a war? [LAUGHS] What is your read of the history here?

JOHN GANZ: Sometimes, yeah, defeated — they take over a country, and then they get defeated in the war. Or usually, sometimes they take power for a little while. They get into some kind of crisis and their regime collapse because it doesn’t have enough support. And sometimes it’ll just fizzle out.

I think it’s important to remember — I think fascist propaganda about the ’30s and so forth, it makes these movements look inevitable like the force of history, right? They’re just moving, and it was impossible for them to stop. And they had so much powers behind them. And that gives us a kind of cartoonish picture of them.

In point of fact, there were many contingent points along the line where things could have gone otherwise. And their political support could have collapsed all of a sudden. And they got lucky. Just as easily as things taking power is fortune goes the other way. And he doesn’t get the right equation, he doesn’t get the backing of the people he needs, he doesn’t form the coalition he needs, it might go back into the reservoir, to use your metaphor, but it just fizzles in a certain way.

EZRA KLEIN: And what about the reservoir itself? I mean, one of the things that I find scarce about Trump is the way he has infected the broader Republican Party, particularly now that he’s been back on the scene. I mean, different people are trying to learn something from him on the right. And I do think it creates this question of how do you reduce the demand for something like him, which I’m not sure is the same question as how you beat him?

JOHN GANZ: My obvious instinct to this as a Social Democrat, New Deal Democrat kind of guy is that we need to — I know the economy appears to be doing well. I strongly believe that there are structural issues that need to be answered about how Americans leave behind a better life for their children, how jobs feel more secure, how the country feels productive and heading in a certain direction. Our country has a story behind it. And leadership that feels like it’s taking it that way.

I think that’s a big part of it. I hope. I do believe in the United States, especially, everyone who’s tried to become a mini Trump hasn’t really been able to do it. DeSantises’ campaign fizzled. Ramaswamy didn’t really go anywhere. I think honestly — and I hate to say this because it’s something he would say — it’s really — he’s a pretty special guy. [LAUGHS]: And he —

EZRA KLEIN: More and more people are saying that.

JOHN GANZ: More people are saying it. I think — like as I was saying, he’s a synthesis. He is uniquely positioned to synthesize all of these different aspects and come together as the kind of perfect candidate for these types of politics. It makes sense. Oh, you’re like, oh, yeah, T.V. guy, business guy, big racist. Yeah, it kind of all adds up.

And so much of this politics is a cult of personality and about the charisma of the individual who represents all of these things. The leader really matters in these types of politics. So I think that the loss of this leadership, be it through looking like a loser two times, ending up in jail, I think it would be pretty devastating. I think it would be a big setback for right-wing populism to lose Trump for sure.

EZRA KLEIN: And then always our final question, what are three books you would recommend to the audience?

JOHN GANZ: Ah, OK, so my first book is kind of big and long, but it’s one of my favorite books about American history. It’s called “What Hath God Wrought: The Transformation of America, 1815 – 1848.” History of America in the Jacksonian times, it’s a wonderful history. But I just think it’s so interesting to see how the country, although it was so different back then, there are so many things that feel familiar. So many culture wars. So many political issues. So many different divisions between different geographic parts of the country that really still have some kind of resonance with today. And I just think it’s a wonderful book and everybody should read it.

Now, if you don’t want to read a 900-page book, I can offer something much shorter, which is a book called “After Nationalism — Being American in an Age of Division” by Samuel Goldman. It’s just a wonderful book on what it means to be American today and how we’ve lost and still have some of the myths and themes of American history.

And the third book I would recommend is “The Politics of Cultural Despair” by Fritz Stern, where he talks about the kinds of people in Germany who, prior in the 19th century, created the ideological underpinnings for what became Nazism. And it’s a wonderful book.

EZRA KLEIN: John Ganz, thank you very much.

JOHN GANZ: Thank you.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

EZRA KLEIN: This episode of “The Ezra Klein Show” was produced by Annie Galvin. Fact-checking by Michelle Harris. Our senior engineer is Jeff Geld, with additional mixing from Efim Shapiro. Our senior editor is Claire Gordon. The show’s production team also includes Rollin Hu and Kristin Lin. We have original music by Isaac Jones. We have audience strategy by Kristina Samulewski and Shannon Busta. The executive producer of New York Times Opinion Audio is Annie-Rose Strasser. And special thanks to Sonia Herrero.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

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[***Hochul and Adams Envision ‘New New York.’ Getting There Is the Trick.***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6737-GH11-DXY4-X0VG-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Highlight:** The leaders want to turn commercial districts into 24-hour live-and-work spaces, recognizing that the pandemic has fundamentally changed the city.

**Body**

The leaders want to turn commercial districts into 24-hour live-and-work spaces, recognizing that the pandemic has fundamentally changed the city.

Gov. Kathy Hochul and mayor Eric Adams unveiled a reimagined vision for a “New New York” Wednesday, while acknowledging that the pandemic has fundamentally changed New York City.

The plan, titled [*“New New York: Making New York Work For Everyone,”*](https://newnypanel.com/) suggested that reinvigorating the city’s commercial districts by transforming them into 24 hour live-and-work spaces was key to the city’s future.

“The pandemic caused us to rethink everything. How we work, where we work, how we get around, how we spend our time, our lives and where our priorities are,” Ms. Hochul said during a speech before civic and business leaders at Cipriani Wall Street. “We’re truly not living in the same New York that we were in March of 2020.”

The proposal was sparse on details such as funding or even timelines, but was still intended to serve as a statement of joint priorities from the city and state, as well as a reflection of Ms. Hochul’s and Mr. Adams’s ability to collaborate better than [*their predecessors had*](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/04/22/nyregion/cuomo-deblasio-feud-nyc.html).

The report acknowledged that hybrid work is here to stay, a shift in tone from the initial position of Mr. Adams, who has repeatedly urged workers to return to their offices and famously scolded them for “staying home in your pajamas all day.”

Midtown should be made more appealing to commuters with public space improvements, like creating more pedestrian-only plazas around Grand Central Terminal, and implementing a more automated trash collection system on par with cities like Paris and Barcelona, according to the report.

The plan also recommended modernizing outdated regulations to make it easier to convert office buildings into residential apartments, saying a tax incentive should be offered to promote the creation of affordable housing in particular.

Mr. Adams, who has spent much of his first year in office seeking to reduce crime and disorder in the city, continued to press his message.

“The prerequisite to our prosperity is public safety and justice. They go together,” Mr. Adams said at the event, hosted by the Association for a Better New York. “We must be safe as a city. And you can’t be safe as a city if you continue to allow people who are violent in our city to [*return to our streets*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/03/nyregion/bail-reform-adams-hochul.html) and inflict violence on innocent people.”

Although foot traffic across the city’s business districts has almost fully recovered to prepandemic levels, office occupancy has lagged far behind. Since Labor Day, offices in the New York City area have been about half full, according to Kastle Systems, an office security firm.

Subway ridership on weekdays is only about 63 percent of comparable periods in 2019. In Midtown and Lower Manhattan, the city’s two largest business districts, spending at restaurants and bars is still about 35 percent below prepandemic levels, the report said.

The slow rebound in New York City’s hospitality sector has been a major reason that the city’s private-sector jobs recovery has trailed the nation’s throughout the pandemic.

But Mr. Adams made a point of underscoring the importance of high-income earners as a key part of the city’s recovery, and sought to avoid proposals that benefited the ***working class*** at the expense of high earners.

“To continually attack high income earners where 51 percent of all taxes are paid by two percent of New Yorkers, it blows my mind when I hear people say, ‘So what if they leave?’” the mayor said. “No, you leave.”

While the mayor received the loudest applause from the crowd when talking about public safety and protecting high-income earners, the report’s lack of details and its proposal to use tax incentives to help the transition from office to residential space drew criticism from others.

Carolyn Martinez-Class, a campaign coordinator for the Invest in our New York Coalition, a group that wants to raise money for programs to help lower income New Yorkers by raising taxes on the wealthy, said that while the report recognized the struggles of ***working class*** New Yorkers, it did not focus enough on things that could help, such as funding child care or housing vouchers.

“We know that in the budget process the governor has outsize power to make determinations about how state funding is used,” Ms. Martinez-Class said.

The leaders of the panel that developed the report, Robin Hood chief executive Richard Buery and former Sidewalk Labs chief executive Dan Doctoroff, both talked about the need for equity in the plan and using congestion pricing to fund the redevelopment of streets in commercial districts that are turned into 24-hour live-and-work neighborhoods.

Although business districts outside Manhattan have recovered much faster, like Fordham Plaza in the Bronx or Long Island City in Queens, Manhattan’s central business districts make up a disproportionately large share of the city’s economy.

The report said 18 percent of the city’s property tax revenue comes from Manhattan’s business districts, money that is used to fund infrastructure and schools. The report cited how the lack of affordable housing has become a major barrier to the city’s growth, saying the soaring cost of living has made it more difficult for companies to attract and retain workers.

This fall, homelessness in New York City reached a record high, and average rents in the city have risen 40 percent since 2010, the report said. In some parts of New York City, the population grew more than twice as much in the last decade as the number of new housing units, the report said.

To alleviate the housing shortage, the panel proposed changes to existing laws by embracing many priorities of pro-development advocates, including removing some state limits on residential building size and legalizing basement homes.

The report notably did not include proposals that many on the left had lobbied for, including stricter rent regulation and more expansive rental assistance.

Nathan Gusdorf, executive director of the Fiscal Policy Institute, said the mayor’s [*recent cuts to agency budgets*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/11/16/nyregion/budget-deficit-nyc.html) — along with the governor’s opposition to raising taxes on the wealthy — will make the proposals in the report difficult to achieve.

“The report identifies key policy areas that are essential for a full economic recovery but is largely silent on the need for new revenue,” Mr. Gusdorf said.

Mihir Zaveri contributed reporting.

PHOTO: Mayor Eric Adams speaking on Wednesday about the plan titled “New New York: Making New York Work For Everyone.” (PHOTOGRAPH BY HIROKO MASUIKE/THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A17.

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[***Lose and Live***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68TT-1MS1-DXY4-X115-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** By Isaac Fitzgerald

**Body**

In a new novel by Andre Dubus III, a man searches for hope and dignity after a long run of misfortune.

SUCH KINDNESS, by Andre Dubus III

Tom Lowe is, well, low. Destitute. About as close to rock bottom as he can get. He was once a successful carpenter with his own business, a gorgeous house he designed and built himself -- with the help of an (eventually disastrous) adjustable-rate mortgage -- and a wife and child he adored. Now he's divorced, estranged from his 19-year-old son and living in Section 8 housing in Amesbury, Mass. Worst of all, Tom, the narrator of Andre Dubus III's novel ''Such Kindness,'' isn't able to work.

Work, you see, is what made Tom feel useful. It's what made him a man. Someone who could hold his head up high. Work was Tom's way of expressing his love to his wife and to his son: Look at this beautiful life I have made for us. ''Every day that I worked on building my home,'' he recalls, ''I felt like I was in some temporary state of grace.''

When he started falling behind on his mortgage payments, Tom knew how to solve the problem: by working more. Which eventually led to his fall -- a literal fall, while Tom was doing some roofing. A brief distraction, then nothing but gravity, air and, eventually, ground. He had a debilitating injury. Surgeries. Pain medication. And then addiction. From there, Tom's life started slipping away from him in the same inevitable-seeming motion that he felt when he fell off that roof, when his ''body seemed to unmoor from its very center.''

Now living off disability checks and E.B.T. cards that he sells for cash, so that he can buy rotgut vodka to dull the burning pain caused by the screws in his hip, Tom is alone and stewing in bitterness. He's kicked his addiction to opioids, but has allowed a new kind of addiction into his life: resentment. He blames the banker who encouraged him to take out that mortgage. The insurance company that didn't pay him what he was owed after his injury, despite years of on-time payments (until he missed the last two, allowing the company to deny his claim). The doctors who prescribed him the painkillers and the giant pharmaceutical conglomerates that made the pills in the first place. ''Big Pharma, Insurance, Banks'': an unholy trinity of elusive enemies.

Other than hostility for those who have done him wrong, the only other motivating factor currently in Tom's life is visiting his son, Drew, in order to celebrate the boy's 20th birthday. Problem is Drew attends college in Amherst, Mass., over 100 miles west, and Tom has no idea how he will make the trek. He has no car: It was impounded because it was unregistered and uninsured, and Tom didn't have his license on him when he got pulled over. His precious tools, which he was hoping to sell to help get his car back, have recently been stolen. But in Tom's mind, regaining his son's love is his last glimmer of hope.

Much like Tom, the first half of this novel is hard. Not hard to read, mind you. Dubus -- the author of the acclaimed best seller ''House of Sand and Fog'' and the phenomenal memoir ''Townie,'' among other books -- is at the top of his game here, masterfully carrying the reader from the present action to Tom's memories and dreams without confusion. The writing and the structure are clean and seamless.

Reminiscing about his mornings before his car was taken away, Tom gives us a tour of his world in the novel's early pages: ''I leave the 8 and this neighborhood of box houses like the one I grew up in, the vans and pickup trucks in their driveways, the strip plaza across the street with the liquor store and a salon called Dawn's Hair & Nails.'' Later, on the highway, ''I join the traffic of my fellow human beings and feel, for a few miles anyway, part of them again, a man coming home after a long day's work, a man who had every intention of carrying his own weight.''

With its weathered characters and workaday settings, ''Such Kindness'' gives Dubus numerous opportunities to show how easily one's world can fall apart -- how a few mistakes when you're financially vulnerable can lead to crippling loss. Always a keen observer of the ***working class***, Dubus knows what it means to miss a bill payment.

But in ''Such Kindness'' we remain squarely in Tom's head, and Tom's head is not an easy place to be. He's a bit of a bummer to hang with, which he himself would almost eagerly admit. Still, every gritty, well-written disaster in the first half of this book is balanced by the transcendence of the novel's ending.

At its core, this book is a hero's journey, but not one where the hero ends up somewhere wildly different from where he starts. This is a story of acceptance. Hard-won, beautiful, life-changing acceptance. Tom's account brought tears to my eyes -- both from recognition of my own story in his, and of how far I have yet to go myself.

How do we accept the world for what it is, when nothing seems acceptable? Therein lies the trick of this novel, its slow magic wrought through small, accumulative moments. We sit in Tom's consciousness and experience his own hardship softening, but never in the way we expect. This is a testament to Dubus's talents. Every guess I had, even when -- especially when -- I thought I knew where the story was going, was wrong. Dubus kept surprising me, as did Tom.

So I will not ruin their secrets here. But what I can say is that when I finished this novel, I knew the lessons that Tom had learned were now my own.

Isaac Fitzgerald is the author of the best-selling memoir ''Dirtbag, Massachusetts.''

SUCH KINDNESS | By Andre Dubus III | 311 pp. | W.W. Norton & Company | $29.95Isaac Fitzgerald needs a bio. tkt ktt k tk tkt tk tkt kt tk tkt kt tkt kt kt ktkt kt tk tkt kt

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/04/books/review/such-kindness-andre-dubus.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/04/books/review/such-kindness-andre-dubus.html)

**Graphic**

This article appeared in print on page BR8.

**Load-Date:** July 30, 2023

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[***Consistent Signs of Erosion in Black and Hispanic Support for Biden***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:695B-TWP1-JBG3-60MF-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

September 13, 2023 Wednesday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; National Desk; Pg. 14

**Length:** 1328 words

**Byline:** By Nate Cohn

**Body**

It's a weakness that could manifest itself as low Democratic turnout even if Trump and Republicans don't gain among those groups.

An article explaining how to interpret the data is here.

President Biden is underperforming among nonwhite voters in New York Times/Siena College national polls over the last year, helping to keep the race close in a hypothetical rematch against Donald J. Trump.

On average, Mr. Biden leads Mr. Trump by just 53 percent to 28 percent among registered nonwhite voters in a compilation of Times/Siena polls from 2022 and 2023, which includes over 1,500 nonwhite respondents.

The results represent a marked deterioration in Mr. Biden's support compared with 2020, when he won more than 70 percent of nonwhite voters. If he's unable to revitalize this support by next November, it will continue a decade-long trend of declining Democratic strength among voters considered to be the foundation of the party.

Mr. Biden's tepid support among these voters appears to be mostly responsible for the close race in early national surveys, which show Mr. Biden and Mr. Trump all but tied among registered voters even as Mr. Biden runs as well among white voters as he did four years ago.

With more than a year to go until the election, there's plenty of time for Mr. Biden to re-energize his former supporters. Indeed, the Times/Siena data suggests that Mr. Biden could approach -- though not match -- his 2020 standing simply by reclaiming voters who say they backed him in the last election.

But the possibility that his standing will remain beneath the already depressed levels of the last presidential election should not be discounted. Democrats have lost ground among nonwhite voters in almost every election over the last decade, even as racially charged fights over everything from a border wall to kneeling during the national anthem might have been expected to produce the exact opposite result. Weak support for Mr. Biden could easily manifest itself as low turnout -- as it did in 2022 -- even if many young and less engaged voters ultimately do not vote for Mr. Trump.

Many of Mr. Biden's vulnerabilities -- like his age and inflation -- could exacerbate the trend, as nonwhite voters tend to be younger and less affluent than white voters. Overall, the president's approval rating stands at just 47 percent among nonwhite voters in Times/Siena polling over the last year; his favorability rating is just 54 percent.

Issues like abortion and threats to democracy may also do less to guard against additional losses among Black and Hispanic voters, who tend to be more conservative than white Biden voters. They may also do less to satisfy voters living paycheck to paycheck: Mr. Biden is underperforming most among nonwhite voters making less than $100,000 per year, at least temporarily erasing the century-old tendency for Democrats to fare better among lower-income than higher-income nonwhite voters.

The Times/Siena data suggests the emergence of a fairly clear education gap among nonwhite voters, as Mr. Biden loses ground among less affluent nonwhite voters and those without a degree. Overall, he retains a 61-23 lead among nonwhite college graduates, compared with a mere 49-31 lead among those without a four-year degree.

If the gap persists until the election, it will raise the possibility that the political realignment unleashed by Mr. Trump's brand of conservative populism has spread to erode the political loyalties of ***working-class*** voters, of all races, who were drawn to the Democrats by material interests in an earlier era of politics.

Mr. Biden's weakness among nonwhite voters is broad, spanning virtually every demographic category and racial group, including a 72-11 lead among Black voters and a 47-35 lead among Hispanic registrants. The sample of Asian voters is not large enough to report, though nonwhite voters who aren't Black or Hispanic -- whether Asian, Native American, multiracial or something else -- back Mr. Biden by just 40-39. In all three cases, Mr. Biden's tallies are well beneath his standing in the last election.

The findings are echoed by other high-quality national surveys. These show Mr. Biden faring as poorly among nonwhite voters (or even somewhat worse) as he does in the Times/Siena data. On average, he leads by 74-19 among Black voters and by 50-40 among Hispanic voters across 12 high-quality national surveys so far this year.

The shift is also echoed in how nonwhite Times/Siena respondents say they voted in 2020. Overall, nonwhite respondents who divulged their vote in the last election reported backing Mr. Biden by a margin of 70 percent to 24 percent, a figure neatly in line with postelection studies. Nonetheless, Mr. Biden does not approach those tallies in a hypothetical rematch among the very same group of respondents.

The survey finds evidence that a modest but important 5 percent of nonwhite Biden voters now support Mr. Trump, including 8 percent of Hispanic voters who say they backed Mr. Biden in 2020. Virtually no nonwhite voters who say they supported Mr. Trump -- just 1 percent -- say they will back Mr. Biden this time around. In comparison, white Biden and white Trump supporters from 2020 say they will return to their previous candidate in nearly identical numbers.

Beyond voters who have flipped to Mr. Trump, a large number of disaffected voters who supported Mr. Biden in 2020 now say they're undecided or simply won't vote this time around. As a consequence, his weakness is concentrated among less engaged voters on the periphery of politics, who have not consistently voted in recent elections and who may decide to stay home next November.

Overall, Mr. Biden leads by 81-8 among Black voters who turned out in 2022, but by just 62-14 among those who skipped the midterm elections. Similarly, he leads by 53-33 among Hispanics who voted in the midterms, compared with just a 42-37 lead among those who did not vote.

Young people of color, who make up a disproportionate share of nonvoters, are an important part of Mr. Biden's challenge. He holds a 48-29 lead among nonwhite registered voters under age 45, compared with a 58-28 lead among those over 45. In contrast, there was little difference among nonwhite voters over or under 45 in their share of support for Mr. Biden in 2020 -- a result that's echoed in the self-reported recalled 2020 vote choice of the Times/Siena survey respondents.

The generational divide is most striking among Black voters, who have typically offered all but unanimous support to Democrats. That overwhelming support persists among Black registered voters over 45. They back Mr. Biden, 83-8, but Mr. Biden holds just a 59-14 lead among the 152 registered Black respondents under 45.

The dissatisfaction of younger and lower-turnout voters raises the possibility that Mr. Biden's weakness in the polls may show up primarily as low turnout among Black and Hispanic voters, rather than as a titanic shift toward Mr. Trump. Something similar might have happened in the last midterm election, when Democrats appeared to maintain usual shares of support among Black voters, but the racial turnout gap increased to multi-decade highs.

Indeed, Mr. Biden's lead among nonwhite voters expands to 57-27 among those who voted in 2020 or 2022, compared with 53-28 among all registered nonwhite voters. And his lead among those recent voters could grow further, to 63-29, if undecided and dissenting voters are assigned to the candidate whom they said they backed in the last presidential election.

A 63-29 lead would be much closer to Mr. Biden's standing among nonwhite voters in the last presidential election, as would his 84-11 lead among Black voters and his 55-37 lead among Hispanic voters in that same scenario.

Yet even after allocating the remaining undecided voters, these tallies might still be the worst for a Democratic leader among Black and Hispanic voters since Walter Mondale in 1984.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/05/upshot/biden-trump-black-hispanic-voters.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/05/upshot/biden-trump-black-hispanic-voters.html)

**Graphic**

This article appeared in print on page A14.

**Load-Date:** September 13, 2023

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[***‘You Can’t Hide It’: Georgette Heyer and the Perils of Posthumous Revision***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69HF-83H1-JBG3-60MV-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

October 30, 2023 Monday 17:20 EST

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**Section:** BOOKS

**Length:** 1645 words

**Byline:** Alexandra Alter

**Highlight:** A new edition of the best-selling romance writer’s 1950 novel removes blatant Jewish stereotypes, stirring debate about whether to tinker with older works.

**Body**

A new edition of the best-selling romance writer’s 1950 novel removes blatant Jewish stereotypes, stirring debate about whether to tinker with older works.

Georgette Heyer, one of the most popular and influential romance authors of all time, was not a romantic when it came to her work. “I ought to be shot for writing such nonsense,” she once declared in a letter to her publisher.

Among her ardent fans, though, she remains revered as the Queen of Regency Romance, a subgenre she essentially created and popularized. Her intricately researched historical narratives are still widely read nearly 50 years [*after her death*](https://www.nytimes.com/1974/07/06/archives/georgette-heyer-is-dead-at-71-wrote-regency-england-novels-cheerful.html); Julia Quinn, whose Regency romance series “Bridgerton” spawned the hit Netflix series, called her “the original.”

To date, Heyer’s books have sold around 20 million copies. But some readers have questioned her enduring popularity in light of offensive ethnic and antisemitic stereotypes that occasionally appeared in her work.

Most troubling to readers is her 1950 Regency romance “The Grand Sophy.” In a pivotal scene, the novel’s heroine confronts a greedy, villainous moneylender named Goldhanger, who is described as a “swarthy individual, with long, greasy curls, a semitic nose, and an ingratiating leer.”

“It’s not a stray comment, it’s a whole antisemitic scene,” said the romance novelist Cat Sebastian, who has read all of Heyer’s romances. “If I recommend her books, it’s with a lot of caveats.”

When Heyer’s American publisher, Sourcebooks, decided to release new editions of her romances this year, they had to strike a precarious balance. Leaving the original scene could repel some readers. But changing it risked provoking a backlash from fans and scholars who see posthumous revisions as a form of literary reputation laundering, or censorship.

After a lengthy back and forth with the Heyer estate, Sourcebooks made small but significant changes to “The Grand Sophy.” In the new version, the moneylender’s name has been changed to Grimpstone. References to his Jewish identity and appearance have been deleted, along with other negative generalizations about Jews.

Acknowledgment of the changes appears on the copyright page, which says “this edition has been edited from the original with permission of the Georgette Heyer Estate.”

The revisions could ensure that “The Grand Sophy” remains a romance staple for future generations. But they are also likely to stir up an ongoing debate about whether, and how, publishers and estates should handle insensitive language in older works.

When it was revealed earlier this year that novels by Roald Dahl and Agatha Christie [*had been edited to*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/04/03/books/classic-novels-revisions-agatha-christie-roald-dahl.html) remove offensive phrases, many were outraged by what they saw as an attempt to sanitize iconic literary works.

The Heyer estate’s approach bothered Mary Bly, a romance novelist and literary scholar who in 2021 was brought on by Sourcebooks to write introductions for the new editions of the novels. To Bly, changing “The Grand Sophy” without acknowledging the flaws in the original felt like an attempt to obscure Heyer’s views. After the estate declined to include Bly’s explanation of the changes in an afterword, she quit the project.

“They’re publishing a bowdlerized text, and I can’t have any part in that,” Bly said. “You can’t hide it.”

Born in Wimbledon in 1902 into a middle-class family, Heyer led a sheltered life and took up writing early, finishing her first novel, “The Black Moth,” when she was still a teenager. She went on to write more than 50 books, including mysteries, historical novels and romances.

Even at the height of her success, Heyer was uncomfortable with fame. She shunned interview requests and was often self-deprecating about her work. “It’s unquestionably good escapist literature and I think I should rather like it if I were sitting in an air-raid shelter, or recovering from flu,” she wrote to her publisher.

Many of Heyer’s most popular novels took place during the British Regency era, from the late 1700s to around 1830, and featured smart, self-possessed heroines who were architects of their own fates. Fans have included Queen Elizabeth II; the actor Stephen Fry; and the writers Nora Roberts, A.S. Byatt and Philippa Gregory.

“There is not a Regency author today who is not influenced by Georgette Heyer,” said Deb Werksman, the executive editor of Sourcebooks Casablanca.

The press began acquiring U.S. rights to Heyer’s books from her estate in 2007, and has sold two million copies of her work, but they saw the potential for an even bigger audience. A few years ago, “Bridgerton” created a massive appetite for Regency romance, and it seemed like the perfect moment for a Heyer renaissance. Editors at Sourcebooks decided to print new editions with fresh covers, in hopes of expanding Heyer’s fan base.

They also worried some of Heyer’s language might put off new readers. Within her lighthearted romantic romps, Heyer occasionally trafficked in stereotypes that were common in her era, with negative portrayals of foreigners, ***working-class*** people and Jewish people. Sourcebooks suggested to the estate that they tweak potentially offensive or sensitive phrases, such as deleting a reference to the race of a young Black servant in “These Old Shades.”

“We don’t want to throw off a 25-year-old who’s just discovering Heyer,” said Todd Stocke, senior vice president and editorial director of Sourcebooks.

The publisher asked Bly to write introductions explaining Heyer’s historical and literary relevance. A Shakespeare scholar and chair of the English department at Fordham University, Bly publishes historical romances under the pen name Eloisa James, and is a die-hard Heyer fan.

Bly suggested small tweaks to some of the texts, like removing the word “gypsy” from “Frederica.”

But Bly felt “The Grand Sophy,” one of her favorite books growing up in Minnesota, would need more radical revisions.

The novel follows an irrepressible young woman named Sophy who visits her cousins in London and proceeds to wreak havoc on their lives — matchmaking, breaking up engagements, giving the children a pet monkey and taking their horses on a reckless joyride.

The buoyant tone turns ominous when Sophy comes to the rescue of one of her cousins, a gambler who has fallen into debt. Setting out to confront Goldhanger, the moneylender, she finds him in a filthy hovel of an office. He is described as stooped, with hooded eyes, and driven by “the instinct of his race.” Elsewhere in the novel, he is referred to as a “devil” and a “bloodsucker.”

To evaluate the text more thoroughly, Sourcebooks brought on Hilary Doda, an assistant professor at Dalhousie University, as a Jewish sensitivity reader. In her report, she noted that some of Heyer’s language echoed Nazi-era propaganda that had been exported abroad. Sourcebooks proposed changing the moneylender’s name to something less obviously Jewish and deleting or revising the most offensive phrases.

Heyer’s estate — which found no evidence that Heyer engaged with Nazi propaganda — was leery of dramatically altering her work. This spring, the estate commissioned a response to the sensitivity report from Jennifer Kloester, the author of her authorized biography. Kloester agreed the name change was warranted, and proposed Grimpstone, a village in England, since Heyer often used village names for her characters.

“I don’t have a problem with changing the name, if that’s the major source of contention and would stop people from reading Heyer,” Kloester said in an interview. “It helps to keep Heyer in print for modern readers who would take offense.”

In Bly’s proposed afterword, she explained the rationale for the changes. “Heyer wrote ‘The Grand Sophy’ in a time when such stereotyped, damaging descriptions were not fully recognized as offensive,” Bly wrote. “Unfortunately, the scene perpetuates structural antisemitism, damaging and undervaluing people of the Jewish faith.”

The estate agreed to many of the suggested edits, but not the afterword. Bly felt that was intellectually dishonest, and this summer, she withdrew from the project and asked Sourcebooks to remove her introductions.

Peter Buckman, a literary agent representing Heyer’s estate, declined to comment. A message on the estate’s [*website*](https://www.officialgeorgetteheyer.com/contact/) notes that the U.S. editions have been “lightly edited” and that in Britain Heyer’s publisher will “leave the books as the author wrote them” but does “not endorse the language or depictions in some of these books.”

For some readers of her work, the Jewish stereotypes in “The Grand Sophy” are inexcusable, particularly since it was published not long after World War II.

Rose Lerner, a historical romance novelist who is Jewish, has read “The Grand Sophy” many times and feels conflicted about it. While she finds the story delightful, she is also disgusted by its bigoted language, she said.

Still, she’s uncomfortable with the idea of changing Heyer’s words. “I would rather read the original and decide for myself,” she said. “It feels like whitewashing to me.”

Sourcebooks is releasing the new version in the U.S. this fall. But already, it’s become polarizing. In a Goodreads discussion [*group for Heyer fans*](https://www.goodreads.com/topic/show/22476295-2023-editions-on-the-way-closed?comment=262135363#comment_262135363), a reader who had seen an advance copy commented on the changes made to the moneylender scene in “The Grand Sophy,” provoking a heated discussion.

Some said it would make the book better. Others argued it was like removing Shylock from Shakespeare, and that sophisticated readers could put the scene in historical context. Another faction claimed it felt like an effort to cover up Heyer’s views.

“Tweaking the scene without comment means exculpating Mrs. Heyer,” Sabine Payr, a retired robotics researcher in Austria, wrote in the discussion. “I love GH’s novels as everyone else in this group does, but I do not want to be left in the dark about the mind-set of the author.”

PHOTO: Georgette Heyer in 1949. This article appeared in print on page BR27.

**Load-Date:** November 22, 2023

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[***Poll Shows Tight Race for Control of Congress as Class Divide Widens***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65X9-9M71-JBG3-62XN-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

July 13, 2022 Wednesday 16:48 EST

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**Section:** UPSHOT

**Length:** 1578 words

**Byline:** Nate Cohn

**Highlight:** Nonwhite and ***working-class*** Democrats worry more about the economy, while white college graduates focus more on issues like abortion rights and guns.

**Body**

Nonwhite and ***working-class*** Democrats worry more about the economy, while white college graduates focus more on issues like abortion rights and guns.

With President Biden’s approval rating mired in the 30s and with nearly 80 percent of voters saying the country is heading in [*the wrong direction*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/07/11/us/politics/biden-approval-polling-2024.html), all the ingredients seem to be in place for a Republican sweep in the November midterm elections.

But Democrats and Republicans begin the campaign in a surprisingly close race for control of Congress, according to the first New York Times/Siena College survey of the cycle.

Overall among registered voters, 41 percent said they preferred Democrats to control Congress compared with 40 percent who preferred Republican control.

Among likely voters, Republicans led by one percentage point, 44 percent to 43 percent, reflecting the tendency for the party out of power to enjoy a turnout advantage in midterms.

The results suggest that the wave of mass shootings and the recent Supreme Court decision to overturn Roe v. Wade have at least temporarily insulated the Democrats from an otherwise hostile national political environment while energizing the party’s predominantly liberal activist base.

But the confluence of economic problems and resurgent cultural issues has helped turn the emerging class divide in the Democratic coalition into a chasm, as Republicans appear to be making new inroads among nonwhite and ***working-class*** voters — perhaps especially Hispanic voters — who remain more concerned about the economy and inflation than abortion rights and guns.

For the first time in a Times/Siena national survey, Democrats had a larger share of support among white college graduates than among nonwhite voters — a striking indication of the shifting balance of political energy in the Democratic coalition. As recently as the 2016 congressional elections, Democrats won more than 70 percent of nonwhite voters while losing among white college graduates.

With four months to go until the election, it is far too soon to say whether the campaign will remain focused on issues like abortion and gun control long enough for Democrats to avoid a long-expected midterm rout. If it does, a close national vote would probably translate to a close race for control of Congress, as neither party enjoys a clear structural advantage in the race. Partisan gerrymandering has slightly tilted the map toward Republicans in the House, but Democrats enjoy the advantages of incumbency and superior fund-raising in key districts.

Recent unfavorable news for Democrats, in the form of [*Supreme Court rulings*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2022/06/21/us/major-supreme-court-cases-2022.html), and some tragic news nationally might ordinarily mean trouble for the party in power, but that’s not what the results suggest.

The survey began 11 days after the Supreme Court’s decision to overturn Roe v. Wade, when cellphones were still buzzing with news alerts about the mass shooting in Highland Park, Ill.

In an open-ended question, those who volunteered that issues related to guns, abortion or the Supreme Court were the most important problem facing the country represented about one in six registered voters combined. Those voters preferred Democratic control of Congress, 68 percent to 8 percent.

Some of the hot-button social issues thought to work to the advantage of Republicans at the beginning of the cycle, like critical race theory, have faded from the spotlight. Only 4 percent of voters combined said education, crime or immigration was the most important issue facing the country.

The Times/Siena survey is not the first to suggest that the national political environment has improved for Democrats since the Supreme Court overturned Roe. On average, Democrats have gained about three points on the generic congressional ballot [*compared*](https://fivethirtyeight.com/features/maybe-dobbs-did-change-the-race-well-need-more-time-to-know-for-sure/) with surveys taken beforehand.

In the wake of the court’s ruling, the poll finds greater public support for legal abortion than previous Times/Siena surveys. Sixty-five percent of registered voters said abortion should be mostly or always legal, up from 60 percent of registered voters in September 2020.

The proportion of voters who opposed the court’s decision — 61 percent — was similar to the share who said they supported Roe v. Wade two years ago.

Democrats are maintaining the loyalty of a crucial sliver of predominantly liberal and highly educated voters who disapprove of Mr. Biden’s performance but care more about debates over guns, democracy and the shrinking of abortion rights than the state of the economy.

Voters who said issues related to abortion, guns or threats to democracy were the biggest problem facing the country backed Democrats by a wide margin, 66 percent to 14 percent.

For some progressive voters, recent conservative policy victories make it hard to stay on the sidelines.

Lucy Ackerman, a 23-year-old graphic designer in Durham, N.C., said Mr. Biden had repeatedly failed to live up to election promises. She recently registered with the Democratic Socialists of America. Nonetheless, she has committed herself to getting as many Democrats elected this fall as possible.

She says the Supreme Court’s decision to overturn Roe made politics personal: She and her wife married after the decision leaked, out of fear that the court might roll back same-sex marriage rights next.

“The recent events have given me this push to do more,” she said. “I’ve gotten more involved in political efforts locally. I’ve helped sign friends up to vote.”

The liberal backlash against conservative advances in the court appears to have helped Democrats most among white college graduates, who are relatively liberal and often insulated by their affluence from economic woes. Just 17 percent of white college-educated Biden voters said an economic issue was the most important one facing the country, less than for any other racial or educational group.

Over all, white college graduates preferred Democratic control of Congress, 57-36. Women propelled Democratic strength among the group, with white college-educated women backing Democrats, 64-30. Democrats barely led among white college-educated men, 46-45.

Although the survey does not show an unusually large gender gap, the poll seems to offer some evidence that the court’s abortion ruling may do more to help Democrats among women. Nine percent of women said abortion rights was the most important issue, compared with 1 percent of men.

The fight for congressional control is very different among the often less affluent, nonwhite and moderate voters who say the economy or inflation is the biggest problem facing the country. They preferred Republican control of Congress, 62 percent to 25 percent, even though more than half of the voters who said the economy was the biggest problem also said abortion should be mostly legal.

Just 74 percent of the voters who backed Mr. Biden in the 2020 election, but who said the economy or inflation was the most important problem, said they preferred Democratic control of Congress. In contrast, Democrats were the choice of 87 percent of Biden voters who said abortion or guns was the most important issue.

The economy may be helping Republicans most among Hispanic voters, who preferred Democrats to control Congress, 41-38. Although the sample size is small, the finding is consistent with the longer-term deterioration in Democratic support among the group. Hispanics voted for Democrats by almost a 50-point margin in the 2018 midterms, according to [*data*](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1GIovkPfwUJvFZeFPdOi0fK8Rr7aOVFCYBzrlMG4Vjro/edit#gid=0) from Pew Research, then President Donald J. Trump made surprising gains with them in 2020.

No racial or ethnic group was likelier than Hispanic voters to cite the economy or inflation as the most important issue facing the country, with 42 percent citing an economic problem compared with 35 percent of non-Hispanic voters.

Republicans also appear poised to expand their already lopsided advantage among white voters without a college degree. They back Republicans by more than a two-to-one margin, 54-23. Even so, nearly a quarter remain undecided compared with just 7 percent of white college graduates.

As less engaged ***working-class*** voters tune in, Republicans may have opportunities for additional gains. Historically, the party out of power excels in midterm elections, in no small part by capitalizing on dissatisfaction with the president’s party.

Only 23 percent of undecided voters approved of Mr. Biden’s job performance.

Silvana Read, a certified nursing assistant who lives outside Tampa, Fla., is one of the Hispanic voters whom Republicans will try to sway to capitalize on widespread dissatisfaction with Mr. Biden.

An immigrant from Ecuador, she despised Mr. Trump’s comments about women and foreigners, but voted for him because her husband convinced her it would help them financially. Now she and her husband, 56 and 60, blame Mr. Biden for their falling 401(k)s.

“My husband, he sees the news on the TV, he says, ‘I don’t think I can retire until 75,’” she said. “We can’t afford to finish paying the mortgage.”

Still, her allegiance to the Republican Party does not extend far beyond Mr. Trump. She offered no preference in the fight for control of Congress.

She does not plan to vote in the midterms.

The Times/Siena survey of 849 registered voters nationwide was conducted by telephone using live operators from July 5-7. The margin of sampling error is plus or minus four percentage points. Crosstabs and methodology are available [*here*](https://int.nyt.com/data/documenttools/us0722-crosstabs-all/6c241a3f5e5578a2/full.pdf).

Francesca Paris contributed reporting.

Francesca Paris contributed reporting.

PHOTO: (PHOTOGRAPH BY FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** July 17, 2023

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[***Some Parents Say No to a Bigger Child Credit***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:63MB-1461-JBG3-62YG-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

September 16, 2021 Thursday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; Editorial Desk; Pg. 23; GUEST ESSAY

**Length:** 1330 words

**Byline:** By Patrick T. Brown

**Body**

By making an expanded child tax credit available for one year to all but the wealthiest households, the Biden administration is aiming both to strike a major blow against child poverty and to create a political constituency to guarantee the benefit's longevity.

Polling, however, finds the child benefits have lagged in popularity. A new YouGov/American Compass poll found that only 28 percent of voters said they preferred the expanded child tax credit to be made permanent and go to ''all families, regardless of whether they work to earn money.'' This could be because of the credit's slow rollout and the submerged nature of carrying out social policy through the tax code. But it could have more to do with the disconnect between policymakers in D.C. and ***working-class*** parents, particularly when it comes to family policy.

The biggest divide may be on the importance of work. For a new report, the Institute for Family Studies (a conservative think tank) and partner organizations hosted focus groups of white parents in southeastern Ohio, Black parents around Atlanta and Hispanic parents in the San Antonio area. We heard parents talk about work as a way of paying into the system, the price of admission for being eligible for government benefits like the expanded child tax credit. ''Some people will be responsible with it,'' said a Hispanic dad in Texas. ''The other people will just live off of it.''

My ideal form of child benefit would look like the one proposed by Senator Mitt Romney this year, which would streamline the tangle of tax code provisions for families into one monthly benefit. But it's clear from talking to ***working-class*** parents that they want something more from family policy than just a check. They want to feel that their benefits were earned. If politicians want expanded child benefits to stick, they need to listen to the families that will benefit most.

For the focus groups, we recruited participants mostly without college degrees, some married, some single or cohabiting, ranging in age from their 20s to their early 50s. We talked to parents putting in the hours without expecting much in the way of a career progression, in jobs like retail clerk, HVAC installer, stay-at-home mom and part-time entrepreneur, and social worker. Our goal was to see if the proposals and framing popular in policy circles resonated with parents busy with putting bread on the table.

Our findings pour cold water on some of the left's favored policy solutions but don't fit comfortably with the political vision of most Republican politicians, either. ***Working-class*** parents don't want to dramatically increase or shrink the size of government but want to improve how it works on their behalf -- to make work pay, expand the options available to them and help them afford the ever-increasing cost of living.

The government has a responsibility for boosting families with a worker present, most parents said, even while admitting the frustration that long, unpredictable hours can inflict on a family. Unprompted, parents in all three groups volunteered feeling damned if they do, damned if they don't, with take-home pay seemingly insufficient to keep up with the bills yet too high to qualify for safety-net benefits.

One Georgia working mother remembered her frustration with finding out her income was slightly too high to qualify for Head Start. Unable to afford any other child care for her then-preschool-age son, she said, ''I had to lie and say I wasn't working.'' That incident colors her view of policy proposals now. Sometimes, she said, ''it seems like the people who are not working seem like they're better off, because they get all the assistance.''

Of course, those receiving government assistance would likely tell a different story about their challenges. Before the pandemic, nondisabled households with children in the bottom tenth of the income scale received an average of roughly $15,000 from safety net and social insurance programs -- unlikely to be truly better off than those with steady employment.

The parents we talked to felt a tension between the obvious benefits a monthly benefit could bring but still wanting some kind of work requirement. Work made a family deserving of government support; without it, family benefits were seen as welfare. A Hispanic mom in her late 30s ticked off her monthly expenses -- food, rent, car -- and admitted that an extra $300 to $400 per month would be ''really beneficial.'' But, she added, ''it could also coddle people that don't want to work and are playing the system.''

Not all ***working-class*** parents were against the idea of a child allowance. One Atlanta mom in her 30s noted that a dichotomy of working or not working does not cover other situations, such as being unable to work because of family obligations or disability. ''Regardless of whether you work or not, you should be able to get that help, that extra supplemental income for your kids,'' she said. Other participants pointed out that for some moms in low-wage jobs, child care expenses can eat up what they earn.

There is good reason for policymakers to prefer the administrative simplicity and egalitarianism of universal benefits. One Texas mom noted a strict work requirement would leave out parents who were most in need: ''Some people are working and doing their best, but they're working at, like, McDonald's, you know? They're still low-income.'' But among most of the ***working-class*** parents we talked to, fairness was seen not in uniformity but in more actuarial terms: If you want to receive a benefit, you have to pay into it.

We also heard parents wish government benefits would be flexible instead of one size fits all, especially when it comes to the trade-off between work and family life. Even the more self-described progressive parents tended to not want government-run child care programs, preferring vouchers or tax credits. Our participants also recognized trade-offs; most were in favor of raising the minimum wage but were quick to note the negative effects too large an increase could have on the economy.

Some parents expressed frustration with tax benefits or safety-net programs that can provide more assistance to cohabiting couples than to married ones. One participant in Georgia shared that she and her partner had chosen not to marry because marriage penalties in the tax code and the child support system would leave their household financially worse off. Another participant spoke for the group: ''It's sad that she has to choose between marrying a man she loves or losing the benefits that she has.''

***Working-class*** parents' feelings on work and parenthood don't comfortably fit a partisan script, frustrating the attempts of political opportunists hoping to harness their energy to advance their favored policies. Progressive agendas tend to reflect the cares of college-educated, dual-career couples in big cities. (The Biden administration's proposed American Families Plan, for example, polls much stronger among highly educated voters than those without a college degree.) Meanwhile, too many politicians on the right offer cultural red meat in lieu of a meaningful pro-family economic agenda.

These blind spots are real and endemic. They are what could undermine the political future of an expanded child tax credit. But they also point the way forward for a political movement that would devote time to open-ended discussions with parents from all walks of life and craft an agenda that responds accordingly.

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[*https://www.nytimes.com/2021/09/14/opinion/child-tax-credit-biden.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/09/14/opinion/child-tax-credit-biden.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: (PHOTOGRAPH BY Matt Chase FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

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[***A Smart Way to Turn Gambling Into a Virtue; Peter Coy***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68TD-6J51-DXY4-X40S-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

July 28, 2023 Friday 15:00 EST

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 964 words

**Byline:** Peter Coy

**Highlight:** Prize-linked savings accounts channel people’s love of lotteries toward financially healthy ends.

**Body**

Gambling is foolish, we’re told, because the house always wins. Better to get rich slowly by putting a little away every day. But boy, do we love to take our chances. The American Gaming Association [*said*](https://www.americangaming.org/resources/american-attitudes-on-casino-gaming-2022/) last year that according to its survey, 42 percent of U.S. adults had gambled in the previous year. Sports betting is exploding. And sales of state lotteries hit $108 billion last year, up 85 percent from 2009, [*according to*](https://www.statista.com/statistics/215265/sales-of-us-state-and-provincial-lotteries/) Statista.

Benjamin Franklin, the apostle of thrift, would be horrified.

Luckily, though, gambling doesn’t have to be the enemy of saving. As long ago as the 17th century, people realized that people could be induced to save by giving them a chance, however small, of winning a big prize. Here is an [*excerpt*](https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1689365) from a 2010 paper on the topic:

Prize-linked savings programs have existed since at least the 1694 “Million Adventure” in the United Kingdom (Murphy 2005). Initially proposed to cope with debt from the Nine Years’ War (1689-97), the Million Adventure offered 100,000 tickets at £10 each. A small number, i.e., 2,500 of the tickets (2.5 percent), would win prizes from £10 per year to £1,000 per year for 16 years. The Million Adventure was also a saving program, in that it paid ticket holders a £1 per year until 1710, or a 6.15 percent annual return.

In 1956, the British revived the Million Adventure in the form of [*Premium Bonds*](https://nsandi-corporate.com/about-nsi/our-heritage-timeline#peacetime_period_pb), which pay out prizes to randomly selected investors rather than paying ordinary interest. Harold Wilson, then the shadow chancellor of the Exchequer, called Premium Bonds a “squalid raffle,” but the British people rushed to buy them. Today about one in three Britons owns Premium Bonds. Denmark, Ireland, New Zealand and Sweden offer similar investments.

It has taken longer for prize-linked savings to catch on in the United States, but it’s happening. Save to Win, a prize-linked savings program that’s offered by credit unions, is open to residents of [*28 states*](https://www.itcu.org/bank/savings/save-to-win), according to InTouch Credit Union of Plano, Texas. Some commercial banks also offer prize-linked accounts, as do several direct-to-consumer companies, including [*Yotta Technologies*](https://www.withyotta.com/about-us), [*PrizePool*](https://getprizepool.com/), Truist’s [*Long Game*](https://ir.truist.com/2022-05-03-Truist-acquires-mobile-savings-gamification-pioneer-Long-Game) and [*Flourish Savings*](https://flourishsavings.com/).

I’m no fan of gambling, whether run by the government or otherwise. While people of all income levels gamble, the poor and ***working class*** lose a bigger share of their incomes. Gambling tends to entice the people who can least afford it. Spending on lottery tickets “is strongly associated with measures of innumeracy, poor statistical reasoning and other proxies for behavioral bias,” as one [*recent study*](https://www.nber.org/papers/w28975) put it.

However, I’m a lot more open to gambling if it can get people to save more. You would want to see that prize-linked savings accounts pull in money that otherwise would have been spent on conventional gambling, and that they complement rather than substitute for traditional forms of saving. That was precisely the finding of a study [*published*](https://pubsonline.informs.org/doi/10.1287/mnsc.2021.4047) in the journal Management Science in 2021: Prize-linked saving “substitutes for lottery gambling but is a complement to standard savings,” the authors found.

I interviewed Adam Moelis, a co-founder and the chief executive of Yotta, a fintech company. He is a son of Ken Moelis, a wealthy investment banker. Yotta is set up as a sweepstakes rather than a lottery for legal reasons (so it’s possible to enter without having an account).

I asked Adam Moelis if prize-linked savings accounts are less than optimal for people who don’t need the prospect of prizes to get them to save. He cheerfully agreed.

“If you’re purely rational and your goal is to maximize your net worth, put it in the highest-yielding account you can find,” he said. But, he said, “The reality is, we are who we are and we have to use our biases to help us do the right thing in the long term. We’re all short-term-wired.”

Yotta used to pay an interest rate of 0.2 percent, devoting the rest of the money that would have been paid in interest to the prize pool. But Moelis said he found that people fixated on the low rate and complained about it. So in December, Yotta eliminated interest altogether and raised the prize money. “We got rid of it because we’re all about the prizes, and we wanted to lean into the differentiator,” Moelis said. “If you want a fixed rate, go elsewhere.”

Yotta also used to offer a $10 million top prize. Now the top prize (which has never been won) is $1 million. Moelis is figuring that people will be almost as attracted by the smaller top prize, and now he’s able to hand out more small prizes.

It’s all about the psychology. “I like to say that people need to mix in chocolate chip cookies with their broccoli,” Moelis said. I told him that combination sounded awful and suggested Hollandaise sauce instead of cookies. He said he liked that idea.

The Readers Write

Concerning your [*newsletter*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/07/26/opinion/inflation-greedflation-prices-profits.html) on inflation: I learned today that the cost, at both Chewy.com and Target.com, of the 30-pound bag of dog food my dog has been eating for years went up by $30 since I last ordered a few months ago. Dismaying doesn’t begin to describe it.

Barbara Kelly

Broomfield, Colo.

I went to the McDonald’s drive-through in Lyndonville, Vt., the other day and ordered an old standby: a McDouble, a small order of fries and a small diet Coke. The bill came to $6.49! I was in shock.

Joseph E. Tether III

West Burke, Vt.

You [*wrote*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/07/24/opinion/recession-economy-yield-curve.html) that you still expect a recession. Like a stopped clock, recession pessimists are bound to be right sooner or later.

Dick Nichols

Peachtree City, Ga.

Quote of the Day

“For you say, ‘I am rich and affluent and have no need of anything,’ and yet do not realize that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind and naked.”

— Book of Revelation, [*3:17*](https://bible.usccb.org/bible/revelation/3#:~:text=17*%20i%20For%20you%20say,poor%2C%20blind%2C%20and%20naked.)

Source images by CSA Images/Getty Images

PHOTO: (PHOTOGRAPH BY Illustration by Sam Whitney/The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** July 28, 2023

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[***L.A. Schools Strike, and Parents Say They Get It***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67V7-X1R1-DXY4-X0NV-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

March 23, 2023 Thursday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; National Desk; Pg. 1

**Length:** 1425 words

**Byline:** By Kurtis Lee and Jill Cowan

**Body**

Both parents and the striking school district employees are on the same side of the economic divide in one of the nation's most expensive cities.

LOS ANGELES -- Since Tuesday, Diana Cruz has juggled her stay-at-home job as an executive assistant with the care of her children after the Los Angeles school strike forced their classes to be canceled for three days.

Ms. Cruz earns $36,000 a year and is raising her two daughters and teenage son in a two-bedroom apartment in Los Angeles, where she splits the $1,700 rent with her mother.

A few miles away, Yolanda Mims Reed makes about $24 an hour as a part-time special education assistant at Hamilton High School. She supplements her income by caring for an older woman and by doing hair.

Parents like Ms. Cruz may be flustered by the strike, but few are angry with the strikers like Ms. Reed.

The parents see their lives mirrored in the struggles of the bus drivers, cafeteria workers and classroom aides walking the picket lines -- ***working-class*** residents who take on multiple jobs to survive in Southern California.

''If you're not making massive six-figure salaries, then, yeah, it's hard,'' Ms. Cruz, 33, said. ''How can you not support their cause?''

The strike has sharply illustrated the economic divide in modern Los Angeles, where low-wage workers can barely scrap together rent while affluent professionals blocks away are willing to pay $13 for a coconut smoothie. In this case, the school district's ***working-class*** parents and school workers are on the same side of the divide.

The Los Angeles Unified School District, the nation's second-largest, relies on tens of thousands of staff members who are struggling to keep up with rising costs in a state that lacks enough housing. Most of the families they serve are in the same boat, with 89 percent of the district's households qualifying as economically disadvantaged, according to district data.

Housing is the biggest expense for people living in the Los Angeles area, according to the latest Bureau of Labor Statistics data. Residents devote 38 percent of their yearly spending to housing, compared with the national average of roughly 34 percent, according to the agency.

''The high cost of living in Los Angeles permeates every aspect of life and often forces low-income residents into impossible choices between basic needs like housing, safety, health care and food,'' said Kyla Thomas, a sociologist at the University of Southern California Dornsife Center for Economic and Social Research. ''Many in L.A. live on the brink of crisis.''

LABarometer, a survey that the Dornsife Center conducts to track social conditions and attitudes in the region, found that about 60 percent of local tenants were ''rent-burdened,'' meaning that they spend more than 30 percent of their household income on housing.

Griselda Perez, 51, said that her family stretched to afford their $2,000 rent for a two-bedroom apartment in the Boyle Heights neighborhood. Her eldest son, 20, shares a room with his two younger brothers, 11 and 9, who attend district schools. Every day, she said, the family feels the squeeze of gentrification, as more people with higher incomes move east from downtown.

Ms. Perez said she tried to explain the strike to her sons by likening their situation -- they cannot afford birthday parties and trips to Disneyland -- to the challenges faced by the people who work at their schools.

''When I see the cafeteria workers, when I see the lady at the front door, when I see the lady working at the parent center, we talk mom to mom,'' she said. ''The struggles that they have are the same struggles that we have.''

The walkout continued on Wednesday with picket lines at schools and campus facilities, including at district headquarters in downtown Los Angeles. School support employees have been joined by the district's 35,000 teachers in the work stoppage. The strike is expected to end on Thursday.

The Local 99 branch of the Service Employees International Union, which represents 30,000 support workers in Los Angeles Unified, said that half of its members who responded to a 2022 internal survey said they worked a second job.

The union also said that its members earned an average of $25,000 a year -- a figure that Los Angeles Unified officials said included both part- and full-time employees. The full-time salary average was unclear.

The union noted that 64 percent of its members were Latino and 20 percent were Black. The families they serve are likewise overwhelmingly Latino, some 74 percent, an outgrowth of broad migration and population trends.

Austin Beutner, who served as the district's superintendent during the coronavirus pandemic, said that a vast majority of parents understood the plight of the Local 99 members because they lived in the same neighborhoods. He said the half-dozen school principals he spoke to on Tuesday said they were seeing overwhelming support from parents for the staff members.

''The intersection of school staff and the community is tight and close,'' Mr. Beutner said. ''They are the community. So many of them have family members in schools or neighbors in schools.''

Local 99 has leaned on that support and tried to frame its contract battle as a fight for low-wage workers across Los Angeles. And parental backing -- for now -- could help the union at the negotiating table.

Workers are seeking a 30 percent overall raise, as well as an additional $2-an-hour increase for the lowest-paid employees. The union's members have been working without a contract since 2020.

Alberto M. Carvalho, the current district superintendent, acknowledged ''historic inequities'' that workers had faced, in a statement on Tuesday.

''I understand our employees' frustration that has been brewing, not just for a couple years but probably for decades,'' Mr. Carvalho said.

School districts cannot raise revenues as quickly as private-sector businesses might through price increases during an inflationary period. The Los Angeles district relies on funds that are determined at the state level, and, after years of growth, California is projected to face a deficit in the coming fiscal year. The school district also continues to lose students each year, which means it receives less money because funding is based on enrollment.

The district has countered with a 23 percent wage increase, spread across several years, and a 3 percent onetime bonus. Mr. Carvalho said that the latest proposal sought to address the union's needs ''while also remaining fiscally responsible and keeping the district in a financially stable position.''

At a time when public support for organized labor is high, strikes by teachers and education workers have become increasingly common. Faced with rapid inflation and the prospect of higher pay in the private sector, public employees have been feeling a need for drastic change.

''Everybody else gets raises. What about us?'' Jovita Padilla, a 40-year-old bus driver, said on Tuesday.

In a high-poverty district like Los Angeles Unified, school closures not only cut off class instruction but also crucial school meals. The district offers free breakfast and lunch for all of them, regardless of income, and many children rely on those meals during the school week. With negotiations at a standstill, the district set up supervision sites where working parents could drop off children, as well as locations where families could pick up three days' worth of breakfasts and lunches.

Gabriela Cruz, a district parent who is not related to Diana Cruz, dropped by one of the distribution sites this week and picked up a box of food, which she said was a big help. ''My kids need to eat everyday, and the free food is good for us because we spend a lot on groceries,'' she said.

Ms. Cruz, 44, said working as a receptionist at a real estate office on the first day of the strike was not easy. She had to take her young daughter and son to work.

''The truth is that it was difficult to work,'' she said.

Her family of five depends on her part-time job that pays her $15 an hour. She works 30 hours a week. Her husband works full time in a restaurant and is paid the minimum wage.

''Everything is so expensive,'' she said.

Reporting was contributed by Shawn Hubler from Sacramento, and Corina Knoll and Ana Facio-Krajcer from Los Angeles. Susan C. Beachy contributed research.Reporting was contributed by Shawn Hubler from Sacramento, and Corina Knoll and Ana Facio-Krajcer from Los Angeles. Susan C. Beachy contributed research.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/22/us/la-schools-strike.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/22/us/la-schools-strike.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Service union members and teachers picketed at Panorama High School in Los Angeles on Day 2 of a planned three-day strike. (PHOTOGRAPH BY RICHARD VOGEL/ASSOCIATED PRESS) (A1)

Outside a Los Angeles school district office on Wednesday. School support employees are seeking a 30 percent overall raise, as well as an additional $2-an-hour increase for the lowest-paid workers. (PHOTOGRAPH BY MARIO TAMA/GETTY IMAGES) (A19) This article appeared in print on page A1, A19.

**Load-Date:** March 23, 2023

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[***The ‘Diploma Divide’ Is the New Fault Line in American Politics; Guest Essay***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:681K-HVD1-DXY4-X0GC-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

April 17, 2023 Monday 16:19 EST

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 1662 words

**Byline:** Doug Sosnik

**Highlight:** Why educational attainment is increasingly the best predictor of how Americans will vote and for whom.

**Body**

The legal imbroglios of Donald Trump have lately dominated conversation about the 2024 election. As primary season grinds on, campaign activity will wax and wane, and issues of the moment — like the first Trump indictment and potentially others to come — will blaze into focus and then disappear.

Yet certain fundamentals will shape the races as candidates strategize about how to win the White House. To do this, they will have to account for at least one major political realignment: educational attainment is the new fault line in American politics.

Educational attainment has not replaced race in that respect, but it is increasingly the best predictor of how Americans will vote, and for whom. It has shaped the political landscape and where the 2024 presidential election almost certainly will be decided. To understand American politics, candidates and voters alike will need to understand this new fundamental.

Americans have always viewed education as a key to opportunity, but few predicted the critical role it has come to play in our politics. What makes the “diploma divide,” as it is often called, so fundamental to our politics is how it has been sorting Americans into the Democratic and Republican Parties by educational attainment. College-educated voters are now more likely to identify as Democrats, while those without college degrees — especially white Americans, but increasingly others as well — are now more likely to support Republicans.

It’s both economics and culture

The impact of education on voting has an economic as well as a cultural component. The confluence of rising globalization, technological developments and the offshoring of many ***working-class*** jobs led to a sorting of economic fortunes, a widening gap in the average real wealth between households led by college graduates compared with the rest of the population, whose levels are near all-time lows.

According to an analysis by the [*Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis*](https://www.stlouisfed.org/institute-for-economic-equity/the-real-state-of-family-wealth/educational-household-wealth-trends-and-wealth-inequality), since 1989, families headed by college graduates have increased their wealth by 83 percent. For households headed by someone without a college degree, there was relatively little or no increase in wealth.

Culturally, people’s educational attainment increasingly correlates with their views on a wide range of issues like abortion, attitudes about L.G.B.T.Q. rights and the relationship between government and organized religion. It also extends to cultural consumption (movies, TV, books), social media choices and the sources of information that shape voters’ understanding of facts.

This is not unique to the United States; the pattern has developed across nearly all Western democracies. Going back to the 2016 Brexit vote and the most recent national elections in Britain and [*France*](https://www.theguardian.com/world/commentisfree/2022/apr/28/france-election-divide-campaign-split), education level was the best predictor of how people voted.

This new class-based politics oriented around the education divide could turn out to be just as toxic as race-based politics. It has facilitated a sorting of America into enclaves of like-minded people who look at members of the other enclave with increasing contempt.

The road to political realignment

The diploma divide really started to emerge in voting in the early 1990s, and Mr. Trump’s victory in 2016 solidified this political realignment. Since then, the trends have [*deepened*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/09/08/us/politics/how-college-graduates-vote.html).

In the 2020 presidential election, Joe Biden defeated Mr. Trump by assembling a coalition different from the one that elected and re-elected Barack Obama. Of the [*206 counties*](https://ballotpedia.org/Election_results,_2020:_Retained_Pivot_Counties) that Mr. Obama carried in 2008 and 2012 that were won by Mr. Trump in 2016, Mr. Biden won back only 25 of these areas, which generally had a higher percentage of non-college-educated voters. But overall Mr. Biden carried college-educated voters by 15 points.

In the [*2022 midterm elections*](https://www.cnn.com/election/2022/exit-polls/national-results/house/0), Democrats carried white voters with a college degree by three points, while Republicans won white non-college voters by 34 points (a 10-point improvement from [*2018*](https://www.cnn.com/election/2018/exit-polls)).

This has helped establish a new political geography. There are now 42 states firmly controlled by one party or the other. And with 45 out of 50 states voting for the same party in the last two presidential elections, the only states that voted for the winning presidential candidates in both 2016 and 2020 rank roughly in the middle on [*educational levels*](https://worldpopulationreview.com/state-rankings/educational-attainment-by-state) — Pennsylvania (23rd in education attainment), Georgia (24th), Wisconsin (26th), Arizona (30th) and Michigan (32nd).

In 2020, Mr. Biden received 306 electoral votes, Mr. Trump, 232. In the reapportionment process — which readjusts the Electoral College counts based on the most current census data — the new presidential electoral map is more favorable to Republicans by a net six points.

In 2024, Democrats are likely to enter the general election with 222 electoral votes, compared with 219 for Republicans. That leaves only eight states, [*with 97*](https://www.270towin.com/) electoral votes — Arizona, Georgia, Michigan, New Hampshire, North Carolina, Nevada, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin — up for grabs. And for these states, education levels are near the national average — not proportionately highly educated nor toward the bottom of attainment.

The 2024 map

A presidential candidate will need a three-track strategy to carry these states in 2024. The first goal is to further exploit the trend of education levels driving how people vote. Democrats have been making significant inroads with disaffected Republicans, given much of the party base’s continued embrace of Mr. Trump and his backward-looking grievances, as well as a shift to the hard right on social issues — foremost on abortion. This is particularly true with college-educated Republican women.

In this era of straight-party voting, it is notable that Democrats racked up [*double-digit percentages*](https://www.politico.com/2022-election/results/governor/) from Republicans in the 2022 Arizona, Michigan and Pennsylvania governors’ races. They also made significant inroads with these voters in the Senate races in Arizona (13 percent), Pennsylvania (8 percent), Nevada (7 percent) and Georgia (6 percent).

This represents a large and growing pool of voters. In a recent NBC poll, [*over 30 percent*](https://s3.documentcloud.org/documents/23589424/230032-nbc-january-2023-poll-v2-129-release.pdf) of self-identified Republicans said that they were not supporters of MAGA.

At the same time, Republicans have continued to increase their support with [*non-college-educated*](https://www.wsj.com/articles/gop-gaining-support-among-black-and-latino-voters-wsj-poll-finds-11667822481) voters of color. Between 2012 and 2020, support for Democrats from nonwhite-***working-class*** voters dropped [*18 points*](https://www.dropbox.com/s/ka9n5gzxwotfu1a/wh2020_public_release_crosstabs.xlsx?dl=0). The [*2022 Associated Press VoteCast exit polls*](https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2022/11/08/exit-polls-2022-elections/) indicated that support for Democrats dropped an additional 14 points compared with the [*2020 results*](https://thedemocraticstrategist.org/2023/01/teixeira-bidens-uphill-battle-with-working-class-voters/).

However, since these battleground states largely fall in the middle of education levels in our country, they haven’t followed the same trends as the other 42 states. So there are limits to relying on the education profile of voters to carry these states.

This is where the second group of voters comes in: [*political independents*](https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/2021/06/30/behind-bidens-2020-victory/), who were carried by the winning party in the last four election cycles. Following Mr. Trump’s narrow victory with independent voters in 2016, Mr. Biden carried them by nine points in 2020. In 2018, when Democrats took back the House, they carried them by 15 points, and their narrow two-point margin in [*2022*](https://www.cnn.com/election/2022/exit-polls/national-results/house/0) enabled them to hold the Senate.

The importance of the independent voting bloc continues to rise. This is particularly significant since the margin of victory in these battleground states has been very narrow in recent elections. The [*2022 exit polls*](https://www.cnn.com/election/2022/exit-polls/national-results/house/0) showed that over 30 percent of voters were independents, the highest percentage since 1980. In Arizona, 40 percent of voters in 2022 considered themselves political independents.

These independent voters tend to live disproportionately in suburbs, which are now the most diverse socioeconomic areas in our country. These suburban voters are the third component of a winning strategy. With cities increasingly controlled by Democrats — because of the high level of educated voters there — and Republicans maintaining their dominance in rural areas with large numbers of non-college voters, the suburbs are the last battleground in American politics.

Voting in the suburbs has been decisive in determining the outcome of the last two presidential elections: Voters in the suburbs of Atlanta, Detroit, Milwaukee, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh and Phoenix determined the winner in the last two presidential elections and are likely to play the same pivotal role in 2024.

These voters moved to the suburbs for a higher quality of life: affordable housing, safe streets and good schools. These are the issues that animate these voters, who have a negative view of both parties. They do not embrace a MAGA-driven Republican Party, but they also do not trust Mr. Biden and Democrats, and consider them to be culturally extreme big spenders who aren’t focused enough on issues like immigration and crime.

So in addition to education levels, these other factors will have a big impact on the election. The party that can capture the pivotal group of voters in the suburbs of battleground states is likely to prevail. Democrats’ success in the suburbs in recent elections suggests an advantage, but it is not necessarily enduring. Based on post-midterm exit polls from these areas, voters have often voted against a party or candidate — especially Mr. Trump — rather than for one.

But in part because of the emergence of the diploma divide, there is an opening for both political parties in 2024 if they are willing to gear their agenda and policies beyond their political base. The party that does that is likely to win the White House.

Doug Sosnik was a senior adviser to President Bill Clinton from 1994 to 2000 and is a senior adviser to the Brunswick Group.

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[***What Happened to the American Dream?; Ross Douthat***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69GT-H3J1-JBG3-63VR-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

October 27, 2023 Friday 14:55 EST

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 1817 words

**Byline:** Ross Douthat

**Highlight:** A new book reckons with decades of disappointment.

**Body**

In the agonized debates over how it can possibly be that Donald Trump has such a strong chance of being returned to the White House in 2024, it’s important to stress the ways in which the Trump economy, before the arrival of Covid, departed in positive ways from the trends of the last half-century. Trump’s presidency was a period not just of steady growth and low unemployment, but also of growth that was more widely shared than in much of the recent past — with the strongest [*improvement in median incomes*](https://fred.stlouisfed.org/series/MEHOINUSA672N) since the 1990s, [*wage growth*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/03/upshot/minimum-wage-boost-bottom-earners.html) for middle- and low-income workers outpacing growth for the upper class, and the lowest [*African American unemployment rate*](https://fred.stlouisfed.org/series/LNS14000006) in decades.

Some of these trends have persisted, as this newsletter has [*discussed previously*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/15/opinion/biden-economy.html), into the Biden presidency, but they’ve been undermined by inflation and shadowed by rising interest rates, creating an economic picture that’s more fraught than some of Biden’s boosters want to acknowledge. (Even this week’s eye-popping G.D.P. number — third-quarter growth at a [*4.9 percent*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/26/business/economy/gdp-economy-q3.html) rate — coexists with data showing disposable personal income actually dipping just a bit, suggesting that the post-Covid stagnation in real earnings hasn’t fully broken yet.) Whereas the Trump era was less complicated: For a few short years, the American economy performed in ways Americans once took for granted, closer to the long post-World War II boom than to the decades of recession-punctuated deceleration we’ve experienced since the 1970s.

Lately, I’ve been reading a portrait of that long age of disappointment — “[*Ours Was the Shining Future: The Story of the American Dream*](https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/217260/ours-was-the-shining-future-by-david-leonhardt/),” a new book by my Times colleague and former podcast sparring partner David Leonhardt. It’s a rich economic history of the post-World War II era, enlivened with both personal anecdotes (including some Leonhardt family history) and biographical sketches of famous or once-famous figures, from C. Wright Mills to Robert Bork and Barbara Jordan, whose ideas illuminate the larger transformations Leonhardt describes.

The book’s argument belongs to a genre, reconsiderations of neoliberalism, that’s somewhat familiar by now but is usually more narrowly polemical, where my colleague offers sweep and detail and depth of historical narrative. And the genre’s entries usually come from predictable “outsider” ideological perspectives, from the far left or lately the populist right, assailing the neoliberal age in the voice of its traditional enemies. Whereas Leonhardt, I think it’s fair to say, is a man of the moderate center-left both in ideological predispositions and in personal temperament, which lends his reconsiderations a more unpredictable aspect and gives some of his criticisms greater heft.

He is, among other things, more fair-minded than some of neoliberalism’s populist critics about the reasons that the United States turned to tax cuts, deregulation, privatization and a more minimal vision of the role of the state from the 1970s onward as solutions to real problems of stagnation and inflation and diminished American competitiveness. He’s alive to the ways that economic history and the progressive moral vision do not always perfectly overlap; the reality that African Americans achieved their greatest economic gains before the full triumphs of the civil rights era, before the era of segregation gave way to the era of affirmative action, makes a crucial subplot in his larger case for the benefits of the postwar economic order.

And he’s more attuned than some writers on the left to the fundamental tensions between the “Brahmin left,” the worldview of the liberal professional class, and the interests of ***working-class*** America — not just in the way that cultural issues can distract from liberalism’s economic commitments or undermine its political support, but also in the way that the cosmopolitan moral vision and the interests of American workers may sometimes be in direct tension.

This last point yields [*his greatest heterodoxy*](https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2023/10/us-immigration-policy-1965-act/675724/), from the perspective of current-era liberalism: an argument that mass immigration might have more to do with post-1970s wage stagnation than liberal experts like to think (even after the improvement in blue-collar wages under Trump’s anti-immigration presidency), in addition to playing a crucial role in unraveling the trust and cohesion that midcentury liberalism depended upon for its grander projects.

That heterodoxy coexists with a core argument that’s more congenial to Biden administration policy, especially insofar as the Biden White House has tried to adapt somewhat to Trump’s populist critique. Basically, Leonhardt argues that post-1970s America lost sight of government’s crucial role in promoting the democratic aspect of democratic capitalism, and that mass prosperity and widely shared wage gains require not only simple redistribution but also structures that counteract corporate power, elite self-interest and monopolistic entrenchment. What we need, then, is a more mid-20th-century mentality, encompassing everything from direct government investment in technology and industry and public works, to some kind of reinvented labor movement, to a post-Bork approach to antitrust regulation and the new behemoths of the digital age, to a renewal of democratic ambition and capacity in our gridlocked and often-filibustered Congress.

It’s a powerful case, and there are good reasons that parts of both right and left, in Trumpism and Bidenomics, have reached for some version of its post-neoliberal vision. But in the spirit of our podcasting days, let me offer two points of possible rebuttal to Leonhardt’s critique and prescriptions.

First, a libertarian response. In his account of Ronald Reagan and his legacy, Leonhardt argues (correctly) that post-1970s neoliberalism did not deliver either the pace of growth or the seeming equality of opportunity that defined the pre-1970s American economy. And he offers America’s less libertarian, more social-democratic developed-world competitors as a different model, because “inequality has not risen as much in many countries as it has in the United States,” while “broad measures of national well-being, such as life expectancy, fared worse” in America than elsewhere.

But to the extent that broadly shared prosperity depends on having rising wealth to share and redistribute in the first place, the neoliberal American economy arguably deserves a little more credit than this. In terms of per capita income, productivity growth and innovation, our post-Reagan advantage over our major European peers has been robust, and despite occasional talk of convergence, the American edge has pretty clearly increased under neoliberalism. Indeed, even during the post-Great Recession period, the era of life expectancy stagnation that Leonhardt identifies as indicting the U.S. economic model, the American economy went from being close to the same size as the European Union’s to being about [*one-third larger*](https://www.ft.com/content/80ace07f-3acb-40cb-9960-8bb4a44fd8d9).

It’s not that we can’t potentially learn things from Europe while seeking answers to our social crisis. But whatever we learn can’t be as simple as our neoliberalism went too far, their social democracy worked out better — unless we’re willing to give up on all the surplus wealth and dynamism that we enjoy.

Moreover, the libertarian reader of “Ours Was the Shining Future” might argue that, to the extent that our own dynamism has been deficient relative to America’s pre-1970s trend, that deficiency reflects not neoliberal overreach but all the ways in which neoliberalism simply failed — in its efforts to prevent the growth of regulation, the capture of government by entrenched interests, the culture of safetyism throttling innovation in fields from medicine to nuclear power.

The recent book by the Reaganite economic writer Jim Pethokoukis, “[*The Conservative Futurist*](https://www.hachettebookgroup.com/titles/james-pethokoukis/the-conservative-futurist/9781546005544/),” makes an extended version of this argument, tracing our era of stagnation to anti-progress ideologies and the regulatory bureaucracies that gave them the force of law. Leonhardt nods to this case by including, for instance, efforts to remove the “bureaucratic barriers that prevent the construction of new homes, schools and transportation systems” in his list of progress-oriented movements. But the libertarian critic would argue that when it comes, say, to the strangling effect that the environmental review process has on states like California, or union rules on construction in New York, the real neoliberal program has been found difficult and left untried.

Then, finally, the example of Europe also points to a social-conservative response to Leonhardt’s portrait, because of course one force among many driving European stagnation is the collapse of birthrates and the rapid aging of the continent under conditions of secularization and sexual liberation.

“Ours Was the Shining Future” urges liberals to concede some modest ground to cultural conservatives, but apart from its immigration heterodoxies, those concessions are mostly framed as a matter of coalition building and pragmatic political necessity. The underlying liberal social model is assumed to be basically compatible with the widely shared prosperity Leonhardt seeks.

But is it? To some extent, the deep trends that he bemoans are rooted in social liberalism itself. The slowing of growth is connected to the retreat from marriage and family, which has most of the developed world headed for demographic autumn, in which economic stagnation may be cemented by senescence. The socioeconomic inequalities of post-1970s America are connected to widening inequalities in post-1970s family structure, the rise of out-of-wedlock births and single-parent families that so many progressives are so conspicuously loath to treat as a matter of real cultural or political concern.

It’s not that conservatives have a clear solution to these dilemmas (regular readers will note that I have not yet delivered a [*recently promised*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/29/opinion/marriage-kearney.html) newsletter on plausible conservative responses to marriage’s decline!), or that they’re in any way resolved simply by electing right-wing governments, whether in Washington or Warsaw or anywhere else.

But we clearly live in a culture that’s much closer to what social liberals wanted, back when this long era of disappointment began, than it is to any conservative social blueprint. So when liberals reckon with why disappointment shadows us, why the shining future dimmed, the role of their own cultural victories may deserve more attention even than what’s offered by Leonhardt’s broad-minded, self-critical and always interesting account.

Breviary

N.S. Lyons [*on Israel’s high-tech failure*](https://theupheaval.substack.com/p/hard-lessons-from-israels-high-tech).

Damir Marusic [*on Hamas’s propaganda of the deed*](https://wisdomofcrowds.live/p/the-revolutionary-legitimacy-of-hamas).

Tim Alberta [*on Joe Biden’s primary challenger*](https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2023/10/dean-phillips-joe-biden-2024-primary/675784/).

Gale Walden [*on dating and teaching David Foster Wallace*](https://www.lrb.co.uk/the-paper/v45/n21/gale-walden/diary).

Ben Sixsmith [*on the myths of a Black Britain*](https://thecritic.co.uk/gaslit-history/).

Proof that the jocks [*still inherit the Earth*](https://www.nber.org/papers/w31753).

PHOTO: (PHOTOGRAPH BY Fran Caballero FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** October 27, 2023

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[***J.D. Vance Converted to Trumpism. Will Ohio Republicans Buy It?***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:63B2-MH41-DXY4-X3RY-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** Trip Gabriel

**Highlight:** As the “Hillbilly Elegy” author runs for Senate in Ohio, he has walked back previous criticism of Donald Trump and reversed arguments that the white ***working class*** bears responsibility for its problems.

**Body**

As the “Hillbilly Elegy” author runs for Senate in Ohio, he has walked back previous criticism of Donald Trump and reversed arguments that the white ***working class*** bears responsibility for its problems.

Before he was a celebrity supporter of Donald J. Trump’s, J.D. Vance was one of his most celebrated critics.

“Hillbilly Elegy,” Mr. Vance’s searing 2016 memoir of growing up poor in [*Ohio*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2021/11/02/us/elections/results-ohio-special-congressional-elections.html) and Kentucky, offered perplexed and alarmed Democrats, and not a few Republicans, an explanation for Mr. Trump’s appeal to an angry core of white, ***working-class*** Americans.

A conservative author, venture capitalist and graduate of Yale Law School, Mr. Vance presented himself as a teller of hard truths, writing personally about the toll of drugs and violence, a bias against education, and a dependence on welfare. Rather than blaming outsiders, he scolded his community. “There is a lack of agency here — a feeling that you have little control over your life and a willingness to blame everyone but yourself,” he wrote.

In interviews, he called Mr. Trump “cultural heroin” and a demagogue leading “the white ***working class*** to a very dark place.”

Today, as Mr. Vance [*pursues the Republican nomination*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/07/01/us/politics/jd-vance-ohio-senate.html) for an open Senate seat in Ohio, he has performed a whiplash-inducing conversion to Trumpism, in which he no longer emphasizes that white ***working-class*** problems are self-inflicted. Adopting the grievances of the former president, he denounces “elites and the ruling class” for “robbing us blind,” as he said in his announcement speech last month.

Now championing the hard-right messages that animate the Make America Great Again base, Mr. Vance has [*deleted inconvenient tweets*](https://twitter.com/KFILE/status/1410643663609372674), renounced his old views about immigration and trade, and gone from a regular guest on CNN to a regular on “[*Tucker Carlson*](https://duckduckgo.com/?q=jd+vance+tucker+carlson&amp;atb=v265-1&amp;iar=videos&amp;iax=videos&amp;ia=videos&amp;iai=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.youtube.com%2Fwatch%3Fv%3Dr9bnufghHZw),” echoing the Fox News host’s racially charged insults of immigrants as [*“dirty.”*](https://www.cleveland.com/open/2021/07/jd-vance-used-to-admonish-donald-trumps-xenophobic-appeals-to-voters-until-he-decided-to-run-for-senate.html)

When ***working-class*** Americans “dare to complain about the southern border,” Mr. Vance said on Mr. Carlson’s show last month, “or about jobs getting shipped overseas, what do they get called? They get called racists, they get called bigots, xenophobes or idiots.”

“I love that,” Mr. Carlson replied.

Whether Ohio Republicans do, too, is the big question for Mr. Vance — who will crucially benefit from a [*$10 million super PAC*](https://www.cincinnati.com/story/news/politics/elections/2021/03/15/super-pac-supporting-possible-ohio-senate-candidate-j-d-vance-gets-10-m-donation-peter-thiel/4700540001/) funded by the tech billionaire Peter Thiel, a Trump supporter who once employed Mr. Vance.

His G.O.P. rivals in the state have had a field day. Josh Mandel, a former treasurer of Ohio who is the early front-runner in the five-candidate field, [*called*](https://twitter.com/JoshMandelOhio/status/1415723614033387522) Mr. Vance a “RINO just like Romney and Liz Cheney,” referring to the Utah senator and the Wyoming congresswoman who voted to impeach Mr. Trump for inciting the Capitol riot.

Liberals and some conservatives have also dismissed Mr. Vance for cynical opportunism. One Never Trump conservative, Tom Nichols, wrote of “the moral collapse of J.D. Vance” [*in The Atlantic*](https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2021/07/moral-collapse-jd-vance/619428/).

Mr. Vance’s adherence to some of the most extreme views of Trump supporters shows how the former president, despite losing the White House and Congress for his party, retains the support of fanatically loyal voters, who echo his resentments and disinformation and force most Republican candidates to bend a knee.

Yet Mr. Vance’s flip-flops over policy and over Mr. Trump’s demagogic style may not prove disqualifying with Ohio primary-goers when they vote next spring, according to strategists. Although Mr. Vance’s U-turn might strike some as too convenient in an era when voters quickly sniff out inauthenticity, it is also true that his political arc resembles that of many Republicans who voted grudgingly for Mr. Trump in 2016, but after four years cemented their support. (Mr. Vance has said he voted third-party in 2016.)

“Will he be able to overcome his past comments on Trump and square that with the G.O.P. base? Maybe,” said Michael Hartley, a Republican strategist in Ohio who is not working for any of the Senate candidates. He added that Mr. Vance had the lived experience to address policies that lift ***working-class*** people “in a way that others cannot.”

Mr. Vance, 37, who lives with his wife and two young sons in Cincinnati, has carefully seeded the ground for his candidacy, appearing frequently on podcasts and news shows with far-right influencers of the Trump base, including Steve Bannon and Sebastian Gorka.

In interviews, speeches and on social media, he has become a culture warrior. He [*threatened*](https://jdvance.com/?utm_source=google&amp;utm_medium=search&amp;utm_campaign=website&amp;utm_content=senate-majority&amp;gclid=Cj0KCQjwxdSHBhCdARIsAG6zhlV3W7EVJSrY2eoJADGFn5cT7u1ED60BwuGgLnyq4yuLCM56QC_Wn5IaAullEALw_wcB) to make Big Tech “pay” for putting conservatives “in Facebook jail,” and he [*mocked*](https://twitter.com/JDVance1/status/1408409641160224778)Gen. Mark A. Milley, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, after the four-star general [*said he sought to understand “white rage”*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/06/23/us/politics/milley-critical-race-theory-military.html) in the wake of the assault on the Capitol.

To Mr. Vance, it is a “big lie” that Jan. 6 was “this big insurrection,” he [*told Mr. Bannon*](https://citizensoftheamericanrepublic.org/2021/05/20/j-d-vance-says-jan-6-commission-could-be-a-blessing-or-a-curse/).

In “Hillbilly Elegy,” Mr. Vance credited members of the elite with fewer divorces, longer lives and higher church attendance, adding ruefully, “These people are beating us at our own damned game.” But that was not his message at a recent conservative gathering where he [*blamed*](https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2021/jul/26/ohio-senate-candidate-jd-vance) a breakdown in the American family on “the childless left.’’

Mr. Carlson, Fox’s highest-rated host, all but endorsed Mr. Vance during the candidate’s appearance last month. Mr. Vance also has the backing of Representative Jim Banks of Indiana, a rising conservative leader in the House. And Charlie Kirk, the founder of the right-wing student group Turning Point USA, who has ties to the Trump family, has endorsed the “Hillbilly Elegy” author.

“He has been consistent in being able to diagnose the anxieties of Trump’s base economically almost better than anyone else,” Mr. Kirk said in an interview. Although Mr. Vance once mocked Mr. Trump’s position that a southwest border wall would bring back “all of these steel mill jobs,” today he supports the “America First” agenda that reducing legal immigration will increase blue-collar wages, a link that many economists [*dispute*](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/08/08/business/economy/immigrants-skills-economy-jobs.html). “Why let in a large number of desperate newcomers when many of our biggest cities look like this?” Mr. Vance [*said recently on Twitter*](https://twitter.com/jdvance1/status/1401516681449639938?lang=en) over a picture of a homeless encampment in Washington.

Mr. Trump has met with all five major declared Ohio Republican Senate candidates — who are seeking the open seat of [*the retiring Senator Rob Portman*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/25/us/politics/rob-portman-ohio-senate-republicans.html) — but has not signaled a preference. He is not likely to do so any time soon, according to a person briefed on his thinking. Among Democrats, [*Representative Tim Ryan*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/02/01/us/politics/tim-ryan-ohio-senate.html) has the field nearly to himself. Ohio, once a battleground state, [*has trended rightward*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/03/06/us/politics/ohio-senate-race.html) in the Trump era.

Mr. Vance declined to be interviewed for this article. But an examination of his embrace of Trumpism through the ample record of his writings and remarks, as well as interviews with people close to him, show that it happened the way a Hemingway character famously described how he went bankrupt: “Gradually, and then suddenly.”

The year 2018 appears to have been the turning point. That January, Mr. Vance considered a Senate bid in Ohio but ultimately decided not to run, citing family matters, after [*news reports*](https://www.dispatch.com/news/20180111/residency-issue-trump-criticisms-may-have-sunk-vances-candidacy) brought to light his earlier hostile criticism of Mr. Trump.

Later that year, the furious opposition on the left to [*the Supreme Court nomination of Brett M. Kavanaugh*](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/10/06/us/politics/brett-kavanaugh-supreme-court.html) was a milestone in Mr. Vance’s political shift. Mr. Vance’s wife, Usha, whom he met in law school, had clerked for Justice Kavanaugh. “Trump’s popularity in the Vance household went up substantially during the Kavanaugh fight,” Mr. Vance [*told a conservative group*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9NMes-GIHF8) in 2019.

Although Mr. Vance has said that he came to agree with Mr. Trump’s policies on China and immigration, the most important factor in his conversion, [*he told Mr. Gorka*](https://amgreatness.com/2021/03/10/reinvigorating-americas-heartland-j-d-vance-talks-with-sebastian-gorka/) in March, was a “gut” identification with Mr. Trump’s rhetorical war on America’s “elites.”

“I was like, ‘Man, you know, when Trump says the elites are fundamentally corrupt, they don’t care about the country that has made them who they are, he was actually telling the truth,’” Mr. Vance said.

(His adoption of Trump-style populism did not inhibit him from flying to the Hamptons last month for a fund-raiser with Republican captains of industry, as [*reported by Politico*](https://www.politico.com/newsletters/playbook/2021/07/19/schumer-channels-his-inner-mcconnell-493633).)

Finally, the influence of Mr. Thiel, a founder of PayPal, whom Mr. Vance has called a “mentor to me,” appears to have been decisive in Mr. Vance’s embrace of Trumpism.

An outspoken and somewhat rare conservative in Silicon Valley, Mr. Thiel [*addressed the 2016 Republican convention*](https://www.nytimes.com/2016/07/22/us/politics/peter-thiel-republican-convention-gay.html) and advised the Trump transition team. He is a fierce critic of China and global trade and [*a supporter of restrictionist immigration policies*](https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2020/aug/01/kansas-republican-senate-kris-kobach-roger-marshall-primary), and Mr. Vance has moved toward all those positions. Mr. Thiel, who did not respond to an interview request, is also paying for a super PAC for another protege, [*Blake Masters*](https://apnews.com/article/joe-biden-government-and-politics-arizona-senate-elections-election-2020-e80b92e3f88b4dea032454983c8cd6fb), in a Senate race in Arizona.

In March, Mr. Thiel brokered a meeting between Mr. Vance and Mr. Trump at Mar-a-Lago, the former president’s resort in Florida. Mr. Vance made amends for his earlier criticism and asked Mr. Trump to keep an open mind, according to people briefed on the meeting. If Mr. Trump were going to attack Mr. Vance — as he has other Republican 2022 candidates around the country whom he perceives to be disloyal — he probably would have done so already.

For now, the former president’s appetite for revenge in Ohio seems to be sated by attacking Representative Anthony Gonzalez, a Republican who [*voted for impeachment*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/05/07/us/trump-anthony-gonzalez-gop-censure.html) in January. Mr. Trump [*held a rally in the state*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/06/26/us/politics/trump-rally-ohio.html) in June to back a primary challenger to Mr. Gonzalez. Mr. Vance was on hand, [*sharing a photo on Twitter*](https://twitter.com/JDVance1/status/1408907641074720774?s=20) to show his support for Mr. Trump.

PHOTOS: J.D. Vance, the author of “Hillbilly Elegy,” with supporters after a rally last month in Middletown, Ohio, where he announced he was joining the crowded Republican race for an open Senate seat.; Mr. Vance has stopped exhorting the ***working class***, instead adopting the former president’s grievances against “elites.”(PHOTOGRAPHS BY JEFFREY DEAN/ASSOCIATED PRESS); Mr. Vance is set to benefit from a $10 million super PAC funded by the tech billionaire Peter Thiel, above. (PHOTOGRAPH BY DOUG MILLS/THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** November 2, 2021

**End of Document**



[***Vivek Ramaswamy Loves Eminem. And He Doesn’t Care If the Feeling Is Mutual.***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6903-BTJ1-DXY4-X1MP-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

August 19, 2023 Saturday 17:00 EST

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**Section:** US; politics

**Length:** 1086 words

**Byline:** Jonathan Weisman

**Highlight:** The Republican presidential candidate loves rap music, even if critics say his politics are at odds with its spirit. “There’s no such thing as one rap community,” he says.

**Body**

The Republican presidential candidate loves rap music, even if critics say his politics are at odds with its spirit. “There’s no such thing as one rap community,” he says.

For some audiences, Vivek Ramaswamy is [*a*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/27/us/politics/vivek-ramaswamy-wealth.html) biotech entrepreneur who pushed for pharmaceutical breakthroughs before he tried to break into politics. For others, he is a cultural warrior [*battling “woke” corporations*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/02/21/us/politics/vivek-ramaswamy-presidential-candidate-2024.html) or a crusader for his definition of “truth,” whether it be the sanctity of two genders or the perpetuation of fossil fuels.

The identity that the entrepreneur and Republican candidate for president has kept more or less under wraps since his undergraduate days at Harvard is another thing entirely, Da Vek the Rapper.

Yet there it was at the Iowa State Fair this month, the 38-year-old shape-shifting presidential candidate, microphone in hand, spitting [*Eminem’s “Lose Yourself”*](https://www.c-span.org/video/?c5081268/vivek-ramaswamy-raps-eminems-lose-yourself) before a largely white crowd that appeared somewhere between amused and enthused. Beside him onstage was the Iowa governor, Kim Reynolds, who watched with the look of a mother baffled by her child’s latest science fair project.

As breakout moments go, Mr. Ramaswamy’s impromptu performance may not rise to the level of Bill Clinton’s saxophone solo on “The Arsenio Hall Show.” But it did separate him culturally from his generally more awkward and older competitors in the still-early race for the presidency.

The lyrics — “He opens his mouth, but the words won’t come out” — did not fit the fast-talking, quick-witted candidate in the slightest. The words “he knows when he goes back to this mobile home” do not exactly leap from a wellspring of personal experience for Mr. Ramaswamy, a multimillionaire entrepreneur with a middle-class upbringing, a [*$2 million mansion*](https://virtualglobetrotting.com/map/wesley-c-bates-house-1/view/google/) in the suburbs of Columbus, Ohio, and a largely self-funded presidential bid.

But rap and hip-hop are part of the Ramaswamy story, back to Harvard when his alter ego Da Vek rapped libertarian lyrics in all-black outfits down to a Kangol cap. As a freshman, he performed at an open mic before a Busta Rhymes concert, a moment that has since been [*exaggerated to make him Busta’s opening act*](https://www.politico.com/news/2023/07/26/vivek-ramaswamy-eminem-rap-00108137).

He [*told The Harvard Crimson back in 2006*](https://www.thecrimson.com/article/2006/12/13/vivek-g-ramaswamy-if-you-think/) that “Lose Yourself” was his life’s theme song.

In an interview on Friday, Mr. Ramaswamy seemed a little sheepish about his return to rap. Theme song? “There are parts of what you say in the past that you recoil from,” he admitted.

But he did stick by his identification with Eminem, the unlikely white rapper from ***working-class*** Detroit who went on to become, by most measures, [*the best-selling hip-hop artist*](https://middermusic.com/best-selling-rappers-of-all-time/) of all time.

“I did not grow up in the circumstances he did,” said Mr. Ramaswamy, the son of a physician mother and engineer father. “But the idea of being an underdog, people having low expectations of you, that part speaks to me.”

Eminem was, Mr. Ramaswamy said, “a guy in every sense who was not supposed to be doing what he did.”

The candidate said he did not plan to rap at Iowa’s center stage. Responding to a question that Ms. Reynolds had asked every presidential hopeful at her “fair-side chats,” Mr. Ramaswamy said his favorite “walkout” song for the campaign trail would have to be “Lose Yourself,” an unusual answer in this Republican field but hardly counterculture.

“Lose Yourself” was the centerpiece of “8 Mile,” the semi-autobiographical film in which Eminem plays an aspiring rapper struggling to prove himself in a largely Black subculture. The track took best original song at the Academy Awards in 2003, and the next year it won two Grammys, including for best rap song.

After his chat with Ms. Reynolds ended, Mr. Ramaswamy was signing autographs when an enterprising sound technician put the song over the loud speaker. The candidate raised his fist, lifted the mic to his mouth, and the rest is, well, not quite history but a nice moment.

Mr. Ramaswamy’s venture into hip-hop, a culture synonymous with Black struggle and triumphs, carried risks. Rhymefest, a Chicago rapper who [*defeated Eminem at a freestyle contest*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A_snnaP_fyo) in 1997, noted that Mr. Ramaswamy had called Juneteenth [*a “useless” holiday*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2FrlMrm74Ys) and told CNN’s Don Lemon that Black Americans achieved equality only because they secured the right to bear arms, never mind that the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. preached nonviolence and armed civil rights leaders like Fred Hampton were gunned down by law enforcement.

“It’s the rewriting and manipulation of Black history for Republican talking points that gets me,” Rhymefest said, adding: “Everyone has a right to music. Everyone has a right to express themselves through the culture that helped formulate their passions, and hip-hop is a passionate calling.” But, he said, “he doesn’t understand the words or the meaning.”

Soren Baker, a historian of rap, said such conflicts were nothing new for Republican politicians, who have tangled with artists since President Ronald Reagan drew the ire of Bruce Springsteen over “Born in the U.S.A.” in 1984.

Mr. Springsteen made clear he didn’t think the president was listening closely to his music’s often bleak portraits of Reagan’s America. Eminem has not commented on Mr. Ramaswamy’s performance. A representative did not respond to a request on Friday.

But it’s unlikely the rapper is a Ramaswamy fan. In 2017, Eminem famously performed [*a freestyle jeremiad*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LunHybOKIjU) against then-President Donald J. Trump, calling him “a kamikaze that’ll probably cause a nuclear holocaust.” Mr. Ramaswamy, in contrast, is steadfastly supportive of Mr. Trump, even as he runs against him for the 2024 G.O.P. nomination.

“What Vivek is doing is trying to align himself with the struggle of overcoming adversity,” said Mr. Baker, author of “The History of Gangster Rap.” “From what I know of Vivek’s policies, objectives and goals, they’re not in alignment with Eminem at all.”

Mr. Ramaswamy did not shy from the critique. “Is there a risk? There’s a risk in everything we do?” he said. But he added, “There’s no such thing as one rap community,” pointing to Ice Cube, the former leader of N.W.A who worked with the Trump campaign in 2020 on a Contract With Black America.

Of course, “Lose Yourself” is hardly a political anthem. It has become more like a frat house pregame rallying cry, or, as Rhymefest put it, “the song that gets the team out on the field.”

But Mr. Ramaswamy said it wouldn’t be blasting through his AirPods as he prepares to go onstage Wednesday at the first Republican primary debate of the 2024 cycle.

“I’m an adult,” he quipped.

Ben Sisario contributed reporting.

Ben Sisario contributed reporting.

**Load-Date:** August 20, 2023

**End of Document**



[***Trump Might Not Need a Coup This Time***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69K3-CMT1-DXY4-X4S1-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

November 7, 2023 Tuesday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; Editorial Desk; Pg. 20; THE CONVERSATION

**Length:** 1715 words

**Byline:** By Gail Collins and Bret Stephens

**Body**

Gail Collins: Bret, I know you're busy writing about your reporting trip to Israel, and I am looking forward to reading all your thoughts. But, gee, can we talk about the Times/Siena poll on the presidential race that came out on Sunday? Donald Trump is ahead in almost all the critical states.

Yow. Pardon me while I pour myself a drink.

Bret Stephens: Nice to be home. Please pour me one while you're at it.

For readers who don't know the gory details of the poll, here they are: Across six battleground states, Trump leads President Biden 48 percent to 44 percent among registered voters. In the crucial swing states that Biden won last time, Trump is ahead in five -- Arizona, Georgia, Michigan, Nevada and Pennsylvania -- while Biden leads only in Wisconsin. Biden is losing support from young voters, Hispanic voters, Black voters -- constituencies Democrats have depended on for decades to overcome the longstanding Republican advantage among whites.

Women voters favor Biden by eight percentage points, 50 percent to 42 percent, but men favor Trump by a far wider 18-point spread: 55 percent to 37 percent. (I guess that's another definition for the term ''manspreading.'') On the economy, voters prefer Trump over Biden by a 22-point margin. And a whopping 71 percent think Biden is too old to be president, as opposed to just 39 percent for Trump.

Gail: Whimper, whimper.

Bret: Basically, this poll is to Biden's second-term ambitions what sunlight is to morning fog. Isn't it time for him to bow out gracefully and focus his remaining energies on the crises of the moment, particularly Ukraine and the Middle East, instead of gearing up for a punishing campaign while setting the country up for Trump's catastrophic comeback?

Gail: Well, you and I both hoped he wouldn't run for re-election. But he did, and he is -- and as I've said nine million times, he's only three years older than Donald Trump and appears to be in much better physical condition.

Bret: For all we know, Biden may be physically fitter than Alex Honnold and mentally sharper than Garry Kasparov, even if he's hiding it well. But this poll is pretty much voters yelling, ''We don't think so.'' Ignore it at your peril.

How about putting in a good word for Dean Phillips, the Minnesota representative challenging Biden? Or at least urging the Biden team to lose Kamala Harris in favor of a veep pick more Americans would feel confident about as a potential president, like Lloyd Austin, the defense secretary?

Gail: I'm not gonna argue about perfect-world scenarios. Harris might not be your ideal potential president -- or mine -- but dumping her from the ticket would suggest some historic degree of bad performance. And she really hasn't done anything wrong.

Bret: Harris could well be the best vice president ever, though she's also hiding it well. But the point here is that voters are underwhelmed, and her presence on the ticket compounds Biden's already abysmal numbers.

Gail: I'm tormented by this whole national vision of Biden as an aging dolt while Trump plays the energetic orator. As our colleagues Michael Bender and Michael Gold pointed out recently, Trump's had ''a string of unforced gaffes, garble and general disjointedness'' in his speeches lately.

Bret: Trump has always been the Tsar Bomba of idiocy. But too many people seem more impressed by his rhetorical force than appalled by his moral and ideological destructiveness.

Gail: Why does Biden have this terrible image while Trump's his old, fun-under-multiple-indictments self?

Bret: That's a great question. As a matter of law, I think Trump belongs in jail. The political problem is that the indictments help him, because they play to his outlaw appeal. He wants to cast himself as the Josey Wales of American politics. His entire argument is that ''the system'' -- particularly the Justice Department -- is broken, biased and corrupt, so anything the system does against him is proof of its corruption rather than of his. And tens of millions of people agree with him.

Gail: This is the world that grew up around us when the Riddler was more fun than Batman.

Bret: Perfectly said. The good news in the Times/Siena poll is that Trump's negatives are also very high. They're just not as high as Biden's. Which means Democrats could easily hold the White House with another candidate. But you seem reluctant to push the idea.

Gail: Yeah, since Biden is very, very definitely running, I don't see any point in whining about the fact that I wish he wasn't. He'd still be 10 times a better president than Trump.

Bret: I just refuse to believe Biden's candidacy is inevitable. Democrats seem to have talked themselves into thinking that any primary challenge to Biden just guarantees an eventual Republican victory, since that's what tends to happen to incumbent presidents, like George H.W. Bush, Jimmy Carter and Gerald Ford. But the alternative is to watch Biden risk his single greatest accomplishment -- defeating an incumbent Trump in the first place -- by heedlessly running in the face of overwhelming public skepticism.

Gail: What's so frustrating is -- Biden has a really fine record. The economy has picked up. He's gotten a huge program passed for infrastructure projects like better roads and bridges. He's always got the fight against global warming on his agenda. He stands up firmly for social issues most Americans support, like abortion rights.

Bret: All the more reason for him to rest on his laurels and pass the baton to a younger generation. I can think of a half-dozen Democrats, particularly governors, who would trounce Trump in a general election just by showing up to the debate with a pulse and a brain. Let me just start with four: Gretchen Whitmer, Josh Shapiro, Jared Polis, Wes Moore. ...

Gail: I know Trump appears more energetic, but he's really only a whole lot louder. Either way, his multitudinous defects in character and policy really should make the difference.

Bret: Hope you're right. Fear you're not.

Gail: Sigh. Let's change the subject. You're in charge of Republicans -- what's your party going to do about the dreaded Senator Tommy Tuberville?

Bret: For the record, I quit the G.O.P. more than five years ago.

As for Tuberville, who is holding some 370 senior military promotions hostage because he objects to Pentagon policies on abortion, I suggest he should have a look at what just happened in Israel. The country just paid a dreadful price in lives in part because far-right politicians ignored the degradation of the country's military readiness while they pursued their ideological fixations. I hope defense hawks like Lindsey Graham join forces with the Senate majority leader, Chuck Schumer, to change Senate rules and move the nominations to a vote.

Speaking of Congress, your thoughts on the effort to censure Representative Rashida Tlaib over some of her rhetoric?

Gail: Well, Representative Tlaib accused Israel of committing genocide. She's also said that President Biden ''supported'' genocide of the Palestinians, a comment that was offensive to Biden while also, I think, hurting the Palestinian cause. But I wouldn't want to see members of Congress distracted from the deeply serious issues at hand with a squabble about censorship, particularly one championed by folks like the dreaded Representative Marjorie Taylor Greene.

Bret: Readers won't be surprised to know that I find Tlaib's views wrong and repellent. Like Taylor Greene, she's an embarrassment to her party and the House. But that's exactly the reason I oppose efforts to censure her. One of the things that distinguishes free societies like America and Israel from dictatorships like Hamas's in Gaza is that we stand for freedom of speech as a matter of course, while they suppress it. The right censure for Tlaib would be to get voted out of office, not muzzled by her colleagues.

Gail: But let's get back to that poll for a minute. I was fascinated by the fact that only 6 percent of the respondents identified themselves as union members. I think the unions have done great things for the ***working class*** and middle class in this country and I'm very much saddened by their dwindling influence.

Bret: I've always been pro-union. They're a powerful force for greater automation and an argument for free trade.

Gail: Hissss ...

Bret: OK, that was my inner Alex P. Keaton speaking. But union leaders should at least stop to ask themselves why, if they're so terrific, so many American workers are reluctant to join them. I feel that way about certain other self-regarding institutions, including much of the news media, that are so full of their own wonderfulness that they can't figure out why people keep fleeing in droves.

Gail: Bret, we've entered the November holiday season -- really did enjoy the trick-or-treaters last week and was pleased to notice that the popular costumes in our neighborhood seemed to go more toward skeletons and ghosts than celebrities and pop culture heroes. On to Thanksgiving and then I'm gonna challenge you to come up with a list of things in the public world you're thankful for.

Bret: Pumpkin-spice lattes. Just kidding.

Gail: Meanwhile, this is Republican debate week, featuring several people nobody's really heard of and an absent Donald Trump. I guess your fave, Nikki Haley, is near the head of the pack, such as it is. Think she still has a whisper of a chance?

Bret: Not sure. But you've somehow reminded me of a lovely poem by Adrienne Rich, which seems to capture both Haley's candidacy and my daily struggles with coherent prose.

You see a mantrying to think.

You want to sayto everything:Keep off! Give him room!But you only watch,terrifiedthe old consolationswill get him at lastlike a fishhalf-dead from floppingand almost crawlingacross the shingle,almost breathingthe raw, agonizingairtill a wavepulls it back blind into the triumphantsea.

It's called ''Ghost of a Chance.'' Here's me hoping Haley's got more than that.

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**Graphic**

PHOTO (PHOTOGRAPH BY DOUG MILLS/THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A20.

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[***Can the U.S. Make Solar Panels? This Company Thinks So.***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6984-59K1-DXY4-X0BG-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

September 26, 2023 Tuesday 11:33 EST

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**Section:** BUSINESS; energy-environment

**Length:** 1461 words

**Byline:** Ivan Penn

**Highlight:** First Solar kept producing them in Ohio after most of the industry moved to China. President Biden wants many more domestic manufacturers.

**Body**

For more than two decades, workers at a factory in Perrysburg, Ohio, near Toledo, have been making something that other businesses stopped producing in the United States long ago: solar panels.

How the company that owns the factory, First Solar, managed to hang on when most solar panel manufacturing left the United States for China is critical to understanding the viability of President Biden’s efforts to establish a large domestic green energy industry.

Mr. Biden and Democrats in Congress last year authorized hundreds of billions of dollars in federal incentives for manufacturing solar panels, wind turbines, batteries, electric cars and semiconductors. The efforts amount to one of the most expansive uses of industrial policy ever attempted in the United States.

As a result, many companies, including First Solar, have announced the construction of dozens of factories, in total, around the country. But nobody is entirely sure whether these investments will be durable, especially in businesses, like battery or solar panel manufacturing, where China’s domination is deep and strong. Chinese manufacturers enjoy lower labor costs, economies of scale and incentives from a government eager to control industries critical to fighting climate change.

First Solar survived the shift of most manufacturing to China in part because its panels do not use polysilicon, a material found in most panels and now made almost entirely in China. But it has not been an easy ride, and the company has struggled at times, especially after the 2008 financial crisis.

“They’re sort of a unicorn,” said Michael Heben, director of the Wright Center for Photovoltaics and Innovation at the University of Toledo, who has worked with First Solar. “It’s been a rocky history. The revenues have been pretty lumpy.”

Some analysts warn that efforts to make solar panels in the United States are misguided. Even in the best of times, the business yields modest profits and does not employ a lot of people. It would be better to import panels from low-cost producers to quickly shift from fossil fuels to renewable energy, said Jenny Chase, a solar analyst at Bloomberg New Energy Finance.

“Solar panels would have been cheaper,” Ms. Chase said, if policymakers did not insist on domestic manufacturing. “In the United States, even with the manufacturing boom, it will still be expensive.”

But many lawmakers and corporate executives insist that the United States should make solar panels. They contend that it would be unwise for the country and allies like the European Union and Japan to remain dependent on China for such an important technology. Supply chain chaos during the pandemic, and the growing economic hostility between Beijing and Washington, highlighted the huge risks.

One thing is certain: The world will need many more solar panels to eliminate greenhouse gas emissions. The capacity of solar power installed worldwide needs to be at least 20 times as big as today and possibly as much as 70 times, energy experts said.

“We are going to need very large amounts of photovoltaics around the world,” said Nancy Haegel, director of the National Center for Photovoltaics at the National Renewable Energy Laboratory. “While it’s a very ambitious goal, it is also achievable given the growth of photovoltaics in recent years.”

First Solar’s chief executive, Mark Widmar, said he was confident that his company and others could quickly expand U.S. production. The company, which is based in Tempe, Ariz., is building its fifth U.S. factory in Louisiana. It is already expanding in Ohio, where it has three plants, and building one in Alabama. It also has factories in Vietnam and Malaysia and is working on one in India.

“It’s daunting,” Mr. Widmar said at the Perrysburg factory when describing the company’s plans. “It’s really a David versus Goliath.”

Mr. Widmar, 58, who grew up in a ***working-class*** family in South Bend, Ind., about two and a half hours from Perrysburg, said he was motived by a desire to create U.S. jobs and extend America’s lead in technology.

He was the first in his family to attend college — his father worked in a mailroom, and his mother was a secretary — earning degrees in accounting and finance from Indiana University.

Soon after becoming chief executive seven years ago, Mr. Widmar said, he pushed his engineers to roll out a new generation of solar panels that would generate more energy at a lower cost per watt. The move was risky because it required removal of old equipment and a big investment in new machinery, a switch that sharply reduced production in 2018.

“I said, ‘Let’s leapfrog,’” Mr. Widmar said. “A lot of C.E.O.s wouldn’t have made that decision. I knew we had to grow.”

First Solar began in 1990 as Solar Cells, founded by Harold McMaster, an inventor and businessman who was a pioneer in producing tempered glass, which is used in skyscrapers and solar panels.

In the 1990s and 2000s, the solar panel business was growing fast in the United States, Europe and Japan. But like many boom industries, it soon hit hard times, and many companies, including Solyndra, which the Energy Department backed during the Obama administration, shut down.

At the same time, the Chinese government and Chinese companies doubled down on the technology. They greatly expanded panel manufacturing, helping to drive down costs sharply.

First Solar, which benefited from investments by Walmart’s founding Walton family, survived in part by quickly scrapping plans to expand production. That saved the company from having to sell panels at a steep loss, [*according to a case study*](https://www.csis.org/analysis/case-study-first-solar-2006-2012) by the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington.

It also helped that First Solar’s panels were different from most Chinese panels. Instead of silicon, the company used a proprietary thin film of cadmium telluride.

One thing that helped sustain First Solar was strong growth in Europe, where many countries, particularly Germany, offered generous subsidies to encourage the use of solar power.

Yet First Solar has not been immune to the industry’s ups-and-downs. The company lost more than $100 million in 2019 before earning about $400 million each in 2020 and 2021. Last year, it lost $44 million, which the company attributed to the volatile cost of freight and shipping.

Mr. Widmar said the Inflation Reduction Act, Mr. Biden’s signature climate law, set the stage for a growing domestic solar manufacturing industry. But he worries that the law could become “a political football” — a real threat given that some Republican lawmakers have sought to repeal all or parts of the legislation.

He also said the United States must protect domestic producers from what he described as unfair Chinese competition. “If we are to have a diverse, competitive and sustainable solar manufacturing industry, China’s anticompetitive behavior must be addressed,” he said.

One of First Solar’s advantages, Mr. Widmar said, is that it is not as exposed to the use of forced labor, which human rights groups and U.S. government officials say is common in China’s western Xinjiang region.

In August, First Solar revealed that it had uncovered the use of forced labor by subcontractors at its plant in Malaysia. The subcontractors had forced immigrant workers to pay fees to get jobs and had withheld wages and passports. Mr. Widmar said he was determined to publicize the findings, compensate the workers and get the subcontractors to return their passports.

“I’m an auditor by nature," Mr. Widmar said. “I’ve always felt in order to sleep at night you always have to do what’s right.”

Human rights activists worry that as manufacturers ramp up solar panel production, forced labor, sometimes referred to as “modern slavery,” will become more common. Walk Free, a human rights group based in Australia, [*estimates that 50 million people*](https://www.walkfree.org/global-slavery-index/) around the world lived under forced-labor conditions in 2021, about 10 million more than in 2016.

Michael Carr, executive director of the Solar Energy Manufacturers for America, a trade group, said more domestic manufacturers like First Solar were needed to ensure that the United States had a secure supply of panels untainted by forced labor.

“The module manufacturing in the United States is starting to happen,” Mr. Carr said. But, he added, “our international competitors have built up a really sizable lead.”

PHOTOS: Scenes from a First Solar panel factory in Perrysburg, Ohio, at left and above. Below, the company’s chief executive, Mark Widmar. The manufacturer has managed to hang on when most solar panel production has gone to China. “It’s daunting,” Mr. Widmar said of the company’s expansion plans. “It’s really a David versus Goliath.” (PHOTOGRAPHS BY DANIEL LOZADA FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (B5) This article appeared in print on page B1, B5.

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**End of Document**



[***Can the U.S. Make Solar Panels? This Company Thinks So.***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6984-F6Y1-JBG3-603G-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** Section ; Column 0; Business/Financial Desk

**Length:** 1404 words

**Byline:** By Ivan Penn

**Body**

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First Solar survived the shift of most manufacturing to China in part because its panels do not use polysilicon, a material found in most panels and now made almost entirely in China. But it has not been an easy ride, and the company has struggled at times, especially after the 2008 financial crisis.

''They're sort of a unicorn,'' said Michael Heben, director of the Wright Center for Photovoltaics and Innovation at the University of Toledo, who has worked with First Solar. ''It's been a rocky history. The revenues have been pretty lumpy.''

Some analysts warn that efforts to make solar panels in the United States are misguided. Even in the best of times, the business yields modest profits and does not employ a lot of people. It would be better to import panels from low-cost producers to quickly shift from fossil fuels to renewable energy, said Jenny Chase, a solar analyst at Bloomberg New Energy Finance.

''Solar panels would have been cheaper,'' Ms. Chase said, if policymakers did not insist on domestic manufacturing. ''In the United States, even with the manufacturing boom, it will still be expensive.''

But many lawmakers and corporate executives insist that the United States should make solar panels. They contend that it would be unwise for the country and allies like the European Union and Japan to remain dependent on China for such an important technology. Supply chain chaos during the pandemic, and the growing economic hostility between Beijing and Washington, highlighted the huge risks.

One thing is certain: The world will need many more solar panels to eliminate greenhouse gas emissions. The capacity of solar power installed worldwide needs to be at least 20 times as big as today and possibly as much as 70 times, energy experts said.

''We are going to need very large amounts of photovoltaics around the world,'' said Nancy Haegel, director of the National Center for Photovoltaics at the National Renewable Energy Laboratory. ''While it's a very ambitious goal, it is also achievable given the growth of photovoltaics in recent years.''

First Solar's chief executive, Mark Widmar, said he was confident that his company and others could quickly expand U.S. production. The company, which is based in Tempe, Ariz., is building its fifth U.S. factory in Louisiana. It is already expanding in Ohio, where it has three plants, and building one in Alabama. It also has factories in Vietnam and Malaysia and is working on one in India.

''It's daunting,'' Mr. Widmar said at the Perrysburg factory when describing the company's plans. ''It's really a David versus Goliath.''

Mr. Widmar, 58, who grew up in a ***working-class*** family in South Bend, Ind., about two and a half hours from Perrysburg, said he was motived by a desire to create U.S. jobs and extend America's lead in technology.

He was the first in his family to attend college -- his father worked in a mailroom, and his mother was a secretary -- earning degrees in accounting and finance from Indiana University.

Soon after becoming chief executive five years ago, Mr. Widmar said, he pushed his engineers to roll out a new generation of solar panels that would generate more energy at a lower cost per watt. The move was risky because it required removal of old equipment and a big investment in new machinery, a switch that sharply reduced production in 2018.

''I said, 'Let's leapfrog,''' Mr. Widmar said. ''A lot of C.E.O.s wouldn't have made that decision. I knew we had to grow.''

First Solar began in 1990 as Solar Cells, founded by Harold McMaster, an inventor and businessman who was a pioneer in producing tempered glass, which is used in skyscrapers and solar panels.

In the 1990s and 2000s, the solar panel business was growing fast in the United States, Europe and Japan. But like many boom industries, it soon hit hard times, and many companies, including Solyndra, which the Energy Department backed during the Obama administration, shut down.

At the same time, the Chinese government and Chinese companies doubled down on the technology. They greatly expanded panel manufacturing, helping to drive down costs sharply.

First Solar, which benefited from investments by Walmart's founding Walton family, survived in part by quickly scrapping plans to expand production. That saved the company from having to sell panels at a steep loss, according to a case study by the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington.

It also helped that First Solar's panels were different from most Chinese panels. Instead of silicon, the company used a proprietary thin film of cadmium telluride.

One thing that helped sustain First Solar was strong growth in Europe, where many countries, particularly Germany, offered generous subsidies to encourage the use of solar power.

Yet First Solar has not been immune to the industry's ups-and-downs. The company lost more than $100 million in 2019 before earning about $400 million each in 2020 and 2021. Last year, it lost $44 million, which the company attributed to the volatile cost of freight and shipping.

Mr. Widmar said the Inflation Reduction Act, Mr. Biden's signature climate law, set the stage for a growing domestic solar manufacturing industry. But he worries that the law could become ''a political football'' -- a real threat given that some Republican lawmakers have sought to repeal all or parts of the legislation.

He also said the United States must protect domestic producers from what he described as unfair Chinese competition. ''If we are to have a diverse, competitive and sustainable solar manufacturing industry, China's anticompetitive behavior must be addressed,'' he said.

One of First Solar's advantages, Mr. Widmar said, is that it is not as exposed to the use of forced labor, which human rights groups and U.S. government officials say is common in China's western Xinjiang region.

In August, First Solar revealed that it had uncovered the use of forced labor by subcontractors at its plant in Malaysia. The subcontractors had forced immigrant workers to pay fees to get jobs and had withheld wages and passports. Mr. Widmar said he was determined to publicize the findings, compensate the workers and get the subcontractors to return their passports.

''I'm an auditor by nature," Mr. Widmar said. ''I've always felt in order to sleep at night you always have to do what's right.''

Human rights activists worry that as manufacturers ramp up solar panel production, forced labor, sometimes referred to as ''modern slavery,'' will become more common. Walk Free, a human rights group based in Australia, estimates that 50 million people around the world lived under forced-labor conditions in 2021, about 10 million more than in 2016.

Michael Carr, executive director of the Solar Energy Manufacturers for America, a trade group, said more domestic manufacturers like First Solar were needed to ensure that the United States had a secure supply of panels untainted by forced labor.

''The module manufacturing in the United States is starting to happen,'' Mr. Carr said. But, he added, ''our international competitors have built up a really sizable lead.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/26/business/energy-environment/first-solar-panels-biden-ira.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/26/business/energy-environment/first-solar-panels-biden-ira.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: First Solar's factory in Perrysburg, Ohio, has been making solar panels for more than 20 years. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Daniel Lozada for The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

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[***Story Collections***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68S9-7H11-DXY4-X26B-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

July 23, 2023 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section BR; Column 0; Book Review Desk; Pg. 26; THE SHORTLIST

**Length:** 1112 words

**Byline:** By Kate Folk

**Body**

''She was horrified by the traces of monstrosity in everyday life,'' Agustina Bazterrica writes of a character in her new collection, NINETEEN CLAWS AND A BLACKBIRD: Stories (Scribner, 154 pp., paperback, $17.99), and it could be read as a unifying principle for all 20 stories. Her breakout novel, ''Tender Is the Flesh,'' depicted a world in which humans are bred for meat, and while these tales trade in the macabre, they're set in a universe that's distinctly ours, lending them a subtler, more insidious resonance. Moses' translation from the Spanish captures the playful gruesomeness of the Argentine writer's prose.

Misogyny and its knock-on effects are an animating force throughout. In ''A Light, Swift, and Monstrous Sound,'' a dentist narrowly misses being struck by the body of an upstairs neighbor who's jumped from his balcony and landed on her ground-floor patio, and she believes the dead man's face contains hatred for her, specifically. In ''Unamuno's Boxes,'' a woman suspects her cabdriver is a serial killer, tipped off by his perfectly manicured nails. In ''The Continuous Equality of the Circumference,'' Ada attempts to transform her body into a circle through increasingly grotesque methods, while ''Candy Pink'' is a manifesto for the brokenhearted: ''Write the word 'list' and enumerate the items you need to purchase in order to die with the style and dignity of a cartoon character.''

Endings come with a twist as characters sanguinely accept their fates, as if to concede they should have seen it coming. Bazterrica takes big swings throughout, and while not every punch lands, these stories are fresh and unnerving.

A vein of feminist horror runs through Joyce Carol Oates's latest collection, ZERO-SUM: Stories (Knopf, 251 pp., $29). In the electric ''Mr. Stickum,'' a group of teenage girls ensnares sex criminals in a flypaper-like contraption they've installed in an abandoned mill. ''For always it is expected of girls, as of adult women, that we will be loving, forgiving, merciful,'' the collective voice muses. ''But Mr. Stickum has taught us that is a losing zero-sum game.'' In ''The Cold,'' a mother grieving a miscarriage is plagued by a chill that prevents her from sleeping. ''I have become a brilliant impersonator of myself,'' she insists, as her grip on reality loosens.

The collection's centerpiece, ''The Suicide,'' is an unsparing portrait of an author named Harold Hofsteader, whom Oates has described in an interview as a fictionalized alter ego of David Foster Wallace. Hofsteader, who has bipolar disorder, agonizes over how suicide might shape his legacy. His ruminations are darkly funny -- for instance, he considers using a jump rope before reading the same detail in a French mystery novel: ''The final gesture of The Suicide's life was not going to be plagiarized!''

The third section ventures deeper into genre territory. In ''Monstersister,'' a parasitic entity grows out of a girl's skull, eventually sloughing off into an autonomous being; the true horror is that the girl's family prefers her cast-off ''sister.'' While the final two, post-apocalyptic stories tread familiar ground, the overall trajectory feels satisfying, with the book's zero-sum games advancing to an existential battle between humanity and the destructive forces it has unleashed.

In ''The Math of Living,'' the shortest story in Nishanth Injam's stunning debut, THE BEST POSSIBLE EXPERIENCE: Stories (Pantheon, 212 pp., $25), the narrator calculates a formula for their yearly visit home to see their parents in India. ''What has exile done?'' they reflect. ''It has taken everything I had in return for the idea of a home far, far away.'' This ambivalence drives many of the book's stories, in which characters -- all living in India or its diaspora in the United States -- yearn for a home, and a version of themselves, that no longer exists.

In ''Summers of Waiting,'' Sita returns to her village to visit the emotionally distant grandfather who raised her, Thatha, who is mired in grief over past losses: ''Thatha, living the story, could not see the one thing in which his son still lived: her.'' In ''The Bus,'' a man riding a bus home for the Diwali weekend observes that fellow passengers who enter the bathroom never emerge. He narrates to his brother, who died when they were children, with arch fatalism: ''Now you're dead and I'm stuck on this bus.''

The book's poignant title story details the relationship between Alex and his father, whom he calls Mr. Lourenco after they watch ''Great Expectations'' -- ''like a certain Pip in the movie, who acquired culture by politely addressing older men as Mr.'' An affectionate but erratic parent who sometimes blows their rent money on glossy magazines, Mr. Lourenco takes pride in his work as a tour bus driver in Goa, hoping to provide his passengers with ''the best possible experience so that they could sleep that night with satisfaction.'' Injam's narratives strike a perfect balance of darkness and light.

In the title story of Kathleen Alcott's richly layered collection, EMERGENCY: Stories (Norton, 188 pp., $27.95), a gossipy collective narrator tells the story of Helen Tiel, a troubled woman who's the object of their morbid fascination. ''Helen still believed in a notion we had all worked to disavow, as all adults must,'' they observe of her failed marriage: ''that to any rule, she might prove the brilliant exception.''

Many characters in the book persist in this belief, to their peril. Money is a prominent concern, with stories centering primarily on young women from ***working-class*** backgrounds who have clawed their way into tenuous middle-class stability. In ''Reputation Management,'' Alice becomes conflicted about her role in rehabilitating the image of a Yeshiva teacher who's been accused of sexual abuse when she learns his alleged, teenage victim has killed himself. Of Alice's titular job, Alcott writes, ''It was the first time in her adult life that her talents as a chameleon had felt translatable, and also that she hadn't smelled of the entrees carried three at a time on her forearm.''

In the elegiac ''Temporary Housing,'' a psychiatrist recalls a girl she grew up with in Petaluma, Calif. Alcott evokes the confusing intensity of teenage friendship, a closeness bordering on the erotic: ''The idea of there being some sound we'd never heard the other make, some face we'd never seen that meant exactly that, was as illogical as the fact we'd soon parcel our lives apart.'' Alcott's prose, both sensuous and cerebral, abounds with insight into people and the shapes life contorts them into.

Kate Folk is the author of ''Out There.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/07/12/books/review/in-these-four-story-collections-feminist-horror-abounds.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/07/12/books/review/in-these-four-story-collections-feminist-horror-abounds.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS This article appeared in print on page BR26.

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[***Trump May Not Need a Coup This Time; The Conversation***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69JW-SSF1-DXY4-X3R0-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 1712 words

**Byline:** Gail Collins and Bret Stephens

**Highlight:** The new Times/Siena poll is to Biden’s second-term ambitions what sunlight is to morning fog.

**Body**

Gail Collins: Bret, I know you’re busy writing about your reporting trip to Israel, and I am looking forward to reading all your thoughts. But, gee, can we talk about the Times/Siena poll on the presidential race that came out on Sunday? Donald Trump is ahead in almost all the critical states.

Yow. Pardon me while I pour myself a drink.

Bret Stephens: Nice to be home. Please pour me one while you’re at it.

For readers who don’t know the gory details of the poll, here they are: Across six battleground states, Trump leads President Biden 48 percent to 44 percent among registered voters. In the crucial swing states that Biden won last time, Trump is ahead in five — Arizona, Georgia, Michigan, Nevada and Pennsylvania — while Biden leads only in Wisconsin. Biden is losing support from young voters, Hispanic voters, Black voters — constituencies Democrats have depended on for decades to overcome the longstanding Republican advantage among whites.

Women voters favor Biden by eight percentage points, 50 percent to 42 percent, but men favor Trump by a far wider 18-point spread: 55 percent to 37 percent. (I guess that’s another definition for the term “[*manspreading*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ia0VtiKBdQg).”) On the economy, voters prefer Trump over Biden by a 22-point margin. And a whopping 71 percent think Biden is too old to be president, as opposed to just 39 percent for Trump.

Gail: Whimper, whimper.

Bret: Basically, this poll is to Biden’s second-term ambitions what sunlight is to morning fog. Isn’t it time for him to bow out gracefully and focus his remaining energies on the crises of the moment, particularly Ukraine and the Middle East, instead of gearing up for a punishing campaign while setting the country up for Trump’s catastrophic comeback?

Gail: Well, you and I both hoped he wouldn’t run for re-election. But he did, and he is — and as I’ve said nine million times, he’s only three years older than Donald Trump and appears to be in much better physical condition.

Bret: For all we know, Biden may be physically fitter than [*Alex Honnold*](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/10/25/opinion/alex-honnold-free-solo-movie.html) and mentally sharper than [*Garry Kasparov*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6vYJyOGKCHE&amp;t=308s), even if he’s hiding it well. But this poll is pretty much voters yelling, “We don’t think so.” Ignore it at your peril.

How about putting in a good word for Dean Phillips, the Minnesota representative challenging Biden? Or at least urging the Biden team to lose Kamala Harris in favor of a veep pick more Americans would feel confident about as a potential president, like Lloyd Austin, the defense secretary?

Gail: I’m not gonna argue about perfect-world scenarios. Harris might not be your ideal potential president — or mine — but dumping her from the ticket would suggest some historic degree of bad performance. And she really hasn’t done anything wrong.

Bret: Harris could well be the best vice president ever, though she’s also hiding it well. But the point here is that voters are underwhelmed, and her presence on the ticket compounds Biden’s already abysmal numbers.

Gail: I’m tormented by this whole national vision of Biden as an aging dolt while Trump plays the energetic orator. As our colleagues Michael Bender and Michael Gold pointed out recently, Trump’s had “a string of unforced gaffes, garble and general disjointedness” in his speeches lately.

Bret: Trump has always been the [*Tsar Bomba*](https://www.bbc.com/future/article/20170816-the-monster-atomic-bomb-that-was-too-big-to-use) of idiocy. But too many people seem more impressed by his rhetorical force than appalled by his moral and ideological destructiveness.

Gail: Why does Biden have this terrible image while Trump’s his old, fun-under-multiple-indictments self?

Bret: That’s a great question. As a matter of law, I think Trump belongs in jail. The political problem is that the indictments help him, because they play to his outlaw appeal. He wants to cast himself as the Josey Wales of American politics. His entire argument is that “the system” — particularly the Justice Department — is broken, biased and corrupt, so anything the system does against him is proof of its corruption rather than of his. And tens of millions of people agree with him.

Gail: This is the world that grew up around us when the Riddler was more fun than Batman.

Bret: Perfectly said. The good news in the Times/Siena poll is that Trump’s negatives are also very high. They’re just not as high as Biden’s. Which means Democrats could easily hold the White House with another candidate. But you seem reluctant to push the idea.

Gail: Yeah, since Biden is very, very definitely running, I don’t see any point in whining about the fact that I wish he wasn’t. He’d still be 10 times a better president than Trump.

Bret: I just refuse to believe Biden’s candidacy is inevitable. Democrats seem to have talked themselves into thinking that any primary challenge to Biden just guarantees an eventual Republican victory, since that’s what tends to happen to incumbent presidents, like George H.W. Bush, Jimmy Carter and Gerald Ford. But the alternative is to watch Biden risk his single greatest accomplishment — defeating an incumbent Trump in the first place — by heedlessly running in the face of overwhelming public skepticism.

Gail: What’s so frustrating is — Biden has a really fine record. The economy has picked up. He’s gotten a huge program passed for infrastructure projects like better roads and bridges. He’s always got the fight against global warming on his agenda. He stands up firmly for social issues most Americans support, like abortion rights.

Bret: All the more reason for him to rest on his laurels and pass the baton to a younger generation. I can think of a half-dozen Democrats, particularly governors, who would trounce Trump in a general election just by showing up to the debate with a pulse and a brain. Let me just start with four: Gretchen Whitmer, Josh Shapiro, Jared Polis, Wes Moore. …

Gail: I know Trump appears more energetic, but he’s really only a whole lot louder. Either way, his multitudinous defects in character and policy really should make the difference.

Bret: Hope you’re right. Fear you’re not.

Gail: Sigh. Let’s change the subject. You’re in charge of Republicans — what’s your party going to do about the dreaded Senator Tommy Tuberville?

Bret: For the record, I quit the G.O.P. more than five years ago.

As for Tuberville, who is holding some 370 senior military promotions hostage because he objects to Pentagon policies on abortion, I suggest he should have a look at what just happened in Israel. The country just paid a dreadful price in lives in part because far-right politicians ignored the degradation of the country’s military readiness while they pursued their ideological fixations. I hope defense hawks like Lindsey Graham join forces with the Senate majority leader, Chuck Schumer, to change Senate rules and move the nominations to a vote.

Speaking of Congress, your thoughts on the effort to censure Representative Rashida Tlaib over some of her rhetoric?

Gail: Well, Representative Tlaib accused Israel of committing genocide. She’s also said that President Biden “supported” genocide of the Palestinians, a comment that was offensive to Biden while also, I think, hurting the Palestinian cause. But I wouldn’t want to see members of Congress distracted from the deeply serious issues at hand with a squabble about censorship, particularly one championed by folks like the dreaded Representative Marjorie Taylor Greene.

Bret: Readers won’t be surprised to know that I find Tlaib’s views wrong and repellent. Like Taylor Greene, she’s an embarrassment to her party and the House. But that’s exactly the reason I oppose efforts to censure her. One of the things that distinguishes free societies like America and Israel from dictatorships like Hamas’s in Gaza is that we stand for freedom of speech as a matter of course, while they suppress it. The right censure for Tlaib would be to get voted out of office, not muzzled by her colleagues.

Gail: But let’s get back to that poll for a minute. I was fascinated by the fact that only 6 percent of the respondents identified themselves as union members. I think the unions have done great things for the ***working class*** and middle class in this country and I’m very much saddened by their dwindling influence.

Bret: I’ve always been pro-union. They’re a powerful force for greater automation and an argument for free trade.

Gail: Hissss …

Bret: OK, that was my inner Alex P. Keaton speaking. But union leaders should at least stop to ask themselves why, if they’re so terrific, so many American workers are reluctant to join them. I feel that way about certain other self-regarding institutions, including much of the news media, that are so full of their own wonderfulness that they can’t figure out why people keep fleeing in droves.

Gail: Bret, we’ve entered the November holiday season — really did enjoy the trick-or-treaters last week and was pleased to notice that the popular costumes in our neighborhood seemed to go more toward skeletons and ghosts than celebrities and pop culture heroes. On to Thanksgiving and then I’m gonna challenge you to come up with a list of things in the public world you’re thankful for.

Bret: Pumpkin-spice lattes. Just kidding.

Gail: Meanwhile, this is Republican debate week, featuring several people nobody’s really heard of and an absent Donald Trump. I guess your fave, Nikki Haley, is near the head of the pack, such as it is. Think she still has a whisper of a chance?

Bret: Not sure. But you’ve somehow reminded me of a lovely poem by Adrienne Rich, which seems to capture both Haley’s candidacy and my daily struggles with coherent prose.

You see a man

trying to think.

You want to say

to everything:

Keep off! Give him room!

But you only watch,

terrified

the old consolations

will get him at last

like a fish

half-dead from flopping

and almost crawling

across the shingle,

almost breathing

the raw, agonizing

air

till a wave

pulls it back blind into the triumphant

sea.

It’s called “Ghost of a Chance.” Here’s me hoping Haley’s got more than that.

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PHOTO (PHOTOGRAPH BY DOUG MILLS/THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A20.

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[***Home Brokerages Face Change in Wake of Costly Court Loss***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69JW-DBF1-JBG3-63F4-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Length:** 1800 words

**Byline:** By Michael J. de la Merced and Jordyn Holman

**Body**

Industry experts say a federal jury ruling this week against the National Association of Realtors and large brokerages makes the current commission model likely to change.

A federal jury dealt the biggest blow to the American home-buying industry in perhaps a century this week when it found that the powerful National Association of Realtors and several large brokerages had conspired to keep agent commissions artificially high.

Brokers, analysts and consumer advocates called the decision -- which awarded plaintiffs nearly $1.8 billion in damages -- a game changer. More antitrust lawsuits against the association and brokerages are awaiting trial, while federal regulators are looking to intervene as well.

Here's what changes might be in store for the home brokerage industry, which pulls in an estimated $100 billion in commissions each year.

Real estate experts say the current system won't stand. Right now, home sellers essentially pay fees for both their own agent and the buyers' agent, with a typical commission around 5 to 6 percent, split between the two brokers.

That structure is largely enforced by the National Association of Realtors, which has about 1.5 million dues-paying members. If a seller doesn't agree to those terms, the listing isn't shown on the multiple listing services that underpin most home sales.

This week's decision may have changed that. ''The industry can no longer believe that any jury will decide in favor of their price-setting system,'' Steve Brobeck, senior fellow at the Consumer Federation of America, told DealBook.

Experts identified a range of potential shifts, including:

Making commission sharing optional, so that sellers' agents who don't want to pay buyers' agent fees can still list on databases.

Negotiating to have the home seller cover the buyer's broker costs as part of the transaction price. Or, if banks and federal regulators agree, home-lending rules could be changed to allow mortgages to directly finance buyers' agent fees.

Having buyers' agents charge flat fees, bill by the hour or offer a menu of services that home shoppers could choose from.

Forgoing buyers' agents altogether, as buyers in most countries do.

According to analysts at the investment bank Keefe, Bruyette & Woods, as much as 30 percent of the industry's commissions could disappear.

Start-ups are trying different business models. Some, including CoStar's Homes.com, promote house listings instead of selling buyer leads to agents, as Zillow and Realtor.com do. (Agents can pay Homes.com to promote their listings more prominently.) And companies known as iBuyers, like Opendoor and Offerpad, try to remain independent from multiple-listing services by listing homes they own. Shares in those companies have risen sharply since the Realtors verdict.

The brokerage industry could contract. Lower fees could drive down the number of U.S. agents as much as 80 percent, according to the KBW analysts. Among those at risk are part-time brokers or underperformers. ''We'll find out who the real professionals are,'' said Jason Haber, an agent at Compass.

Such a drop could have disastrous consequences for the National Association of Realtors, which collects about $150 from each member annually. According to the nonprofit's most recent annual tax filing, it earned $79 million in net income on $327 million in revenue.

The group has said it will appeal the court ruling. -- Michael J. de la Merced

IN CASE YOU MISSED IT

Sam Bankman-Fried was found guilty on all counts. The founder of the FTX cryptocurrency exchange was convicted on seven charges of fraud and conspiracy and could face up to 110 years in prison. The verdict cements the fall of the crypto industry's former poster child.

Efforts were taken to regulate artificial intelligence on both sides of the Atlantic. President Biden issued an executive order requiring companies to test A.I. tools that could be a threat to national security and share the results with the government. At the first global A.I. safety summit, hosted by Rishi Sunak, the British prime minister, 28 governments agreed to cooperate on risk management.

Autoworkers ended their strike. General Motors agreed to a tentative deal with the United Automobile Workers, the last of the three big Detroit manufacturers to do so, after weeks of labor strife. The concessions were seen as a big win for the union.

An old trade rule causes new problems for U.S. retailers

American retailers have faced an existential crisis since e-commerce disrupted the industry's traditional business models. But their latest threat, a group of retailers and policymakers say, is coming from a nearly century-old trade rule, The Times's Jordyn Holman reports for DealBook.

The rule, de minimis, exempts packages shipped into the United States from duties and fees if they are worth less than $800.

Critics of de minimis point out that because Chinese-founded online retailers like Shein and Temu deliver merchandise straight from their overseas warehouses to shoppers' homes, few of their packages are worth at least $800. But products made overseas and shipped in bulk to the United States -- where retailers store them in warehouses before sending them to customers -- are less likely to fall under the threshold.

U.S. retailers want that rule changed. If it isn't, they argue, U.S. jobs are at risk.

De minimis ''played a significant role'' in financial strain that led to David Bridal's bankruptcy in April, which was its second in five years, Jim Marcum, the company's chief executive, told DealBook. The company said it paid about $20 million in fees to U.S. Customs last year while its Chinese-based competitors that ship dresses straight to shoppers paid nothing, Mr. Marcum said. Over six years, that amounted to about $100 million in duties that could have been invested in modernizing the business, he added.

Temu and Shein most likely account for 30 percent of packages shipped daily under the provision, according to a report from the House Select Committee on the Chinese Communist Party. A Shein spokeswoman said de minimis ''is not critical to the success of our business,'' and in July, Shein's executive vice chairman said the company was ''eager'' to work with lawmakers to help change the rule. A Temu spokeswoman said that its ''growth isn't dependent on the de minimis policy'' and that the company was ''supportive of any policy adjustments made by legislators that align with consumer interests.''

One group of U.S. retailers wants Congress to expand de minimis so that it applies to U.S. distribution centers in foreign trade zones. In these zones, companies are not required to immediately pay duty fees for imported products. Instead, they pay the fees when they ship those products to customers. That delay helps them manage cash flow, but unlike packages shipped out of a warehouse abroad, packages shipped out of warehouses in foreign trade zones aren't exempt from fees if they're worth less than $800. ''What we want is parity,'' said Ron Sorini, a lobbyist and trade expert working with the group.

Some favor other approaches. Kim Glas, the president of the National Council of Textile Organizations, said it would be better to limit the use of de minimis to fewer retailers. She supports a bill, introduced in Congress in June, that would exclude ''nonmarket economies,'' such as China and Russia, from using the exception, though she would like to see legislation ban all e-commerce shipments from using the de minimis exception.

''We don't want to have a law in existence that creates an incentive to move your distribution offshore,'' Sorini said. ''And that's the incentive that exists today.''

Dissecting the American dream

In ''Ours Was the Shining Future,'' The Times's David Leonhardt examines the rise and fall of the American dream, arguing for progressive policies aimed at economic improvement for the ***working class***. In a recent interview, Leonhardt answered questions from Andrew. His responses have been condensed and edited.

You write that the U.S. started to lose its way in the early 1980s when wages stagnated. What do you make of the argument that the period between World War II and 1980 was a historical aberration -- the rest of the world was largely out of business -- and that it was global competition that led to wage stagnation?

I think that's partly true. But the United States also made a set of decisions that have damaged most people's economic prospects. We used to be the most educated country in the world, and we've fallen behind. We didn't have to. We used to have some of the best transportation infrastructure in the world, and we've fallen behind. We used to spend more of our government funds on scientific research than we do. Our economy is vastly more unequal than it used to be. And that didn't have to happen, either.

The book makes the case for stronger labor unions, something we're now seeing play out in the U.S. However, some automakers -- and even employees -- have a view that in the past, auto unions extracted so much money that the industry ultimately fell into bankruptcy. Do you agree with that?

I think there are particular cases of unions overreaching in the past, and I think the auto industry, particularly in the 1970s, might be a good example. But the bigger problem in the United States has been low wages for too many workers. Inequality has absolutely soared. And historically, there is a very strong relationship between the labor unions and the wages of most workers. Can unions sometimes be too strong? Yes. Has that been the main problem in the U.S. economy in recent decades? No. The main problem has been that we've had weak unions, weak wage growth for most workers and really high inequality.

You appear to praise Franklin D. Roosevelt's entitlement programs. Given the nation's debt problem, how would you think about revising those entitlement programs?

I understand why Roosevelt made them universal. It was a political decision. But I think there's a very good argument that they should no longer be universal. The United States today sometimes spends more government money on affluent old people than it does on poor children. One of the ways to address our long-term debt problems, which are real, is to cut spending on affluent retirees. And I don't just mean the very rich. I also mean upper-middle-class people who are more numerous than the very rich, many of whom don't need as generous benefits as they receive. There's also room in our economy to raise taxes, and there is room to cut a bunch of other benefits that flow largely to well-off people, like the mortgage interest deduction.

Thanks for reading! We'll see you Monday.

Please email thoughts and suggestions to [*dealbook@nytimes.com*](mailto:dealbook@nytimes.com)

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/04/business/dealbook/how-the-real-estate-broker-business-could-change.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/04/business/dealbook/how-the-real-estate-broker-business-could-change.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: A federal jury found that the National Association of Realtors and several large brokerages had conspired to keep agent commissions artificially high. (PHOTOGRAPH BY CAITLIN O'HARA FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page B6.

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[***The Disaster No One Wants To Talk About***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68S9-7H11-DXY4-X286-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Body**

There's a growing understanding in Britain that the country's vote to quit the European Union, a decisive moment in the international rise of reactionary populism, was a grave error.

Just as critics predicted, Brexit has led to inflation, labor shortages, business closures and travel snafus. It has created supply chain problems that put the future of British car manufacturing in danger. Brexit has, in many cases, turned travel between Europe and the U.K. into a punishing ordeal, as I learned recently, spending hours in a chaotic passport control line when taking the train from Paris to London. British musicians are finding it hard to tour in Europe because of the costs and red tape associated with moving both people and equipment across borders, which Elton John called ''crucifying.''

According to the U.K.'s Office for Budget and Responsibility, leaving the E.U. has shaved 4 percent off Britain's gross domestic product. The damage to Britain's economy, the O.B.R.'s chairman has said, is of the same ''magnitude'' as that from the Covid pandemic.

All this pain and hassle has created an anti-Brexit majority in Britain. According to a YouGov poll released this week, 57 percent of Britons say the country was wrong to vote to leave the E.U., and a slight majority wants to rejoin it. Even Nigel Farage, the former leader of the far-right U.K. Independence Party sometimes known as ''Mr. Brexit,'' told the BBC in May, ''Brexit has failed.''

This mess was, of course, both predictable and predicted. That's why I've been struck, visiting the U.K. this summer, by the curious political taboo against discussing how badly Brexit has gone, even among many who voted against it. Seven years ago, Brexit was an early augur of the revolt against cosmopolitanism that swept Donald Trump into power. (Trump even borrowed the ''Mr. Brexit'' moniker for himself.) Both enterprises -- Britain's divorce from the E.U. and Trump's reign in the U.S. -- turned out catastrophically. Both left their countries fatigued and depleted. But while America can't stop talking about Trump, many in the U.K. can scarcely stand to think about Brexit.

''It's so toxic,'' Tobias Ellwood, a Tory lawmaker who has called on his colleagues to admit that Brexit was a mistake, told me. ''People have invested so much time and pain and agony on this.'' It's like a ''wound,'' he said, that people want to avoid picking at. The London mayor, Sadiq Khan, one of the few Labour Party leaders eager to discuss the consequences of leaving the E.U., described an ''omertà,'' or vow of silence, around it. ''It's the elephant in the room,'' he told me. ''I'm frustrated that no one's talking about it.''

Part of the reason that no one -- or almost no one -- is talking about Brexit's consequences lies with the demographics of the Labour Party. Somewhere between a quarter and a third of Labour voters supported Brexit, and those voters are concentrated in the so-called Red Wall -- ***working-class*** areas in the Midlands and Northern England that once solidly supported Labour but swung right in the 2019 election. ''Those voters do not want to have a conversation about Brexit,'' said Joshua Simons, the director of Labour Together, a think tank close to Labour leadership.

Sheer exhaustion also contributes to making Brexit talk unwelcome: Between the vote to leave the European Union in 2016 and the final agreement in 2020, the issue consumed British politics, and many people just want to move on. Simons argues there's also a third factor: a sense that the results of a democratic referendum must be honored. He cites a point that a mentor of his, the political philosopher Danielle Allen, made after the 2016 vote. ''In the end, in democracy, sometimes you all do crazy things together,'' Simons said. ''And what becomes more important is not whether the crazy thing was a good or bad thing to do. It's that you're doing it together.''

As someone from a far more polarized country, I found this idea somewhat foreign. If the Trumpist electorate had imposed such a costly and ultimately unpopular policy on the country, I suspect there would be a rush among Democrats to reverse it. But in the U.K., referendums -- which are rare and held only to address major issues -- have a political gravity that it's hard for an outsider like me to understand.

''You've got to respect the referendum,'' said Khan. ''What you can't have is never-endums, referendum after referendum after referendum. That disrespects the electorate.''

Still, he argues that without facing the harm that Brexit has caused, the country can't move forward: ''Unless you can diagnose what the problem is, how can there be a prognosis?'' Britain is not, at least in the near term, going to rejoin the E.U. But both Khan and Ellwood argue that it can still forge closer trade and immigration ties than it has now, and perhaps eventually return to the European single market, the trade agreement encompassing the E.U. countries, Norway, Switzerland, Iceland and Liechtenstein.

''After the next election, I can see all parties embracing the idea of rejoining the single market,'' said Ellwood, adding, ''I put money on it that it happens in the next five years.''

One silver lining to Brexit is that it offers a cautionary tale for the rest of Europe. After Britain voted to leave the E.U. in 2016, there's been fear, among some who care about the European project, that France or Italy could be next. But as The Guardian reported, as of January, support for leaving the E.U. has declined in every member state for which data is available. As governments across the continent move rightward, the E.U. itself is moving in a more conservative direction, but it's not coming apart.

''I don't think you're going to see other countries in the E.U. leaving the E.U. if for no other reason than because they've seen the impact on us,'' said Khan. But there's a larger lesson, one most Western countries seemingly have to continually relearn. Right-wing nationalist projects begin with loud, flamboyant swagger. They tend to end unspeakably.

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**Graphic**

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[***The 25 Most Defining Pieces of Furniture From the Last 100 Years; T 25***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BNC-FKF1-JBG3-61BK-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** Nick Haramis, Max Berlinger, Rose Courteau, Kate Guadagnino, Max Lakin and Evan Moffitt Nick Haramis is an editor at large for T, The New York Times Style Magazine.

**Highlight:** Three designers, a museum curator, an artist and a design-savvy actress convened at The New York Times to make a list of the most enduring and significant objects for living.

**Body**

How do we define furniture? It might seem like a silly question, but it’s one that kept coming up in October of last year, when, in a conference room on the 15th floor of The New York Times building, six experts — the architects and interior designers [*Rafael de Cárdenas*](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/09/13/t-magazine/design/rafael-de-cardenas.html) and [*Daniel Romualdez*](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/09/13/t-magazine/design/rafael-de-cardenas.html); the Museum of Modern Art’s senior curator of architecture and design, [*Paola Antonelli*](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/09/13/t-magazine/design/rafael-de-cardenas.html); the actress and avid furniture collector [*Julianne Moore*](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/09/13/t-magazine/design/rafael-de-cardenas.html); the artist and sculptor [*Katie Stout*](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/09/13/t-magazine/design/rafael-de-cardenas.html); and T’s design and interiors director, [*Tom Delavan*](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/09/13/t-magazine/design/rafael-de-cardenas.html) — gathered for nearly three hours to make a list of the most influential chairs, sofas and tables, as well as some less obvious household objects, from the past century.

The goal was to land on a wide range of offerings, but there were parameters: To qualify, each piece was required to have been fabricated, even if just as a prototype, within the past 100 years. It also needed to be at least slightly functional. (The Japanese architect Oki Sato’s 2007 [*Cabbage chair*](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/09/13/t-magazine/design/rafael-de-cardenas.html), a treatise on sustainability constructed entirely from a roll of disused paper, isn’t the sturdiest place to sit; nonetheless, it was nominated.) Lighting was excluded from the debate — “which is nuts,” said de Cárdenas, a former men’s wear designer who started his firm in 2006 — unless it was attached to, say, a desk. (The Italian architect and designer Ettore Sottsass’s illuminated Ultrafragola mirror, which presaged selfie culture by decades, made the cut.) There were no limits placed on provenance, and a piece didn’t need to have been designed by a known name, or even attributable. The jurors were determined to avoid what Antonelli described as “the usual collectors’ items by white German, French and Italian males with a smattering of women, no Latin American or Black — and very little Asian — representation.” While the final list, presented below in roughly the order it was discussed, and not reflecting any kind of hierarchy, does include an icon or two (to omit Charles and Ray Eames or Le Corbusier, the group decided, would be a mistake), diversity of maker (and of materials, styles, processes and prices) was a consideration. In each case, the objects represented more than comfort or utility; every innovation is, in its own way, a historical artifact — a response to the prosperity or unrest into which it was born or a proposal for a more efficient world, maybe a better one.

The participants were asked to [*submit a list of 10 suggestions beforehand*](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/09/13/t-magazine/design/rafael-de-cardenas.html), revealing their own unique tastes and interests. Stout, who curated [*a show in 2020*](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/09/13/t-magazine/design/rafael-de-cardenas.html) with the Shaker Museum in Chatham, N.Y., argued that a bonnet is a slipcover for the head and should count as furniture. (She was voted down.) Moore, an avowed minimalist, petitioned to include austere creations in marble or wood by Poul Kjaerholm and Donald Judd. Romualdez’s more classical choices — among them a daybed by the mid-20th-century French designer Marc du Plantier and a patinated bronze table by the Swiss sculptor Diego Giacometti from the 1980s — were influenced by the luxurious interiors he saw in American magazines while growing up in Manila in the Philippines, long before he’d work for the architects Thierry Despont and Robert A.M. Stern and later open a firm of his own. As Delavan said, “Daniel’s were the chicest. Julianne’s were the purest. Katie’s were the wackiest. Rafael’s were the campiest. And mine were the dullest.” Antonelli’s were, perhaps, the most comprehensive: She created three separate lists to accommodate her top picks, runners-up and wild cards. “I just want us to express an idea of design that excites the world,” she said. As the members of the group settled into the room’s upholstered cantilever chairs — imitations of a Bauhaus style popularized in the 1920s by the Hungarian German Modernist Marcel Breuer — they nodded and offered words of encouragement. And then they got down to business. — Nick Haramis

This conversation has been edited and condensed.

1. Piero Gatti, Cesare Paolini and Franco Teodoro, Sacco Chair, 1968

Considered the original beanbag, the Sacco chair is the rare design object to become an instant classic in both rec rooms and museum collections. It was included in MoMA’s seminal 1972 show “[*Italy: The New Domestic Landscape*](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/09/13/t-magazine/design/rafael-de-cardenas.html),” which presented furnishings that looked beyond aesthetics and function and toward sociocultural shifts, including the rejection of bourgeois propriety. “Imagine trying to be stuffy while slouching in a beanbag chair,” said the show’s curator, the architect and industrial designer Emilio Ambasz. Indeed, the vaguely pear-shaped blob of stitched vinyl filled with polystyrene beads — the transparent prototype was partially inspired by piles of snow — molded to the body of the sitter and encouraged lounging of the highest order; the hard part was getting out of it. Now that we better understand the environmental impact of polystyrene, the Italian furniture company Zanotta, which has produced the piece from the start and continues to call it the “anatomical easy-chair,” has experimented with a version stuffed with bioplastic derived from sugar cane. — Kate Guadagnino

Tom Delavan: It was revolutionary in terms of material, and it really did filter down to so many imitations that are less expensive. It also addressed how people’s lives were changing: We’re slouching lower and lower as time goes by.

Paola Antonelli: I used to say it was like the Kama Sutra: It has tons of positions. And it was a symbol of an era. I remember pictures of bearded revolutionaries smoking their joints on it. It was all about huddling together and rethinking the world, and it’s still as fresh as ever. I love the fact that you can find it in different shapes. My only big concern about that chair is sustainability. But there’re so many other fillers beside polystyrene, right? I think you can use mushroom mycelium.

Katie Stout: I wish we were all lounging on beanbags right now.

2. Le Corbusier, LC14 Tabouret Cabanon, 1952

Some of the best design originates at home. A great example is the LC14 Tabouret Cabanon, which the Swiss-born French architect Charles-Édouard Jeanneret, known as Le Corbusier, built for his cabin in Roquebrune-Cap-Martin, a vacation shack that he designed (reportedly in 45 minutes) on the French Riviera. At roughly 160 square feet, the residence was almost monastic, with most of the furniture built in. An exercise in pure functionality, the boxes can be used as chairs, side tables and storage. Made of wood — the Cabanon is chestnut, though other iterations come in oak — they were inspired by a whiskey crate the architect found on the beach, with dovetail joints and oblong holes in the sides for lifting. Prefiguring both modular furniture and the nothing-to-hide sensibility of industrial décor, they serve as rustic altars to the right angle, about which Le Corbusier once wrote, “Simple and naked / yet knowable. … It is the answer and the guide.” — Rose Courteau

Julianne Moore: In my business, this is what we call an apple box. I stand on one if I’m shorter than the actor I’m working with. Le Corbusier created an object of desirability, but it’s something you could make yourself and use a million different ways. [The English furniture designer] Jasper Morrison did his own version. I have two in my house that were built by a grip to hold a certain kind of camera. A painter once said to me, “They’re sort of amazing. They look like a [Constantin] Brâncuși [sculpture].” It’s a simple object that reminds different people of different things. And while it’s sort of silly that the Corbusier version has become this untouchable museum piece, I like the fact that it’s just a box.

Delavan: I’m going to argue against it. You can’t say that Le Corbusier invented the box. My feeling is that he was basically reusing a thing that already existed.

Rafael de Cárdenas: I’m not defending it, but he did recontextualize it.

Antonelli: Even though I’ve never been a fan of this, I buy your argument. I had [the Italian architect and designer Achille] Castiglioni as a teacher. And he used to always say that redesign is a legitimate form of design — to take something that exists in the world and appropriate it and improve upon it.

3. Le Corbusier, Pierre Jeanneret and Charlotte Perriand; Chaise Longue à Réglage Continu; 1928

In 1929, [*Le Corbusier*](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/09/13/t-magazine/design/rafael-de-cardenas.html), along with his cousin Pierre Jeanneret and their colleague and fellow architect and designer [*Charlotte Perriand*](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/09/13/t-magazine/design/rafael-de-cardenas.html), created a Modernist interior for the Salon d’Automne art exhibition in Paris. In a sly rejection of the enameled embellishments of Art Deco, the prevailing style of the time, they presented concealed lights, glass-topped tables, mirrored cabinets and seating featuring tubular steel, including the lissome Chaise Longue à Réglage Continu, which they’d first produced and placed the previous year in a villa just outside of Paris. With an H-shaped, bicolor-steel base cradling chromed tubes that followed the form of a supine human body — dipping to accommodate the hips and cresting to support the knees — it was among the first ergonomically conscious pieces of furniture ever manufactured. The frame, which could be adjusted to change the angle of repose, held a slim, black fur mattress with a cylindrical headrest. Far too radical for its time and expensive to fabricate, the piece languished for decades but emerged as a coveted emblem of Modernism when Cassina started producing it in 1965. Le Corbusier, who held functionality in high esteem, is famous for saying that a house is a machine for living. It’s no surprise, then, that he considered this chaise longue a machine for resting. His biographer Charles Jencks had another take: “It is as if the body is being propped up on fingertips like a precious jewel.” — K.G.

Delavan: I love this chair because, even though it looks weird, it addresses how our bodies are meant to sit. It’s ergonomic in a way that chairs or sofas weren’t before. Every zero-gravity chair is a version of this.

Antonelli: Interestingly, for a piece of modern furniture, it’s also comfortable.

Moore: And it references what was going on in the world at the time: industrialism and metal suddenly entering our lives and our homes.

Delavan: Think of how crazy this must have seemed in 1928.

Moore: When so many people were still living with traditional furniture.

Antonelli: If we’re to include a tubular steel chair, this is the one.

4. George Nakashima, Slab I Coffee Table, Circa 1950

These days, live-edge furniture — fashioned from a slice of a log with at least one side left ruggedly intact — seems to be everywhere. Each piece owes a debt to the raw splendor of [*George Nakashima’s*](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/09/13/t-magazine/design/rafael-de-cardenas.html) original slab coffee tables. Nakashima, who was born in Spokane, Wash., to Japanese immigrant parents, established himself as a furniture designer before being imprisoned with his family at the Minidoka internment camp in Idaho during World War II. While there, he further refined his woodworking skills under the tutelage of a fellow internee, the master carpenter Gentaro Kenneth Hikogawa. After Nakashima’s release in 1943, he settled in New Hope, Pa., where he established his own studio and made furniture for Knoll. Believing that his work gave trees a second life, he fused the austere solidity of Shaker furniture with the Japanese concepts of wabi, sabi and shibui — emphasizing age and simplicity. This bundle of ideals was best expressed in the Slab table, with a top made from a single slice of American black walnut or cherry, occasionally accented with functional elements like a stabilizing butterfly joint. Instead of excising the irregularities and imperfections, Nakashima chose to highlight them, a radical approach at the time. Each table was unique to the tree and the woodworker who handled it. The furniture designer enshrined sensitivity, not domination, as the key to sublime design, in contrast to the ornate embellishments of Art Deco and the factory aesthetics of the postwar era, which embraced machinery as a human triumph. — R.C.

Moore: I’m obsessed with craft, and I think that Nakashima was the first person who brought it into mainstream conversation. I think about what he went through, how he emerged from the internment camp and returned to making his furniture. You could go to New Hope and say, “I want a table, some chairs and a bed,” and he would do it. He was expressing himself as an artist and introducing this idea of organic Modernism.

Delavan: This table inspired a lot of craftspeople to be like, “I can make one, too.”

De Cárdenas: There’re also kitsch versions of it. So much defining furniture is high culture, but this had mass appeal.

Antonelli: I like that it inspired people to make their own little monsters.

5. Bill Stumpf, Ergon Chair, 1976

The ancient Greeks made chairs with curved backrests, but it wasn’t until the 1970s that ergonomics, the study of people in their workplace undertaken to improve efficiency and welfare, was heartily embraced by industrial designers. That’s when Herman Miller brought on the American designer [*Bill Stumpf*](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/09/13/t-magazine/design/rafael-de-cardenas.html), who’d worked with medical experts while doing postgraduate research at the University of Wisconsin to conduct studies on ideal sitting posture that incorporated X-rays and time-lapse photography. In 1976, the year that word processing became available on microcomputers, Stumpf came up with the swiveling Ergon office chair, constructed with pillowy pieces of fabric-covered foam (one for the back and another for the bottom), which could be wheeled in any direction. The chair also had gas-lift levers that controlled height and tilt — good news for women, who were joining the work force in record numbers, and whose comfort had been ignored by earlier designers. But Stumpf didn’t stop there; in collaboration with the Los Angeles-born Don Chadwick, he went on to debut 1994’s Aeron chair, which featured a higher backrest covered in a flexible textile called pellicle. It remains, with a tweak or two, one of those pieces that’s so ubiquitous you’re not likely to notice or think about it. That is, until a co-worker nabs yours. — K.G.

Delavan: It’s one of the earliest examples of an adjustable office chair. Part of it was that women were now in the workplace, so they needed the chair to be a different size. Paola, you’d nominated the Aeron chair, which is great, but I feel like Stumpf’s idea started here. The Aeron is a refinement of the Ergon.

Antonelli: I saw the Aeron chair being made when I was living in Los Angeles, and I remember it in the World Trade Center lobbies. It’s the first thing I acquired for the Museum of Modern Art when I started working there. But I prefer this one because it’s earlier. There was the Ettore Sottsass chair for Olivetti — the yellow one [from 1972] — but I don’t care, because this one was probably more affordable, and it went everywhere.

6. Gae Aulenti, Table With Wheels, 1980

The “High Tech” moment in design started in the early 1970s, as more and more New York City artists were moving into lofts in SoHo’s abandoned cast-iron buildings and furnishing them with functional pieces picked up at hospitals, offices, warehouses and restaurant supply stores. In these open-plan homes and those that aspired to be like them, you were likely to find white walls, exposed pipes, track lighting, Metro Super Erecta wire shelving and stainless-steel commercial refrigerators. In 1980, at the tail-end of that era, the Italian architect and designer [*Gae Aulenti*](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/09/13/t-magazine/design/rafael-de-cardenas.html) introduced Table With Wheels, a thick pane of beveled glass mounted on large rubber casters that she intended to resemble the wooden trolleys used to cart heavy pieces around the factory of Milan’s FontanaArte design studio, where she served as art director. The table had the playfulness and poeticism of a Marcel Duchamp readymade, and it presaged glass as one of the decade’s trendy materials for interiors — one seen increasingly throughout the 1980s in the form of smooth reflective surfaces and chunky, semitransparent blocks. In 1993, Aulenti riffed on her design, releasing Tour, an updated model with bicycle wheels. — K.G.

De Cárdenas: I know it’s just a piece of glass on casters, but I think it transcends class, style and era.

Moore: You know what else it speaks to? High-tech design.

Daniel Romualdez: If we’re doing high tech, I think we should include the Metro shelves.

Moore: No! That then knocks out Dieter Rams.

7. Dieter Rams, 606 Universal Shelving System, 1960

The German functionalist [*Dieter Rams*](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/09/13/t-magazine/design/rafael-de-cardenas.html) didn’t invent modular design, but as the creator of the 606 Universal Shelving System for Vitsoe, he can be credited as one of its early perfecters. The system’s construction is strikingly simple, with aluminum E-Tracks mounted to walls from which shelves, cabinets and even tables can be hung using no-equipment-required pins. Adjustable and customizable, it can be adapted to a wide range of spaces, needs and aesthetics. (When they’re full, the wafer-thin but deceptively strong shelves, made of powder-coated, laser-cut steel, nearly disappear.) The unit embodies all 10 of the design principles that Rams, an early advocate of environmental sustainability, formulated in the 1970s (No. 1: “Good design is innovative”; No. 5: “Good design is unobtrusive”), but the real reason it’s been revered for decades may be its incomparable durability (No. 7: “Good design is long-lasting”). Parts purchased today can be used interchangeably with those from 1960, when the shelving first went into production. — R.C.

Moore: I’m going to go to bat for Dieter Rams. I’m a big fan of the idea of a system, particularly in terms of the 20th century and how we started to live [in a more transient way], which led to things that collapse or stack and are lightweight. The idea is that you can buy this piece and change it — use it for books, records or clothing. I’m really interested in industrial design, a lot of which we don’t even think of as being designed. It often seems to have come out of nowhere, and I feel that way about this shelving.

Antonelli: If we’re going to include a shelving system, much as I love Metro’s [steel storage] shelves, Dieter Rams should be on here.

Moore: He’s a rock star.

Stout: Even just this image [from the Vitsoe catalog], with a game of Twister stored on a shelf, feels so democratic to me. All these different tiers of design.

Moore: I love the Vitsoe catalog, frankly. It’s very soothing.

8. Faye Toogood, Roly-Poly Chair, 2014

[*Faye Toogood’s*](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/09/13/t-magazine/design/rafael-de-cardenas.html) Roly-Poly chair, which debuted in 2014 as part of a collection of similarly rotund fiberglass furniture titled Assemblage 4, isn’t just a seminal piece of design — it’s also got a sense of humor. The key lies in the contrast between its jolly, potbellied seat, evocative of a cartoon animal, with four squat, cylindrical legs, and the confident way it occupies space. The chair is a corporeal symbol of maternal strength; Toogood, a multi-hyphenate British clothing and interior designer, has said that the roundness was inspired by her pregnancy. (“I’ve got fat,” she told an architecture magazine upon the chair’s release.) Indeed, it’s the kind of perch that makes you never want to get up, to relinquish your vanity and drop into a state of permanent comfort. With no hard edges, it’s both cleverly child-safe and endlessly imaginative, conjuring bubble letters, elephants and balloons. But although the Roly-Poly grew out of the designer’s experience with her changing body, it offers something more universal: a softer, more whimsical take on minimalism, which in recent years has turned away from sharp-cornered austerity toward the more organic silhouettes of the circle and the arch. — R.C.

Moore: Faye was at the forefront of a movement where things suddenly got soft.

Antonelli: And big.

Delavan: She changed the silhouette.

De Cárdenas: I remember her presentation in Milan in 2011. There were these black hard-boiled eggs, and cheese served on pieces of charcoal. I mean, it sucked scraping your teeth on stuff, but it was also cool. And then there was furniture, but the whole thing was the presentation. Whatever that is, some people do it well and most people don’t. But I think she started it. Everything in design at the time was slick and boxy, highlighting craftsmanship, but this work wasn’t.

Delavan: It felt like something she could have sculpted.

Moore: And it was new. It’s always exciting to be woken up like that.

9. Unknown, but Possibly Jean-Michel Frank; Parsons Table; Circa 1930

Some pieces of furniture are so unobtrusive and chameleon-like that they hardly feel designed. Such is the case with the Parsons table, whose defining feature is its ratio: No matter the table’s size, its legs — which stand flush with the corners of its surface — must always be equal in width to the thickness of its top. It’s thought to have emerged from a design project completed in the early 1930s at the Paris satellite of New York’s Parsons School of Design, the result of an assignment often attributed to the aristocratic French decorator Jean-Michel Frank, who was a lecturer there at the time. (The American designer Joseph B. Platt is also often cited as having a hand in the piece.) Known for creating magisterial spaces for the fashion designer Elsa Schiaparelli and the composer Cole Porter, Frank put aside his usual interest in such sumptuous materials as shagreen and obsidian, challenging the students to design a table so elemental that it would retain its basic character and integrity regardless of finish. — R.C.

Romualdez: Leading up to this debate, I asked ChatGPT for a list of influential furniture and nothing surprised me. [But] I wanted to [choose items] that influenced me personally. Growing up in the Philippines, I only saw things in magazines — like [1960s François-Xavier] Lalanne sheep [sculptures]. They were in Valentino [Garavani]’s chalet, [Yves] Saint Laurent’s library, the Agnellis’ Milanese apartment.

Moore: Unfortunately, Lalanne sheep are just signifiers of enormous wealth.

Romualdez: Yes, but for me, nose pressed to the glass, it made me question, “What makes something fancy?” People had flocks of them. When Julianne [and I were talking about our lists], she asked, “What’s your favorite dining table?” Although simple and plain, this is the first thing that came to mind.

De Cárdenas: We can’t not include the Parsons table.

Romualdez: A friend of mine, [the American philanthropist] Deeda Blair, used to tell me, “You can’t get an 18th-century coffee table. It’s a conceit of the modern world.” I was attracted to this as a foil to [what’s in] most people’s fancy living rooms.

10. Ettore Sottsass, Ultrafragola Illuminated Mirror, 1970

Although the Italian architect and designer Ettore Sottsass’s undulating electrified mirror, which emits a dusky pink glow, predates social media by four decades, it somehow anticipated the age of the selfie. Sottsass, who would in the 1980s spearhead the madcap Milan-based collective known as the Memphis Group, crafted it as an apparent tribute to womanhood — its ripples supposedly reference flowing hair and body curves. Such an idea may now seem a study in objectification; nonetheless, the mirror’s enchantments are undeniable, as proven by its vibrant second life on social media. The musician Frank Ocean and the model Bella Hadid are among those who’ve captured themselves, like modern-day Narcissuses, in its reflection. The appeal is obvious: It’s seductive, flirtatious and lighthearted — décor as an antidepressant in troubling times. Perhaps Sottsass himself best explained why the glowing, flowing mirror is universally beloved. “When I was young, all we ever heard about was functionalism, functionalism, functionalism,” he once said. “It’s not enough. Design should also be sensual and exciting.” — Max Berlinger

Stout: Sottsass isn’t my favorite, but this has been so influential, especially in terms of marketing and the rise of Corporate Memphis. Even though it’s from the 1970s, it seems to have been made for the Instagram era. He and [the Italian architect and designer] Gaetano Pesce have been so significant to an entire generation of designers, especially right now.

Antonelli: I don’t think we need to include Pesce.

De Cárdenas: Pesce was always niche and was left out of the design conversation for a long time. Now his work feels very relevant again.

11. Billy Baldwin, Slipper Chair, 1950s

Until the 20th century, what we now call the slipper chair was a private affair, a boudoir staple of Victorian-era excess with an armless seat to accommodate the wide petticoats and corset-bound women unable to bend over. But in the 1950s, the American decorator Billy Baldwin yanked the chair with an overstuffed profile out of the dressing room and got it ready for cocktail hour. He threw out the brocade jacquard and flouncy trim for something more clean-cut and modern; the low-to-the ground, high-backed seat became sheathed in a pleated skirt or tight slipcover tailored straight to the floor. (Baldwin believed that too many naked chair legs made a room “restless.”) Still, it didn’t completely escape its beau monde past. Baldwin’s clientele included the likes of socialites Jacqueline Onassis and Nan Kempner. For Diana Vreeland, he designed a slipper chair in a clashing print to complement the fashion editor’s scarlet chintz “garden in hell” room in her Park Avenue apartment. About his stump-legged rejoinders to Continental refinement, Baldwin once said, “We can recognize and give credit where credit is due, to the debt of taste we owe Europe, but we have taste, too.” — Max Lakin

Romualdez: I’m probably the most traditional decorator in this room. But I think we need to talk about banal furniture that you don’t realize is everywhere — that you don’t even think of as being designed. I was obsessed with this Billy Baldwin chair when I was in school. It’s tiny, but extremely comfortable. And I love that it’s dumb. It doesn’t do anything, which makes it so versatile.

Moore: Every furniture store in America has this chair.

De Cárdenas: I used it one time [for a decorating project]. There was a fabric that the client loved, and we didn’t know how to work it into the room. I was like, “Let’s just make a slipper chair.” It changes its identity every time you upholster it.

Nick Haramis: I grew up quite modestly, and every family in my neighborhood had a version of a slipper chair in the nice room.

Delavan: Originally, the slipper chair was supposed to be in the boudoir. He brought it into the living room.

Romualdez: I also love that he had extremely American taste when most people in that social class were Francophiles.

12. Philippe Starck, Louis Ghost Chair, 2002

Modern design in Europe and the United States was largely a reaction to the ostentation that came before it, particularly among royalty and other privileged households. One hallmark of the frilly old style is the Louis XV/XVI Medallion armchair, named for the 18th-century French monarchs with whom it found favor. Considered a cabriolet due to its rounded concave backrest and open armrests, it was much lighter than the close-sided bergère. More than 200 years later, the French industrial and interior designer Philippe Starck developed his version from a single mold injection of liquid polycarbonate, which hardens to a clear, lightweight and durable Plasticine material also used in cars and fighter jets. Although he eliminated the Medallion’s decorative elements, Starck retained its voluptuous profile, neither conforming to nor fully departing from the expectations of contemporary design. — Evan Moffitt

Moore: I hate this chair so much.

Romualdez: Everyone loved this chair in the beginning.

De Cárdenas: Do we hate it because it’s so ubiquitous?

Antonelli: No, we hate it because it’s so ’80s. But even though I find it terrible, it was so influential.

De Cárdenas: I love Philippe Starck and his total disregard for the history of furniture. Did you see that episode of [the comedy series] “Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt” [2015-19]? Jacqueline [Jane Krakowski’s character] doesn’t have any furniture because she can’t afford it. Kimmy comes over, and she’s like, “You don’t have any furniture.” [Voorhees] gestures to a completely empty space and says she has Philippe Starck Ghost chairs.

13. Margarete “Grete” Schütte-Lihotzky; Frankfurt Kitchen, from the Ginnheim-Höhenblick housing estate; 1926-27

In the aftermath of World War I, Frankfurt, Germany, responded to a growing housing crisis with a sweeping civic effort centered on affordable and modern public residences. The Austrian architect [*Margarete “Grete” Schütte-Lihotzky*](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/09/13/t-magazine/design/rafael-de-cardenas.html), a radical-minded proponent of Red Vienna’s social-democratic reforms who designed apartments for single working women, and, with the architects Adolf Loos and Josef Frank, complexes for veterans and the disabled, was tasked with developing kitchens for these New Frankfurt apartments. In planning her fitted kitchens, Schütte-Lihotzky, who lived until the age of 102, aimed to create something hygienic and dignified for the urban ***working class***. She consulted labor-efficiency studies, interviewed housewives and women’s groups and took inspiration from the rigorously efficient galley kitchens of railway dining cars. The result was a space equipped with innovations such as a gas stove, built-in cabinetry and a tiled backsplash. The room was small by today’s suburban standards — 13 feet long by 7 feet wide — but Schütte-Lihotzky’s vision helped pioneer the notion of today’s kitchen as the center of domestic life. — M.L.

Delavan: I don’t consider a room to be furniture.

Antonelli: Well, we do at MoMA. Maybe this is a system or assemblage of furniture, but it really determined, at least until the arrival of the American kitchen, how we designed kitchens almost like boats: keeping everything together in one place.

De Cárdenas: Before this, were kitchens just a fire and a table?

Antonelli: They had several pieces, but they were all disparate and loose. This was in tune with Existenzminimum [a concept that was developed in response to the German housing crisis of the 1920s]. The rationalist architects of the New Objectivity were trying to fit as much as possible into an apartment and then orient it so that the sun would also help them live healthier lives and heat it up. It was almost like going back to [the first century B.C. Roman architect and engineer] Vitruvius, the idea that Nature can help cities and homes be cleaner, healthier and more efficient.

De Cárdenas: From Ikea to fancy custom kitchens, they’re all basically versions of this.

14. Ayse Birsel and Bibi Seck, Madame Dakar Sofa, 2009

When Patrizia Moroso, the creative director of the Northern Italy-based family furniture company that bears her last name, commissioned a show dedicated to the creative prowess and craftsmanship of Africa, a continent that had been historically overlooked by the Western design world, among the works that seized the imagination was the Madame Dakar sofa. Boldly graphic and rendered with both an eye to the future and reverence for the past by the designers Ayse Birsel and Bibi Seck, who split their time between New York, Paris and Dakar, it contributed to the current interest in African design and technique as well as a mania for Afrofuturism. Made in Moroso’s facility in the West African nation, the hand-woven indoor-outdoor piece is constructed by stringing the plastic threads used in fishing nets — in reference to Senegalese traditions — into a herringbone pattern, which is then slung like a hammock over thick, splayed steel legs. — M.B.

Antonelli: This is gorgeous, but is it influential?

Moore: It had an impactful moment, but it was over quickly.

Stout: I think we should include it.

Antonelli: I agree. Bibi, who spent his youth in Dakar, worked with African weavers to produce a couch that is free from any nostalgia, just celebrating the tremendous potential that can come from a true mind- and hand-meld with expert local artisans.

15. Unknown, Monobloc Chair, 20th Century

Design history is lousy with icons — this iconic sideboard, that iconic zoomorphic torchier — and many of them live on as “authorized” reproductions, costing thousands of dollars, while the rest of us make do with mass-market dupes. The monobloc chair is the antidote to such design idolatry: a single piece of extruded white plastic, immune to trend and cultish adoration. With a barely verifiable history, it’s both the original and the imitation, and costs very little to produce. To make a chair out of just one piece of material is something of a design Holy Grail, one that became more attainable around midcentury with advancements in plastics technology. Early mass-produced chairs — including Verner Panton’s [*Panton*](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/09/13/t-magazine/design/rafael-de-cardenas.html) chair and Vico Magistretti’s [*Selene*](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/09/13/t-magazine/design/rafael-de-cardenas.html) — were all a bit too polished or Space Age-y to achieve ubiquity. The French engineer Henry Massonnet’s [*Fauteuil 300*](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/09/13/t-magazine/design/rafael-de-cardenas.html), from 1972, is often credited as the closest source for what we now call the monobloc, though it, too, is more refined than the standard issue. (There’s also a credible claim that Canadian designer D.C. Simpson created an even earlier version in 1946.) Depending on where you land on the affordability sustainability axis, monoblocs are either a triumph of democratic design or a mess of disposable mass consumption — the red to-go cup of chairs. Either way, it’s often spoken of as the most widely used piece of furniture in the world; the Zelig of plastic chairs, it shows up at both Biloxi cookouts and roadside bars on the outskirts of Jakarta. With zero adornments except for its flared legs and fanned seashell back, it cannot be called beautiful, though it is familiar, and for some people, that can have the same pleasing effect. — M.L.

Antonelli: The monobloc is important. It allows us to talk about history. It allows us to talk about copies. It allows us to talk about footprint. It allows us to talk about the history of plastics.

Moore: Who designed it?

Antonelli: We don’t really know. In every part of the world, you’ll find these chairs.

Romualdez: I had them when we first moved into our house in Montauk, N.Y., and some snotty person said, “I can’t believe you have these ugly chairs.” But they’re so practical and comfortable.

Delavan: Are they ugly or just ugly by association?

Antonelli: They’re ugly. But I do believe that the opposite of beautiful isn’t ugly, it’s lazy.

Romualdez: I’d nominated a Philippe Hiquily armchair from 1971 because it was one of the ugliest chairs I’ve seen. He literally just did furniture for the Rothschilds and people like that. But like with Miuccia Prada’s clothes, when you see something ugly, it’ll often affect you later.

16. Verner Panton, Vilbert Chair, 1992

The term “flat-packed” might trigger traumatic memories of trying to assemble furniture with puzzling instructions and a flimsy Allen wrench; one thing it doesn’t conjure is cutting-edge interiors. But by the 1990s, Ikea had partnered with a number of top designers, including the Danish master Verner Panton, who created this gravity-defying confection. Made from medium-density fiberboard (MDF) with a melamine coating, a material often used by the Swedish company, Panton’s chair has obliquely angled back and leg panels, held together with screws, that hardly seem strong enough to stand up on their own, much less accommodate a human body. Here, Panton, best known for his space-age designs, including the S-shaped Panton chair — fabricated in 1967 using a tongue-like piece of molded plastic — and his hallucinogenic interiors for hotels, restaurants and private homes, did the unexpected: He embraced hard edges, even if only as a matter of practicality. (Imagine, for instance, flat-packing his amorphous Living Tower, a more than six-foot-high upholstered seating apparatus from 1969.) The Vilbert stands as a homage to the Zig-Zag and Red Blue chairs by the early 20th-century Dutch de Stijl movement designer Gerrit Rietveld, as well as to the tinker toy aesthetic of the 1980s Memphis Group, its influences spanning about 50 years of candy-colored geometric dreams. — E.M.

De Cárdenas: I’ve owned these chairs.

Moore: Why’d you get rid of them?

De Cárdenas: There was a time when I had a very Memphis-y place. Then I sold it all at auction, at the only moment when this kind of fiberboard laminate furniture might have been valuable. This was Ikea doing high design and it was too ahead of its time to be commercial.

Delavan: That it came flat-packed is cool.

De Cárdenas: That was the whole point.

Delavan: That’s why it was relatively cheap, too.

17. Clara Porset, Butaque Chair, Possibly 1930s

“Butaque,” the Mexican name for the low, inclined J-shaped wooden lounger prevalent in parts of Latin America, refers to a shape originating in the 16th century, a colonial-era cross between traditional Spanish hip-joint armchairs and pre-Columbian duhos — often hardwood ritual seats used within Indigenous Taino Caribbean culture to commune with deities. In the early 19th century, the Mexican port city of Campeche was a locus of butaque production and the chair’s main exporter to the United States. (Thomas Jefferson was obsessed with them, conscripting enslaved carpenter John Hemmings to produce reproductions for his plantation.) The interior and furniture designer Clara Porset, born into a wealthy family in Cuba and educated in New York and Paris, may have begun making her butaques after emigrating to Mexico in the mid-1930s as a political exile for her participation in the Cuban resistance. Porset reinterpreted the butaque through a Bauhaus lens (she studied under Josef and Anni Albers, practitioners of the movement, at Black Mountain College in North Carolina), designing numerous iterations in local materials, including mahogany, wicker and leather, and reducing the structure to its essential form. Porset’s circa 1957 Modernist reinterpretation of the butaque is her most enduring design, a sinuous shape in laminated wood and woven wicker, with a high-backed seat balanced on half-moon legs. The Mexican architect Luis Barragán commissioned several versions; Albers, also enchanted with Mexican aesthetics, produced an interpretation of his own.— M.L.

Antonelli: Clara Porset, a Cuban designer working in Mexico, took a vernacular chair and made it into an object, which isn’t dissimilar from what [the Italian architect] Gio Ponti did with the Superleggera [chair, from 1957]. This is the Latin American chair. And it’s supercomfortable.

De Cárdenas: Although she was from a wealthy family, she was opposed to the class inequality in Cuba. I believe she went to Mexico because of its strong early socialist movement, and that’s how she became part of the Diego Rivera scene. I think this chair was meant to be sort of invisible — graceful, but not foregrounded.

18. Hella Jongerius, Polder Sofa, 2005

In an industry that prizes sober sophistication, the Dutch designer Hella Jongerius’s Polder sofa is a clever rebuttal: a monumental piece that’s proudly imperfect, flaunting its faults as virtues. Or, as this publication noted in 2009 — while acknowledging the paradox of the couch’s exquisite construction with its funky aesthetic — “[We] feel as fondly toward it as we would a shabby old sofa.” Its squared-off cushions in varying sizes and uneven backrests upholstered in gradations of earthy colors (clay-like reds, mossy greens, oceanic blues) are interesting from every angle, tufted with kooky, often subtly mismatched buttons of mother-of-pearl, horn or wood. Named for a low-lying system of fields in the Netherlands that have been reclaimed from the sea by dikes and drainage canals, the Polder is a love letter to Jongerius’s verdant homeland and its ingenious natural engineering, but it’s also a paean to the comforts of domesticity and the beauty of everyday life. — M.B.

Antonelli: I think we should include Hella Jongerius. We don’t have Dutch designers, and she’s truly one of the most important.

Delavan: But what is it about this sofa?

Antonelli: There’s something very informal about it. She uses buttons at random. It was from just before the time when she became art director for colors [and materials] at Vitra. And it’s a gorgeous, more contemporary precursor to Piero Lissoni’s Extrasoft.

19. Piero Lissoni, Extrasoft Sofa, 2008

Conceived in 2008 for Living Divani by the brand’s creative director, [*Piero Lissoni*](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/09/13/t-magazine/design/rafael-de-cardenas.html) — who has also designed for Kartell, Cappellini and the kitchen maker Boffi, among others — the Extrasoft embodies several of the design trends of the last half-century in a single object: the move toward simple geometry; furniture that sits ever closer to the ground; and the profusion of squishy, somewhat overstuffed forms. But the sofa’s defining feature is its modularity, a distillation of earlier experiments in sectional design, including Mario Bellini’s bulbous Camaleonda (1970) for what was then known as C &amp; B Italia (now B &amp; B Italia) and Hans Hopfer’s vibrantly patterned Mah Jong (1971) for Roche Bobois. With irregularly sized orthogonal sections that connect via hidden hooks, it can be configured into a multitude of shapes; it’s as much interactive art as it is furniture. And because its orientation is largely horizontal, the Extrasoft can spread through almost any space, providing places to recline, socialize or sleep, recalling a giant platform bed or those sexy conversation pits of the 1970s. — K.G.

Antonelli: One of the interesting things about Piero’s couch, as with Faye’s chair and the Madame Dakar sofa, is that we don’t have other extremely recent pieces.

Delavan: I was also trying to figure out a more recent thing that’s important.

De Cárdenas: The idea of being able to move it around is kind of amazing, but I don’t think Piero Lissoni needs the airtime.

Haramis: I’m not sure that popularity should be a reason not to include someone.

Antonelli: He’s right — we’re talking about impact.

20. Charles and Ray Eames, Side Chair, 1952

Few designers evoke postwar American modernism — and optimism — better than the husband-and-wife duo Charles and [*Ray Eames*](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/09/13/t-magazine/design/rafael-de-cardenas.html), who lived and worked in Los Angeles. During World War II, the couple used plywood plies to develop new splints for the Navy, refining molding techniques they later applied to domestic designs, including the Side Chair, a simple shell mounted on an Eiffel Tower lattice of wire spindle legs. At once biomorphic and industrial, the Side Chair is now endlessly cribbed and reinterpreted, showing up in high-end restaurants and Brooklyn townhouses. Originally a molded piece of fiberglass that came in shades of gray, it’s now fashioned in postindustrial recycled material. Perhaps more than any other Eames piece, it fully expresses the couple’s animating principle: slightly goofy but still disarmingly elegant. — M.L.

Antonelli: If we don’t include it, people will say we’re missing [something by] Charles and Ray Eames. I’d do the fiberglass chair because it was also about using a material that had been an important part of the war effort.

De Cárdenas: I want to go on the record not to put in the Eames. I don’t think they need this. There’re entire museum shows dedicated to their work.

Haramis: I don’t think they can be left off a list of influential furniture.

Antonelli: There’re whole stadiums with seats that are derivative of them.

Moore: And it’s egalitarian design, and I’m all for that.

Antonelli: Even with Ray, we don’t have enough women on this list. How is that possible?

Moore: The … patriarchy?

21. Yayoi Kusama, “Accumulation No. 1,” 1962

Can an armchair be sexual? Funny? A feminist manifesto? In the hands of the Surrealist Japanese artist [*Yayoi Kusama*](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/09/13/t-magazine/design/rafael-de-cardenas.html), the answer is a resounding — and perplexing — yes. Her fabric sculpture is furniture reimagined through a provocateur’s lens. Covered in exploding clusters of hand-sewn stuffed tentacles, which Kusama has described as phalluses, “Accumulation No. 1” was constructed in her downtown New York loft, in the same building that housed the studio of her friend the Swedish American sculptor [*Claes Oldenburg*](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/09/13/t-magazine/design/rafael-de-cardenas.html). The chair also seems to have anticipated the strange eroticism of the Comme des Garçons designer Rei Kawakubo’s spring 1997 “[*lumps and bumps*](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/09/13/t-magazine/design/rafael-de-cardenas.html)” collection 35 years later. Tapping into Kusama’s themes of repetition and whimsy, the peculiar creation originated from a more serious impulse: “[I] began making penises in order to heal my feelings of disgust toward sex. Reproducing the objects … was my way of conquering the fear,” she once said. It’s also been read as a taunt lobbed at the male-dominated art scene of the era and the ultimate subversion of a domestic object by a female artist: an armchair overrun with limp penises. — M.B.

Delavan: Are those …

Stout: Yes, they’re little peens.

Antonelli: I used to teach a class at U.C.L.A., and I’d say that there’re two big differences between art and design: One difference is that while an artist can choose whether to work for many people or not, a designer, by definition, works for others; the second is who you sell it to and how you market it. [The artists] Martin Puryear and Andrea Zittel are fabulous designers, too. But someone like Kusama or Donald Judd? No. Those are the ones who think they can just do something. I remember having an argument with [the former chief curator of painting and sculpture at New York’s Museum of Modern Art] Kirk Varnedoe. He said, “Paola, you should consider [acquiring a piece by] Donald Judd. I said, “Why? It’s bad design. If you want to acquire it for the sculpture collection, go for it. But as far as I’m concerned, it’s uncomfortable. It rips your stockings. It’s not childproofed. And if it didn’t have Donald Judd’s name, you’d never buy it.”

Stout: So much of the history of art and design has been about white men. I think this chair was a commentary on that.

Antonelli: While I appreciate that, I just don’t want to acknowledge any artist descending toward design.

Moore: Does design just mean utility? Whenever I have an argument with people about art and design, it seems to come down to the idea that design is something you’d use. And what I don’t understand is why that’s less than. As a person who wants to live with objects, I don’t value a lamp any less than I do a painting. I want to live with them both.

22. Gary Panter and Ric Heitzman; Chairry, From “Pee-wee’s Playhouse”; 1986

If your chair could talk, would it beg to be sat on? Would it complain about bearing your weight? In the beloved TV series “Pee-wee’s Playhouse” — created in 1986 by its star, [*Paul Reubens*](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/09/13/t-magazine/design/rafael-de-cardenas.html) — an armchair is a main character. Voiced by the actress Alison Mork, Chairry invites a wide range of guests and regulars, from Dolly Parton to S. Epatha Merkerson, to plop down on her demented dinosaur face. With her velvety turquoise skin (or, as more prosaic sorts might call it, upholstery), oversize maw (with rounded white teeth positioned between the cushions) and circular eyes with curling lashes, Chairry was an important precursor to Barney, the singing dinosaur who emerged six years later. Chairry — along with the other anthropomorphic elements of the trippy set designed by the boisterous painters and puppet masters Gary Panter, Wayne White and Ric Heitzman — gently mocked the innocence of 1950s children’s shows and subverted the family values rhetoric of the Reagan era. Channeling the colorful postmodernism of the 1980s, Pee-wee’s world was an outsider artist’s pastiche of psychedelia, hippiedom and joyous toddlerhood. For some adult viewers, it was also a queer-coded haven. — E.M.

De Cárdenas: There were at least three tributes in The Times in the days after Paul Reubens died [in July 2023]. One of them was about what a truly democratic, inclusive show this was. I remember Cher being on a holiday special [1988’s “Christmas at Pee-wee’s Playhouse”]. You know how he’d always have a word of the day? Cher came to introduce the secret word. And every time he said it everything in the room would scream. It was a kid’s show, but it wasn’t just for kids.

Stout: Design for kids is so important.

Moore: And influential. As a parent, I think all those anthropomorphized pieces of furniture are wonderful.

Antonelli: It’s certainly very American.

De Cárdenas: Pee-wee spoke to gays and misfits the way that [the Swiss artist H.R.] [*Giger*](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/09/13/t-magazine/design/rafael-de-cardenas.html) [known for his design of the title creature in the 1979 horror film “Alien”] spoke to bros.

Moore: Frankly, I don’t think bros are reading this article.

23. Nanda Vigo, Due Più Chair, 1971

The Milanese artist, architect and designer Nanda Vigo helped usher in the disco era with this chair, originally manufactured for the Italian furniture company Conconi SNC/More Coffee. While its chromed iron or brass tubing evokes Bauhaus functionalism, the cylindrical, fur-covered seat and backrest, not unlike the giant rollers that provide polish at a carwash, give it a touch of Pop Art kitsch. Vigo, who founded her studio in 1959 after spending time in Switzerland and the United States, was inspired by science fiction and the style codes of the burgeoning aerospace industry, as immortalized in Stanley Kubrick’s 1968 film, 2001: A Space Odyssey. She also became known for her fur-lined conversation pits and staircases, like the ones she installed in the 1960s in the poetically named Lo Scarabeo Sotto la Foglia (the Beetle under the Leaf), a private residence in northern Italy. On the Due Più, the material adds a softer touch to the hard-edge minimalism of Vigo’s contemporaries, with results that are undeniably groovy. — E.M.

De Cárdenas: This was very ahead of its time. As ubiquitous as it is, I’ve never seen it at anyone’s house.

Moore: How do you use it?

De Cárdenas: Right? Like, “Sit here, have coffee with me.”

Antonelli: I would like to have a dining table with 10 of them. It’s not super comfortable after a while, but it’s pretty great.

Romualdez: It’s the perfect makeup chair.

24. Alvar Aalto, Stool 60, 1933

With three L-shaped legs and a childlike disk seat, the startlingly simple Stool 60 encapsulates the design ethos of the Finnish designer [*Alvar Aalto*](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/09/13/t-magazine/design/rafael-de-cardenas.html). The result of a partnership between Aalto — fresh off his work on Paimio Sanatorium, a triumph of 1930s Functionalist architecture — and the carpenter Otto Korhonen, it represents their first experiment together with what would become an emblematic technique: They sliced fissures into pale birch slats, softened them with heat and water and then filled each gap in the wood with a timber strip dipped in adhesive. They then bent the assemblage at a 90-degree angle, creating sinuous yet sturdy curved supports. The stool’s impact can be seen not only in the innumerable ways it’s in dialogue with its environment — a place to sit or a small side table, it can be stacked into an elegant column to be stored — but in its playful execution as well. Unsurprisingly, it’s been in continual production, and has been deeply influential: Ikea’s Frosta was widely considered to be an offshoot, and the streetwear brand Supreme collaborated with Artek on a 2017 version with a checkerboard motif. — M.B.

Antonelli: We need Scandinavian design.

Delavan: Then the Aalto stool makes the most sense.

Stout: It’s almost so iconic that I’m like, “Get rid of it.”

Moore: I have about 20 of the Ikea version of this stool in my basement left over from a kid’s party.

De Cárdenas: They make an Ikea version of this?

Delavan: Those aren’t quite as thick.

Moore: And very wobbly.

25. Shiro Kuramata, Feather Stool, 1990

“Enchantment should also be considered as function,” said the Tokyo-based designer Shiro Kuramata. There’s certainly a sense of magic to his Feather Stool, with its wisps of yellow and white plumage suspended in an acrylic block. Kuramata won early acclaim as the creator of more than 100 Issey Miyake retail environments, beginning with the brand’s first Tokyo store in 1976. Like the fashion designer, who died in 2022, Kuramata was innovative in his use of materials, producing chairs and sofas in translucent glass and acrylic, or steel mesh with diaphanous profiles. He created many of his iconic designs in the 1980s, when he was an early member of the Memphis Group, including the Miss Blanche armchair, an acrylic throne embedded with synthetic roses and named for the character in Tennessee Williams’s 1947 play, “A Streetcar Named Desire.” Both pieces, while heavy, give the impression of weightlessness. — E.M.

De Cárdenas: It’s barely furniture, and I like that about it.

Haramis: I’m kind of surprised we aren’t choosing the more famous Kuramata chair, “Miss Blanche.”

De Cárdenas: I prefer that this is a gesture to a chair. If it didn’t have that [short rounded back], it wouldn’t be one.

Moore: It doesn’t look very comfortable.

De Cárdenas: Yeah, I don’t want to, like, watch the Super Bowl in it.

Romualdez: Maybe chairs shouldn’t be comfortable. At some point, you want your guests to leave.

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PHOTOS (PHOTOGRAPHS BY BANQUE D’IMAGES, ADAGP/ART RESOURCE, NY; LESLIE WILLIAMSON; VIA FAYE TOOGOOD; SERENA ELLER VAINICHER; VALENTIN JECK; SARA KRULWICH/THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page D3.

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**End of Document**



[***This Artist’s Next Project Has Her ‘Terrified.’ That’s the Point.; Fall Preview***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6943-C591-DXY4-X003-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

September 7, 2023 Thursday 13:44 EST

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**Section:** ARTS; design

**Length:** 1320 words

**Byline:** Zachary Small

**Highlight:** An upcoming exhibition at the New Museum by Jade Kuriki-Olivo, also known as Puppies Puppies, puts a microscope on her experience as a trans woman.

**Body**

Jade Kuriki-Olivo’s guided tour through her apartment on the Lower East Side ended in the bedroom, where the performance artist spends most of her time. Tropical vines crawled along the walls and into a giant lantern hanging opposite a tapestry of green synthetic fur. She burned incense and described her room above a busy Greek restaurant as a sanctuary.

For an interview about her upcoming exhibition at the New Museum, “[*Nothing New*](https://www.newmuseum.org/exhibitions/view/puppies-puppies-jade-guanaro-kuriki-olivo-nothing-new-1),” which begins Oct. 12 and runs through Jan. 14, 2024, the artist donned a camouflage outfit with green leaves attached. She then hopped onto the bed and crouched into the shape of a bush — as if cloaking herself from the spotlight would negate its halo. Kuriki-Olivo, 34, who also uses the pseudonym [*Puppies Puppies*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/08/18/t-magazine/jade-kuriki-olivo-puppies-puppies.html), will certainly grab attention this fall, when she transforms the museum lobby into a 24/7 surveillance operation tracking her experience as a transgender woman.

“I’m terrified,” Kuriki-Olivo said, “but I really can’t watch the trans community suffer and not make work about that. I find in my spirit that I don’t have a choice.”

The trapdoor of visibility has become a common theme in her work, demonstrating how transgender people survive a period of heightened [*surveillance and restrictions*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/27/us/transgender-laws-states.html) that has coincided with a period of increased public acceptance. She has experienced that paradox firsthand, including last summer when she exhibited a [*nude sculpture*](https://www.artbasel.com/rooms/specialsector/28415/A-sculpture-for-Trans-Women-A-sculpture-for-the-Non-Binary-Femmes-A-sculpture-for-Two-Spirit-People-I-am-a-woman-I-don-t-care-what-you-think?lang=en) of herself as part of Art Basel in Switzerland on a plinth labeled “woman.” Conservative groups were outraged and Kuriki-Olivo said she started receiving death threats after people online found her home address. She withdrew from a series of exhibitions for her safety, passing the opportunities onto other artists.

“The organizers ended up hiring a security guard to protect the sculpture,” she recalled. “And I watched from across the street as people would purposefully have their dogs pee on it.”

Details of the New Museum exhibition are still being negotiated with officials, but the artist described a scenario where she lives in the museum’s lobby for several months inside a glass display with windows she can fog to obstruct the viewer’s gaze. She wants the space to resemble a Zen garden — a homage to her Japanese mother — and plans on developing a repatriation project for Taíno artifacts in memory of her Puerto Rican father, whose ashes are kept in a box on her night stand.

“We are trying to flatten the distinction between her bedroom and the institution,” said Vivian Crockett, a curator organizing the show at the New Museum.

The artist has also been toying with riskier concepts, including the creation of an indoor cannabis farm and a method for continuing her sex work during the exhibition, which helps pay her rent. She also wants to livestream herself in the rare moments when she is outside the museum, sharing her perspective through a camera feed linked to television monitors in the lobby.

“I describe my role as a mediator between the artist and the institution,” Crockett said, describing the negotiations within the museum to realize Kuriki-Olivo’s vision. “Sometimes it feels like I’m also the medium, speaking on behalf of the artist.”

Earlier in her career, Kuriki-Olivo drew inspiration from popular culture. She organized a [*2015 exhibition*](http://whatpipeline.com/exhibitions/17puppiespuppies/1.html) on the Minions from “Despicable Me,” seeing the yellow monsters as caricatures of the ***working class***. That same year, she [*picketed an art fair*](https://hyperallergic.com/181044/in-mexico-city-an-alternative-art-fair-builds-a-community/) dressed as SpongeBob SquarePants, holding a sign that depicted the cartoon in the loving embrace of his neighbor, Squidward. And during her breakthrough performance at the 2017 Whitney Biennial, the artist dressed as [*Lady Liberty*](https://whitney.org/collection/works/56036) with a drooping crown and crestfallen eyes. It became one of the first works categorized in the museum’s permanent collection as performance art.

Her attempts to find herself in these everyday objects stems from a childhood of isolation. Raised in the suburbs of Dallas, Kuriki-Olivo struggled to feel comfortable in an environment where she felt the need to suppress parts of her identity for safety reasons.

“I was scared early on of speaking, that my voice was too soft for a boy,” she recalled. “At night, in the small space between consciousness and unconsciousness, I would pray to God with every cell in me that I would wake up with a vagina.”

Finding herself in seemingly banal objects was an act of survival, recalling the kind of body politics expressed by queer artists like Felix Gonzalez-Torres, who created meaning from strings of lights and hard candies. Recent works have also shown Kuriki-Olivo’s preoccupation with the brutality of death. In 2009, she was diagnosed with a malignant brain tumor, which was removed the following year but has remained present as a theme in her work. Nearly a decade later, she [*created a ghoulish sculpture*](https://hannahhoffman.la/artist/puppies-puppies-jade-kuriki-olivo) described as a portrait of the artist after brain surgery. For a 2019 performance at [*Galerie Francesca Pia in Zurich*](https://www.francescapia.com/artists/puppies-puppies-jade-kuriki-olivo/selected-works), she lay inside a satin coffin.

“I’m scared of the pain the future has in store for this deteriorating body,” said Kuriki-Olivo from underneath her green camouflage. Later during the interview, she stripped the leaves from her body, lounging nude on the mattress where she entertains clients and performs for webcam sites. She said she has found inspiration from the boundary-pushing artists Marina Abramovic and On Kawara, and in the trans activist Sylvia Rivera.

Curators described Kuriki-Olivo as someone who unsettles institutions; even the most progressive bastions of the art world walk a difficult line between showcasing diverse artists and tokenizing them.

“Jade really challenged us,” said Pati Hertling, director of Performance Space New York. When the venue offered Kuriki-Olivio a commission, she instead asked to program a gala honoring trans women of color. The project involved many sex workers and ran late into the night — far beyond the normal hours for Performance Space staff. Moreover, the women to whom the artist extended an invitation to perform were skeptical that the institution would actually pay them.

“There is still a lot of work needed to create a relationship of neutral trust,” Hertling said; the event was an important turning point for her nonprofit. “I am very thankful for Jade to give us the opportunity to fail in certain ways and learn to move forward.”

But when she heard about what Kuriki-Olivo had planned for the New Museum, Hertling’s heart skipped a beat. Four months of 24/7 surveillance would take an emotional toll on the artist, not to mention raising concerns for her own safety.

“Jade takes on a lot, and it’s a responsibility that weighs heavily on her shoulders,” Hertling said. “It will not be an easy piece. She is going to be exhausted and emotionally at the limit of what she can take.”

Kuriki-Olivo agreed. Sitting in her bedroom with the sounds of the rainforest playing from a speaker on her night stand, she explained it all.

“Sometimes, I wish that I didn’t have to make work about my identity,” she said. “But I just keep telling myself that you have to be hypervisible, because it means something different to hide.”

PHOTOS: The performance artist Jade Kuriki-Olivo, also known as Puppies Puppies, who will transform the New Museum’s lobby into a 24/7 surveillance operation tracking her experience as a transgender woman. Below left, Kuriki-Olivo performed as “Liberty (Liberté)” at the 2017 Whitney Biennial. Below right, she exhibited a nude sculpture of herself as part of Art Basel in Switzerland in 2022. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY CAMILA FALQUEZ FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES; UPPIES PUPPIES AND BALICE HERTLING, PARIS; GALERIE FRANCESCA PIA, ZURICH; GALERIE BARBARA WEISS, BERLIN; HANNAH HOFFMAN GALLERY, LOS ANGELES; PHOTO BY BILL ORCUTT; PUPPIES PUPPIES AND BALICE HERTLING, PARIS; GALERIE FRANCESCA PIA, ZURICH; GALERIE BARBARA WEISS, BERLIN; HANNAH HOFFMAN GALLERY, LOS ANGELES. PHOTO BY VINCENT BLEBOI) This article appeared in print on page AR84.

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**End of Document**



[***I Don’t Quite Buy the DeSantis Narrative, and Other Midterm Thoughts***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:66TX-9G81-DXY4-X1SN-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

November 10, 2022 Thursday 07:30 EST

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 389 words

**Byline:** ‘The Ezra Klein Show’

**Highlight:** Ezra Klein and Aaron Retica discuss how Democrats dodged a midterm wipeout.

**Body**

The results of Tuesday’s midterm elections are still trickling in, but the broader story is clear: The red wave that many anticipated never materialized. Republicans gained 54 House seats against Bill Clinton in 1994 and 63 seats against Barack Obama in 2010. It doesn’t look as though the G.O.P. will secure anything close to that in 2022, and Democrats could retain their narrow control of the Senate — all against the backdrop of raging inflation and low approval ratings for President Biden.

Why didn’t Democrats get wiped out? Why did so many Republicans underperform while others, like Gov. Ron DeSantis of Florida, won decisively? And what does it all imply for 2024?

[You can listen to this episode of “The Ezra Klein Show” on [*Apple*](https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/the-ezra-klein-show/id1548604447), [*Spotify*](https://open.spotify.com/show/3oB5noYIwEB2dMAREj2F7S), [*Amazon Music*](https://music.amazon.com/podcasts/c4a3b1da-5433-49e6-8c14-0e1da53be78c/the-ezra-klein-show), [*Google*](https://www.google.com/podcasts?feed=aHR0cHM6Ly9mZWVkcy5zaW1wbGVjYXN0LmNvbS84MkZJMzVQeA%3D%3D) or [*wherever you get your podcasts*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/19/opinion/how-to-listen-ezra-klein-show-nyt.html?action=click&amp;module=RelatedLinks&amp;pgtype=Article).]

To talk through the midterm results and their implications, I am joined by my column’s editor, Aaron Retica. We discuss why this election ended up being so shockingly close; how Democrats’ performance could, paradoxically, make it harder for Biden to win in 2024; why the significance of DeSantis’s victory is probably being overhyped; why inflation didn’t seem to matter nearly as much to the elections’ outcomes as most analysts believed it would; how a possible DeSantis-Donald Trump fight in the 2024 Republican primaries could create electoral space for more traditional Republicans to break through; John Fetterman’s distinct ***working-class*** appeal in Pennsylvania, the moral calculus of Democrats’ decision to bolster extreme Republican candidates in the primaries; the uncertain future of American democracy and more.

Note: This episode was recorded on the afternoon of Wednesday, Nov. 9.

You can listen to our whole conversation by following “The Ezra Klein Show” on [*Apple*](https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/the-ezra-klein-show/id1548604447), [*Spotify*](https://open.spotify.com/show/3oB5noYIwEB2dMAREj2F7S), [*Google*](https://www.google.com/podcasts?feed=aHR0cHM6Ly9mZWVkcy5zaW1wbGVjYXN0LmNvbS84MkZJMzVQeA%3D%3D) or [*wherever you get your podcasts*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/19/opinion/how-to-listen-ezra-klein-show-nyt.html?action=click&amp;module=RelatedLinks&amp;pgtype=Article). View a list of book recommendations from our guests [*here*](https://www.nytimes.com/article/ezra-klein-show-book-recs.html).

(A full transcript of the episode is available [*here*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/11/10/podcasts/transcript-ezra-klein-interviews-aaron-retica.html).)

“The Ezra Klein Show” is produced by Emefa Agawu, Annie Galvin, Jeff Geld and Rogé Karma. Fact-checking by Michelle Harris, Rollin Hu, Kristin Lin and Kate Sinclair. Original music by Isaac Jones. Mixing by Jeff Geld and Sonia Herrero. Audience strategy by Shannon Busta. Special thanks to Kristin Lin and Kristina Samulewski.

PHOTO: (PHOTOGRAPH BY The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

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**End of Document**



[***Jackie on My Mind***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68CV-NFF1-JBG3-603V-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

June 4, 2023 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section SR; Column 0; Editorial Desk; Pg. 3; MAUREEN DOWD

**Length:** 857 words

**Byline:** By Maureen Dowd

**Body**

WASHINGTON -- I think about Jackie Kennedy several times a day.

I have no choice.

Tour groups come by my house in Georgetown to see John Kennedy's bachelor pad, where he was living when he met Jacqueline Bouvier at a dinner party.

I eavesdropped at the window once and heard a tour guide spin the romantic yarn about how the handsome senator met the beautiful debutante and they decided to live happily ever after. Somewhere else. ''Jackie told Jack he needed to get out of this dump,'' the guide said. ''By the time he was elected president, they were living in a beautiful house down the block, which we'll go see now.''

As a tonic to the coarseness of Donald Trump and Ron DeSantis, I have been escaping to the cultured world of Jacqueline Bouvier in the period when Jack was diffidently courting her. (Never a Heathcliff type, Jack sometimes treated her, as Jackie once told Gore Vidal, as though she were a campaign asset, like Rhode Island.)

Carl Sferrazza Anthony's new biography, ''Camera Girl,'' offers a lovely snapshot of Jackie's single years in D.C., working at The Washington Times-Herald.

In 1951, Jackie, who had just graduated from George Washington University with a degree in French literature, joined the paper as a gofer, answering the phone and fetching coffee. Her wealthy stepfather was friends with Arthur Krock, the Washington bureau chief of The New York Times. Krock called Frank Waldrop, the executive editor of the Washington Times-Herald, and asked ''Are you still hiring little girls?'' because he knew a ''round-eyed, clever'' one.

Waldrop would recount the story many times after Jackie became an icon. When she came to meet him, he bluntly asked her, ''Do you really want to go into journalism, or do you want to hang around here until you get married?'' Jackie, who fantasized about being a famous writer, replied, ''No, sir, I want to make a career.''

He emphasized that his paper was not a waiting room for aspiring brides. ''I'd seen her type,'' he would later say. ''Little society girls with dreams of writing the great American novel, who drop it the minute they find the great American husband.''

As Anthony recounts, Jackie was so charming, witty and eager that eventually Waldrop gave her the ''Inquiring Photographer'' column, which none of the men wanted. Paying $25 a week, it was a six-days-a-week column where she would ask people a question and snap their pictures with a bulky Graflex camera. She drove a black Mercury convertible with a red interior that she ''stole'' from her dashing dad, Black Jack Bouvier. She called it Zelda -- because, like Zelda Fitzgerald, ''she was an unreliable beauty.''

Jackie was guarded -- ''simultaneously overt and covert,'' as Anthony put it. It was hard for her to approach strangers. Sunglasses and a big camera were her shields.

She had moxie. At the door of the Washington Senators' locker room, she asked players about their hitting slump. Then they snapped their losing streak, and Jackie was hailed as a good-luck mascot.

J.F.K. once called her fey, defined by the Oxford English Dictionary as ''displaying magical, fairylike, or unearthly qualities,'' as if you'd had breakfast with a leprechaun.

The format suited her. She could display that whimsical side and even draw cartoons for the column. Waldrop gave her a byline and renamed the column ''Inquiring Camera Girl.'' John Husted, her fiancé for three months in 1952, dismissed it as ''an insipid little job,'' but Jackie would later say she ''loved every minute.''

She won over gruff male colleagues who had been skeptical of her finishing school ways. One reporter was so impressed, he offered to take her to an execution. She relished provocative questions: ''Would you rather have men respect or whistle at you?'' ''What would you talk about if you had a date with Marilyn Monroe?''

She asked truck drivers, shouting to them when they stopped for a red light, ''What do you think of Dior's spring fashion line?'' At times, Anthony said, questions reflected anxieties about Jack: ''The Irish author, Sean O'Faolain, claims that the Irish are deficient in the art of love. Do you agree?''

She did not hesitate to ask esoteric questions -- ''In 'The Doctor's Dilemma,' George Bernard Shaw asks if it's better to save the life of a great artist who is a scoundrel, or a commonplace, honest family man. What do you think?'' And she did not talk down to ***working-class*** subjects, recalling that she sought out ''salty'' characters.

That's probably how she found my larger-than-life dad, who was a D.C. police detective in charge of Senate security.

One night he came home and told the family that The Herald's Inquiring Camera Girl had approached him in the Capitol but he had been called to his office and couldn't answer her question.

Her name, he said, was Jacqueline Bouvier.

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**Graphic**

This article appeared in print on page SR3.

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**End of Document**



[***Biden’s Brush With Royalty Caps a Glamorous Week for ‘Scranton Joe’***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:670N-WFV1-JBG3-63MT-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

December 2, 2022 Friday 15:51 EST

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**Section:** US; politics

**Length:** 378 words

**Byline:** Zolan Kanno-Youngs Zolan Kanno-Youngs is a White House correspondent, covering President Biden and his administration.

**Highlight:** The president’s brief encounter with Prince William of Wales came a day after the first state dinner of the Biden administration.

**Body**

The president’s brief encounter with Prince William of Wales came a day after the first state dinner of the Biden administration.

WASHINGTON — President Biden met Prince William of Wales, the future king of Britain, for a gaze over the Boston harbor on Friday, capping an unusually glamorous week for a president who takes pride in the humble moniker of “Scranton Joe.”

“What a spectacular setting,” William told Mr. Biden as he arrived at the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum in Boston, where some locals [*bristled at the royals’ three day tour.*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/12/02/us/prince-william-kate-visit-boston.html?smid=nytcore-ios-share&amp;referringSource=articleShare)

The prince and his wife, Catherine, Princess of Wales, were in town to celebrate the [*Earthshot Prize*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/12/02/us/prince-william-kate-visit-boston.html?smid=nytcore-ios-share&amp;referringSource=articleShare), the award they created to encourage work addressing climate change.

Mr. Biden’s brief encounter with the monarchy came a day after he [*rubbed shoulders with President Emmanuel Macron of France*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/12/02/us/prince-william-kate-visit-boston.html?smid=nytcore-ios-share&amp;referringSource=articleShare) and his wife, Brigitte, over caviar and lobster at the first state dinner of the Biden administration.

But Mr. Biden, who was called “Cher Joe” by Mr. Macron on Thursday, much prefers to emphasize his ***working-class*** reputation. The son of a car salesman from Scranton, Pa., Mr. Biden kicked off his first presidential bid from the back of an Amtrak train and has long been a strong backer of labor unions.

Earlier on Friday, when he [*signed legislation*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/12/02/us/prince-william-kate-visit-boston.html?smid=nytcore-ios-share&amp;referringSource=articleShare) to impose a labor agreement between rail companies and workers to avert a nationwide rail strike, Mr. Biden said the move was “tough for me.”

“But it was the right thing to do at the moment,” he added, “to save jobs.”

Mr. Biden attended the funeral of William’s grandmother, Queen Elizabeth II, in September, [*paying homage to a British monarch*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/12/02/us/prince-william-kate-visit-boston.html?smid=nytcore-ios-share&amp;referringSource=articleShare) he had compared to his own mother.

After chatting with the prince, Mr. Biden made sure to nod to the blue-collar workers of the Bay State. He visited the University of Massachusetts Boston for a phone bank organized by the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers to support Senator Raphael Warnock of Georgia, a Democrat who is facing a runoff election against the Republican Herschel Walker.

“I’m tired of trickle-down economics,” Mr. Biden said, singling out the Massachusetts senators, Elizabeth Warren and Edward J. Markey, both Democrats, as supporters of the middle class.

This article appeared in print on page A11.

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**End of Document**



[***Revisiting a 1920s Magazine for Black Children***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69C4-6KC1-JBG3-61MS-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

October 10, 2023 Tuesday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section C; Column 0; The Arts/Cultural Desk; Pg. 5

**Length:** 1446 words

**Byline:** By Celia McGee

**Body**

An anthology that combines new work with selections from The Brownies' Book, a children's magazine launched by W.E.B. Du Bois, is bringing its mission to bear in a new national context.

The first magazine created especially for Black children, The Brownies' Book, debuted in January 1920, its pages filled with the voices of children and their parents, of poets and college coeds, biographers and advice columnists, schoolgirls and scholars, spinners of fables and gatherers of folk tales, and a panoply of Black figures staking a claim in the history of a country that would rather not acknowledge them. It brimmed with playful illustrations, photographs, and travelers' sketches. On the cover was a portrait of an adolescent ballet dancer, pearls at her neck, a crown on her head, arms aloft; a picture of self-confidence and elation.

Subtitled ''A Monthly Magazine for the Children of the Sun,'' The Brownies' Book was conceived by W.E.B. Du Bois, who named the writer Jesse Redmon Fauset literary editor. It was a spinoff of the annual Children's Number of The Crisis, the powerful and widely read house organ of the N.A.A.C.P. that Du Bois had edited since 1910, and it had a strong message to send into the headwinds of racial prejudice and post-Reconstruction violence in early 20th-century America: ''to make colored children realize,'' as Du Bois wrote, ''that being 'colored' is a normal, beautiful thing.''

Langston Hughes was first published there, along with other writers and artists of the nascent movement that would come to be known as the Harlem Renaissance, Nella Larsen, Arna Bontemps and Hilda Rue Wilkinson among them. A poem by Fauset that ran in the inaugural issue served as the new venture's dedication:

To Children, who with eager lookScanned vainly library shelf and nook,For History or Song or StoryThat told of Colored Peoples' glory....''

Yet despite its groundbreaking mission and cultural consequence, once The Brownies' Book ceased publication at the end of 1921 in the wake of a nationwide depression, it languished largely forgotten by a wider public, referred to occasionally in exhibitions, in scholarly books on Black children's literature, in children's literature courses or in research into early Black journalism.

Now a growing interest in the historical moment exemplified by the magazine has focused wider attention on its pages, making its mission and message resonate in new ways. Karida L. Brown, a professor of sociology at Emory University and co-author of ''The Sociology of W.E.B. Du Bois,'' has compiled -- with her husband, the artist and illustrator Charly Palmer -- a tribute anthology of work by contemporary artists and writers punctuated with selections from the original magazine. ''The New Brownies' Book: A Love Letter to Black Families,'' will be published on Oct. 10 by Chronicle Books.

In late August, Brown and Palmer visited the New York Public Library to see, in the ''Polonsky Exhibition of The New York Public Library's Treasures,'' a copy of the May 1920 Brownies' Book from the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture. On it its cover, ''Winding the May Pole,'' seven young brown-skinned girls in fashionable Kate Greenaway dresses daintily execute a springtime dance.

Over lunch after her visit to the library, Brown said that the genesis of ''The New Brownies' Book'' was her sense that the original magazine and its context offered parallels with the present and inspiration for how to confront a corrosive turning back of the national discourse, whether in the banning of books for or about Black children, the removal of Black history from school curriculums or an ongoing news scroll of police brutality and racially-motivated violence.

''I had just witnessed George Floyd being murdered on TV, and Breonna Taylor, and, and, and,'' she said. ''I thought, 'If I'm feeling this level of despair because of this, what must a Black child feel?'''

'''The New Brownies' Book,''' said the journalist and author Damon Young, a contributor, ''is vital and critical'' as a corrective and retort to the ongoing proscription of Black history and culture in library and school systems nationwide.

Brown said, ''I realized that a new version of The Brownies' Book could be, like Du Bois's, an opportunity to say to Black children, 'We love you, we have faith in you,' to come not from a place of deficit and despair but of joy, love, unity and care.

Du Bois announced The Brownies' Book in the October 1919 issue of The Crisis, just months after the so-called Red Summer, when Black troops, expecting to return from World War I to heroes' welcomes, were met once again with bigotry and the legalized segregation of Jim Crow. Deadly race riots broke out from Washington, D.C. to Elaine, Ark., and the number of lynchings in the U.S. rose exponentially.

These atrocities were graphically chronicled in The Crisis. The Brownies' Book wanted to shield its young readership from such content without denying either the realities of racism at home or the inequities and struggles across a globe where colonialism was being questioned. Proper parenting, it also suggested, was a civil rights pursuit.

Also urgent, Du Bois and Fauset believed, was the emotional well-being of their young readers. If Black children saw themselves represented at all in the prevailing culture of the 1920s, it was in degrading caricatures in advertising and on consumer packaging, in magazines, newspapers and children's literature itself.

In its founding, The Brownies' Book had a specific bone to pick with St. Nicholas Magazine, the country's dominant children's periodical, which even in its popular ''Brownies'' series -- about a global mix of naughty, tannish-colored elves -- excluded any of African descent, restricting fairyland itself.

The Brownies' Book set out to counter ''these gross stereotypes,'' said Farah Jasmine Griffin, a professor of literature and African American studies at Columbia University, ''by taking seriously the shaping of Black children's sense of identity and self-worth.''

The magazine aimed to instill self-respect, self-assurance and a finely tuned social conscience in the next generation, a key to Black progress that would otherwise be thwarted by the forces ranged against it. A moral to its every story, it expounded on history that foregrounded Black icons and their achievements. A regular section written by Du Bois, ''As the Crow Flies,'' touched on headline events around the world.

''Our little girl is dark brown,'' wrote Bella Seymour of New York City in a letter that ran in a section called ''The Grown-ups Corner,'' applauding the launch of The Brownies' Book, ''and we want her to be proud of her color and to know that it isn't the kind of skin people have that makes them great.''

Like a run-up to the glamorous and genteel Jazz Age vignettes that the photographer James Van Der Zee captured of upper-crust Harlem, The Brownies' Book depicted, in pictures and in prose, middle-class and aspirational ***working-class*** Black life as it thrived and strived for equality despite the obstacles in its way. Joy Bivins, the director of the Schomburg, said of her first encounter with the magazine, ''the word I would use is 'delight.'''

''It was just wonderful to see the pictures, the Black Boy Scout troop, the young girls of a debate team, the photographs from baby contests,'' Bivins said. ''Despite the awareness of the hardships of segregation, of discrimination, it was still kids just being kids.''

Jelani Cobb, a writer for The New Yorker and the dean of the Columbia Journalism School, sees a direct link between the magazine and Du Bois's famous formulation from 1903, in ''The Souls of Black Folk,'' of ''a double consciousness.''

''The Brownies' Book is of a piece with Du Bois's profound concern with the idea of how Black people saw themselves while also looking at themselves through the eyes of people who hated them,'' Cobb said. ''There's who we are to the larger white world and who we are inwardly. The Brownies' Book was countering the propaganda of white supremacy in both directions. It's amazing how prescient it was.''

The closing announcement for The Brownies' Book ran in the issue of December 1921. It would be five decades before another periodical for Black children appeared, Ebony, Jr. magazine, launched in 1973 by Johnson Publishing and folded in 1985.

''We are sorry,'' Du Bois wrote in his farewell, ''much sorrier than any of you, for it has all been such fun. After all -- who knows -- perhaps we shall meet again.'' A full-page illustration by Hilda Rue Wilkinson, of a crestfallen child, was called simply, ''Good-Bye.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/09/books/new-brownies-book-karida-brown-charly-palmer.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/09/books/new-brownies-book-karida-brown-charly-palmer.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: The Brownies' Book began in January 1920 and ended with the December 1921 issue. Langston Hughes, Nella Larsen, Arna Bontemps and Hilda Rue Wilkinson were among some of the magazine's writers and artists. (PHOTOGRAPHS VIA LIBRARY OF CONGRESS)

Center left, ''The New Brownies' Book: A Love Letter to Black Families,'' an anthology that will be published on Tuesday by Chronicle Books. Center, ''Scout,'' by Tokie Rome-Taylor, which is among the works to be featured in the new version, as is Lynthia Edwards's ''Sassy Mouth,'' above. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY CHRONICLE BOOKS) This article appeared in print on page C5.

**Load-Date:** October 10, 2023

**End of Document**



[***Sunak's Business Ties Complicate His New Role***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:66RB-8CP1-DXY4-X0SP-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

October 29, 2022 Saturday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; Foreign Desk; Pg. 1

**Length:** 2076 words

**Byline:** By Jane Bradley

**Body**

LONDON -- As Rishi Sunak made his rapid ascent in British politics, campaigning for Brexit and greater immigration controls to preserve jobs for Britons, the company that made his family exceedingly wealthy was becoming a political lightning rod as one of the world's biggest outsourcing firms.

Infosys, the Indian outsourcing giant founded by Mr. Sunak's father-in-law, became notorious among both American political parties for helping companies replace their workers with thousands of Indian immigrants or move their positions to the sprawling Infosys complex in Bangalore.

As the company grew to a market value of nearly $80 billion, it also paid record fines and faced repeated accusations that it broke immigration laws and helped companies discriminate against American workers.

At a perilous time in British politics, with markets on edge, his party in turmoil and inflation rising, Mr. Sunak's financial ties to Infosys blend two volatile political issues: immigration and inequality. Though Mr. Sunak's family members are no longer company directors, they are major shareholders, and the company's outsourcing history does not neatly fit with his party's stance on limiting immigration to protect jobs. And his wife's $800 million stake in the company is the biggest source of his wealth, which has emerged as an early source of unease at a time when the government appears ready to cut benefits for ***working-class*** families and the poor.

Infosys is also a British government contractor that has made more than $120 million in public sector deals since Mr. Sunak entered government, according to an analysis of records from Tussell, a research firm that tracks public spending.

That includes an $8.6 million technology contract with the Home Office, the government department responsible for immigration. The contract, which has not previously been reported, was made public only this May, years after it was signed, despite rules requiring contracts to be made public within 30 days.

Mr. Sunak, who was a member of Parliament when the deal was signed and became chancellor of the Exchequer later in the contract term, did not disclose his wife's stake in the company. British financial disclosure rules do not uniformly require disclosure of spousal earnings, but lawmakers are supposed to reveal financial interests that might ''reasonably be thought by others to influence'' their actions.

''After years of sleaze and scandal, public confidence in the U.K. standards system is already at rock bottom,'' Angela Rayner, deputy leader of the opposition Labour Party, said on Thursday. ''There has been a worrying lack of transparency over what processes were put in place in the case of Infosys.''

A spokeswoman for Mr. Sunak declined to respond to questions seeking comment. Infosys did not respond to repeated requests for comment.

The revelations add to a growing picture of Mr. Sunak's closely guarded wealth, one flecked by tax controversies, offshore accounts and millions of dollars in potential conflicts of interests that went undeclared. He and his wife, Akshata Murty, have a net worth of $845 million, according to the Rich List, the annual catalog of British wealth published in The Sunday Times.

Robert Ford, a University of Manchester political scientist, said Infosys represented a ''fairly obvious potential conflict of interest.'' Coming after the scandals of Boris Johnson's administration, he said, ''you would think Sunak would want to avoid even the mildest hint of anything like that.''

''Yet we do have a situation where he is married into a family that has government contracts, has an interest in extending those contracts and in extending trade with Britain,'' Professor Ford said.

Mr. Sunak, a former Goldman Sachs banker and hedge fund manager, is wealthy in his own right. His early fiscal policies and his finance background have helped steady British markets after his predecessor, Liz Truss, so unsettled the markets that she resigned after 44 days in office.

But Mr. Sunak's critics have seized on his wealth to argue he is too out of touch to shepherd the country through a cost-of-living crisis. Unlike the United States, which put a Kennedy, a Trump and a pair of Roosevelts in the White House, Britain does not have a history of ultrawealthy prime ministers.

Infosys has at times become a political issue for Mr. Sunak. His critics have accused the Conservative government of cutting a 2021 post-Brexit trade deal with India that benefited Infosys at a time when Mr. Sunak was chancellor -- the British equivalent of Treasury secretary. That criticism was overly simplistic at best, but Mr. Johnson, the prime minister at the time, did praise the company during the deal for announcing new jobs in Britain. ''We need more firms like Infosys with a commitment to investing in people to help the U.K. build back better,'' he said.

A Familiar Story

Mr. Sunak represents many firsts, including the first prime minister of color and the first Hindu prime minister. But in other ways, his is a familiar story in British politics.

The eldest son of immigrants of Indian heritage who moved to Southampton, on the southern English coast, Mr. Sunak's father was a family doctor and his mother ran a pharmacy.

Mr. Sunak was educated at private schools, including the prestigious Winchester College, which today is one of the most expensive in the country, with fees of roughly $50,000 a year. When his political allies briefed reporters about his early life, they said he attended on scholarship. But his parents had described saving up to pay the fees.

He went on to study politics, philosophy and economics at Oxford University -- where six of the last seven prime ministers and more than half of all British prime ministers since 1721 also studied.

Earlier this year, footage emerged of a 20-year-old Mr. Sunak telling documentary filmmakers: ''I have friends who are aristocrats. I have friends who are upper class. I have friends who are, you know, ***working class***, but -- well, not ***working class***.''

His parents helped him buy his first apartment, in an affluent London neighborhood, at age 21, and he worked as an analyst for Goldman Sachs for nearly four years -- something he makes no mention of in his public résumé.

Around 2006, Mr. Sunak, by then living in the United States, became a partner at Children's Investment Fund Management, a hedge fund known as T.C.I. that was owned by a Cayman Islands company and co-founded by the billionaire Sir Christopher Hohn.

During Mr. Sunak's time there, the fund campaigned for the breakup of a Dutch bank, ABN Amro. That led to the bank's acquisition by the Royal Bank of Scotland, a deal that saddled the company with debt, contributed to its near collapse and helped trigger a government bailout and the 2008 financial crisis.

Soon after Mr. Sunak became prime minister, his political opponents began circulating lists of T.C.I.'s investments during his time there, including the tobacco company Philip Morris International; News Corp; and Sterlite Industries, a mining company with a history of environmental pollution and fines in India.

Mr. Sunak moved next to Theleme Partners, another offshore-linked hedge fund. The fund launched with an initial investment of more than $620 million, and partners were paid a share of the offshore funds they managed, according to corporate filings first reported by Channel 4 News.

His time at the two funds made Mr. Sunak wealthy. But his net worth was tiny compared to the fortune he married into in 2009 with his wedding to Ms. Murty at a Bangalore hotel.

'Fresh Questions'

Ms. Murty's father, N. R. Narayana Murthy, founded Infosys in 1981. By the time Mr. Sunak married into that fortune, the company was revolutionizing the way international companies did business. Rather than hire their own programmers or software engineers, companies could hire temporary Infosys workers on visas or let the company handle all their technology needs from Bangalore.

But the company's rise was marked by whistle-blower complaints, congressional hearings and lawsuits. In 2013, the company paid a record $34 million to settle a Justice Department lawsuit alleging years of ''systemic visa fraud.'' In 2019, the company settled a tax and immigration investigation by the state of California.

The company denied any wrongdoing in both cases. But what was undeniable was that Infosys benefited from, and accelerated, the very globalization forces that helped fuel populist campaigns like Brexit.

Professor Ford, the University of Manchester scholar, said that while Mr. Sunak's wife profited from those same sources, it was unfair to say that Mr. Sunak did, too. He benefited from marrying into a family, Professor Ford said. But he said the family's ties to Infosys would hang over future trade negotiations with India.

''I would imagine that Infosys would benefit a lot from liberalization and trade with Britain,'' he said. That will raise fresh questions, he said. ''Would Rishi Sunak's extended family benefit from a trade deal between Britain and India for facilitated outsourcing?''

In 2013, Mr. Sunak and his wife founded a start-up investment fund, Catamaran Ventures U.K. The Murthy family seeded the fund with money from the Infosys investments, according to an investigation by The Guardian.

Mr. Sunak transferred his stake in Catamaran to his wife just before he was elected to Parliament in 2015. Under British financial disclosure rules, that means Mr. Sunak is not required to reveal any details about his financial interests in the company -- including where the money is invested -- other than the fact that his wife owns it.

Property records show that the couple has amassed a real estate portfolio that includes a penthouse in Santa Monica, Calif.; an $8 million, five-bedroom townhouse and a nearby apartment in London's Kensington neighborhood; and a $2.3 million manor house in the Yorkshire countryside that is undergoing renovations to build a $460,000 swimming pool.

The Politics Era

Until he entered the Conservative leadership race this spring, Mr. Sunak had enjoyed a rose-tinted political career and a meteoric rise through Westminster.

First, the party tapped him to run for one of the nation's safest Conservative seats. Then, as chancellor, he had at his disposal an almost limitless pot of money to help companies during the coronavirus pandemic. Businesses hailed him as a savior for helping them survive lockdowns, and his public popularity soared.

But when he announced his intention to run for leader, his family's wealth and his own privileged background came under intense scrutiny for the first time.

In April, The Independent revealed that Ms. Murty had used what is known as a non-domiciled tax status that lets people avoid paying British taxes on money earned abroad. The status saved her an estimated $23 million in taxes. Ms. Murty defended the strategy but quickly promised to pay taxes on her worldwide income in the future because she did not want the issue ''to be a distraction for my husband.''

Keir Starmer, the Labour Party leader, accused Mr. Sunak of ''taxation hypocrisy'' for raising taxes on ***working-class*** Britons while maneuvering to reduce his own family's tax bill.

Journalists also raised questions about why Mr. Sunak held a U.S. green card, allowing permanent residence in America, until last year -- including while he was Britain's chancellor.

The scrutiny followed a Guardian report that showed that Mr. Sunak had not publicly disclosed a number of his family's financial interests during his time as chancellor, including its Infosys holdings and an investment in a $1 billion-a-year joint venture with Amazon in India. An independent investigation concluded that Mr. Sunak had not broken any rules.

Mr. Sunak's official register of interests remains relatively bare for someone with such wealth. That is largely because he transferred his assets into a blind trust when he was appointed chancellor in July 2019.

Under typical blind trust arrangements, people cannot know the details about how their money is invested or make decisions about those investments. But parliamentary rules allow Mr. Sunak to give ''general direction'' about his investments. And Mr. Sunak knows what assets the trust holds, while the public does not.

Sarah Hurtes contributed reporting from Brussels.Sarah Hurtes contributed reporting from Brussels.

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: When Prime Minister Rishi Sunak, above, was in Parliament, he did not disclose that his wife, Akshata Murty, far left, had an $800 million stake in Infosys, an outsourcing company founded by her father that contracted with the British government. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY PETER NICHOLLS/REUTERS

HANNAH MCKAY/REUTERS) (A10) This article appeared in print on page A1, A10.

**Load-Date:** October 30, 2022

**End of Document**



[***How Biden Is Trying to Help Working-Class Voters in Red-State Alabama***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:625M-32H1-JBG3-6159-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

March 9, 2021 Tuesday 05:48 EST

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**Byline:** Astead W. Herndon

**Highlight:** The president’s support for the rights of unionizing Amazon workers delighted political organizers in Alabama who are hoping to build long-term Democratic momentum in a reliably red state.

**Body**

The president’s support for the rights of unionizing Amazon workers delighted political organizers in Alabama who are hoping to build long-term Democratic momentum in a reliably red state.

BESSEMER, Ala. — The first time Darryl Richardson tried to start a [*union*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/03/16/technology/amazon-unions-virginia.html), he was 23 years old and virtually alone in the effort. It failed, he lost his job, and he remembers the lasting fears of other employees who worried they would suffer a similar fate.

Nearly 30 years later, Mr. Richardson’s penchant for agitation has not faded. He’s one of the workers seeking to unionize an [*Amazon*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/03/16/technology/amazon-unions-virginia.html) warehouse outside Birmingham, Ala., in a campaign that has targeted one of the world’s most profitable companies and its billionaire chief executive, and that has been invigorated by a wave of support from prominent politicians, including President Biden.

“I couldn’t believe he said something,” Mr. Richardson said of Mr. Biden’s [*video message last week*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/03/16/technology/amazon-unions-virginia.html) in which he affirmed workers’ rights and warned against corporate intimidation. “It matters. It eased minds that might be worried about losing their job.”

Mike Foster, one of the lead organizers for the union, was less surprised. “We’ve been waiting on him,” he said.

When Mr. Biden weighed in on the contentious union debate in Alabama — which has pitted company against worker and neighbor against neighbor as [*a potentially broader labor push brews*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/03/16/technology/amazon-unions-virginia.html) at a corporation that has long resisted similar efforts — he showed a new side of his nascent presidency.

His words demonstrated a willingness to use his bully pulpit on behalf of communities that have often fallen outside the Democratic Party’s governing focus: ***working-class*** voters in Republican states, many of whom are Black. The message also elevated the national debate about the future of labor and unions, a cross-ideological issue on which Mr. Biden can uniquely find common cause with the progressive wing of his party even as many Democrats continue to shy away.

Mr. Biden’s statement did not mention [*Amazon*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/03/16/technology/amazon-unions-virginia.html) specifically and carefully avoided backing the union, calling instead for a fair election that followed federal labor guidelines. Still, for union supporters in Alabama, a state used to being on the back burner of national and Democratic politics, Mr. Biden’s video was taken as a sign that his pledges to pursue racial equity and curb corporate power were more than just campaign catchphrases.

What’s more, the presidential nod to Alabama supercharged the Democratic arms race to find the next Georgia, a Southern state where the party capitalized on decades of organizing and demographic change to [*break Republicans’ grip*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/03/16/technology/amazon-unions-virginia.html) on statewide elections.

The task will be tougher in Alabama: The state is much more firmly Republican than its Southern neighbor, having ousted Senator Doug Jones, a Democratic incumbent, by a healthy margin in 2020. The state has also not experienced the rapid demographic change that has made Georgia’s political transformation possible, and does not have its considerable numbers of college-educated suburban moderates.

Still, Alabama Democrats see the growth of unions — and the vote in Bessemer — as a crucial first step. In that way, the blue banners hanging on the warehouse’s walls that read “vote” are about much more than a union, even if the larger effort faces greater odds.

“Watching what happened in Georgia has given people a lot of hope,” said Kathleen Kirkpatrick, the political director of Hometown Action, a statewide activist group. “What Stacey Abrams did started a decade ago and took a lot of help. So let’s think about where we are on that path.”

Faiz Shakir, a close ally of labor leaders who served as the campaign manager for Senator Bernie Sanders’s 2020 presidential bid, called Mr. Biden’s video “very impactful.” Mr. Shakir said he recalled how, on the campaign trail, he had often felt that labor issues were where there was the least amount of daylight between the progressive Mr. Sanders and the moderate Mr. Biden.

Mr. Shakir said he had privately lobbied Ron Klain, the White House chief of staff, to persuade Mr. Biden to speak out. And in a sign of the potential kinship between Mr. Klain and the left on labor, Mr. Shakir said he believed the president would have chosen Mr. Sanders as labor secretary if the Senate had not been split 50-50, making confirmations more difficult.

“We have disagreed with him on health care and maybe climate and some other pieces, but there’s some good ideological overlap on this one,” Mr. Shakir said, noting that Mr. Biden’s general-election platform [*had been more progressive*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/03/16/technology/amazon-unions-virginia.html) than his stances were in the primary race. Mr. Biden has, to this point, ignored progressive calls to embrace breaking up big technology companies like Amazon.

“I can understand people were dubious about whether that was sincere or not, but our track record with Ron, with Joe Biden, and with the whole team is that when they say they’re going to do something, they will contemplate whether they want to make that commitment,” Mr. Shakir said. “And if they do make the commitment, that’s where they stand. They’re straightforward.”

Although labor leaders, local union activists and national progressive politicians uniformly support an Amazon union in Alabama, that feeling does not reflect the mood inside the warehouse itself. With less than a month to go in the union vote, the 5,800-worker warehouse is split among supporters of the union, strong dissenters and an apathetic center that is growing sick of the national attention.

Outside the plant — where some workers clock 12-hour shifts — union activists and journalists are likely to experience a string of exasperated rejections when asking to speak with employees. Some workers wear “Vote No” pins, while others talk of anti-union literature in the common areas and bathrooms. And on social media, employees post about longing for March 29, when the election will conclude.

Amazon has aggressively countered the unionization effort, highlighting the company’s benefit package and its $15 minimum wage, as well as the job growth it has prompted in an economically stagnant area of the South.

Last week, in a media round table of anti-union warehouse workers hosted by Amazon, some said that Mr. Biden’s message had been unnecessary, and that they did not feel intimidated by the company. A spokeswoman for Amazon declined to directly comment on the president’s remarks.

“I know the president weighed in,” said J.C. Thompson, a process assistant at the warehouse. “And I can’t imagine the pressure our leadership is feeling because there’s a few people — a minority — who are disgruntled.”

Carla Johnson, an employee in the warehouse, said she was voting not to unionize.

“I can speak for myself,” she said. “I don’t need someone from the outside coming in and saying this or that.”

The range of opinions hinted at why Mr. Biden’s message was so calibrated — supporting the workers’ right to a fair election but not supporting the union itself. And some observers, including employees at the Amazon warehouse, believe the president’s words will have little bearing on the outcome of the union vote.

Catherine Highsmith, 24, said she would wager that some employees were not aware that the president had said anything. She sees his support for the workers as less important than parts of his agenda that remain unfulfilled, including raising the federal minimum wage and sending robust stimulus checks to Americans.

“It’s a words versus actions thing,” Ms. Highsmith said. “It’s doesn’t feel right for me to say ‘thanks for helping me’ when you still have to help others.”

Outsiders may see Bessemer as an unlikely place for a union showdown, but many residents disagree. This southwestern Birmingham suburb of about 25,000 people has a history of unionized iron and limestone workers. As jobs moved out the area in the 1950s, however, the city fell into poverty and despair, ranking sixth on [*a list*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/03/16/technology/amazon-unions-virginia.html) in 2019 of the worst places to live in America.

Last year, when Amazon opened the warehouse to the praises of local elected officials, the company hailed its arrival as a sign of economic revival in a predominantly Black area. With the coronavirus pandemic raging, Amazon offered thousands of jobs at a minimum wage of at least $15 an hour, more than double the state’s minimum. Some hailed it as a godsend.

But by the fall, Mr. Richardson and others had already contacted the regional chapter of the Retail, Wholesale, and Department Store Union with complaints of poor working conditions, inflexible hours and a lack of coordinated representation in management.

Liberal organizations seeking to make inroads in local politics have latched on to the union fight. The Alabama Coalition for Community Benefits, a collective of labor groups, progressive grass-roots organizations and civil rights stalwarts like the N.A.A.C.P., has supported the pro-unionization workers in Bessemer, and is also organizing employees at a nearby plant for the bus maker New Flyer.

Mr. Foster, one of the R.W.D.S.U. organizers in Bessemer, who works as a poultry processor at another company’s plant, said the efforts were indicative of a growing labor movement in the South, even in states that have passed [*strict right-to-work laws*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/03/16/technology/amazon-unions-virginia.html) that ban mandatory union membership as a condition of employment.

The political groups see something more, an outgrowth of the organizing that exploded during Donald J. Trump’s presidency. Millions of dollars poured into Alabama during the 2017 special election for the Senate in which Mr. Jones became the first Democrat to hold one of the state’s seats in the chamber since 1997. He [*lost his re-election bid*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/03/16/technology/amazon-unions-virginia.html) last year, but Ms. Kirkpatrick argued that the union efforts were proof that the organizing infrastructure had lived on.

“The legacy of union sensibilities in Alabama maybe don’t follow along partisan lines,” she said. “So regardless of the outcome, one of the things that we really did see over the course of the last three to four years was Democrats and progressive Democrats coming out of the woodwork. Waking up and realizing they weren’t the only person on the block in the retail workplace who has a progressive mind-set.”

On Friday, several congressional Democrats traveled to Bessemer to support the Amazon workers. Representative Andy Levin of Michigan, a former union organizer, said it was “the most important election for the working people of this country in my lifetime.”

“There is nothing I have done in Congress that is more important than standing here today and giving a little solidarity to these workers and their struggle for justice,” Mr. Levin said.

But the national political implications matter less to people like Mr. Richardson and Ms. Highsmith, who believe a union is necessary to improve their daily working conditions. When thousands of Twitter users started a #BoycottAmazon campaign last week in solidarity with the union efforts, the R.W.D.S.U. and local union organizers distanced themselves from the campaign, choosing to keep their focus on Bessemer.

While liberal activists in Alabama see an opportunity to reshape the state’s politics, and national progressives seize on a shared priority with Mr. Biden’s administration, Mr. Richardson just wants to be able to take a long bathroom break without the fear of having his pay docked.

“We’re taking on Goliath,” he said. “And the president has our back.”

PHOTOS: Darryl Richardson, above, is one of the workers seeking to unionize an Amazon warehouse in Bessemer, Ala., outside Birmingham. He said he had been heartened by President Biden’s message of support for the workers’ rights. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY LYNSEY WEATHERSPOON FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** March 17, 2021

**End of Document**



[***How to Interpret Polling Showing Biden’s Loss of Nonwhite Support***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:693W-D1Y1-JBG3-64RV-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** UPSHOT

**Length:** 1332 words

**Byline:** Nate Cohn

**Highlight:** Yes, there’s reason for skepticism, but also reason for concern for Democrats, particularly over turnout.

**Body**

Yes, there’s reason for skepticism, but also reason for concern for Democrats, particularly over turnout.

Is President Biden really struggling as badly among nonwhite voters — especially Black voters — [*as the polls say*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/05/upshot/biden-trump-black-hispanic-voters.html)

I’ve seen plenty of skepticism. Among nonwhite voters, a Democratic presidential candidate hasn’t fared as badly as those polls suggest in a presidential election result since the enactment of the Civil Rights Act in 1964. In the case of Black voters, the disparity between the usual support for Democrats — around 90 percent or more — and the recent polling showing it in the 70s or even the 60s just seems too much to accept. Some skeptics believe they’ve seen results like this [*before*](https://twitter.com/DrewSav/status/1686435062038855680?s=20), only for Republican strength to vanish on Election Day.

But if we compare the polls with those from previous election cycles, Mr. Biden’s early weakness looks serious. His support among Black, Hispanic and other nonwhite voters is well beneath previous lows for Democrats in pre-election polls over the last several decades — including the polls from the last presidential election. Yet at the same time, his weakness is put in better perspective when judged against prior polls, rather than the final election results.

Here’s how you should interpret what the polling really means for Mr. Biden’s eventual support among nonwhite and especially Black voters.

Election results are the wrong benchmark

A major source of skepticism of Mr. Biden’s weakness among nonwhite voters is the sheer magnitude of the drop-off, based on the difference between the early poll results among registered voters and the estimated final results in post-election studies, like the exit polls.

It’s an understandable comparison, but it’s a bad one. Millions of people are undecided in polling today, while all voters have made up their minds in these post-election studies. The registered voter polling also includes millions of people who won’t ultimately vote; the post-election studies typically include only actual voters.

These two factors — undecided voters and low-turnout voters — help explain many seemingly weird differences between pre-election polls and the post-election studies.

For illustration, consider the following from our New York Times/Siena College polling:

* Mr. Biden leads, 72 percent to 11 percent, among Black registered voters over the last year.

1. Mr. Biden’s lead among Black voters jumps to 79-11 if undecided voters are assigned based on how they say they voted in 2020.
2. He leads by 76-10 among Black voters with a record of participating in the 2020 general election.
3. His lead among 2020 voters jumps to 84-10 if we allocate undecided voters based on their self-reported 2020 vote preference.For comparison, this same group of Black voters who turned out in 2020 reported backing Mr. Biden over Donald J. Trump, 89-7, in the last election.

The upshot: The gap between post-election studies and registered voter polls narrows considerably after accounting for the inherent differences between the two measures — undecided voters and turnout.

This lesson isn’t limited to Black voters. To take a different example, Mr. Biden leads by just 46-34 among young registered voters in our polling over the last year, but he leads by 57-35 among young validated 2020 voters if we assign undecided voters based on their 2020 vote preference. His lead among Hispanic voters grows from 47-35 to 56-36 with the same approach. Among Asian American, Native American, multiracial and other nonwhite voters who aren’t Black and Hispanic, it goes up to 50-39, from 40-39.

Of course, we can’t assume that Black, Hispanic, young or any voters will turn out as they did in 2020. We can’t assume that undecided voters will return to their 2020 preferences, either. The point is that the differences between pre-election registered voter polls and the final post-election studies explain many of the differences between survey results by subgroup and your expectations.

If you must compare the crosstabs from registered voter polls with the final election studies, here’s a tip: Focus on major party vote share. In the case of Black voters, Mr. Biden has a 71-12 lead, so that means he has 86 percent of the major party vote in our Times/Siena polling, 71/(71+12) = 86. That roughly five- or six-point shift in major party vote share is a lot likelier to reflect reality than comparing his 59-point margin among decided voters (71-12 = 59) with his 80-point margin from 2020.

Why major party vote share? The logic is simple. Imagine that today 17 percent of eventual Biden voters are undecided and 17 percent of eventual Trump voters are undecided. What would that mean for a poll of voters who will eventually vote 86 to 14? They would be 71 to 12 in the polls today.

Mr. Biden’s polling weakness is unusual

There’s another aspect of the skeptics case that I’m less sympathetic toward: the idea that we always see this kind of weakness among nonwhite voters, and it just never materializes.

If you look back at polling from prior cycles, it becomes clear that Mr. Biden today really is quite a bit weaker than previous Democrats in registered voter polling from prior cycles.

If there’s any consolation for Mr. Biden, it’s that the drop-off is a bit smaller in our Times/Siena polling: In fall 2020, our polls gave Mr. Biden an 81-6 lead among Black registered voters, compared with the aforementioned 71-12 in a compilation of the last four Times/Siena polls.

The story is similar among Hispanic voters, who did not show similar levels of support for prior Republican candidates.

Now it’s possible that these 2020 figures were overly rosy for Mr. Biden, given that the polling more generally overestimated his support that year. Perhaps you can knock Mr. Biden’s major party vote share down two points in 2020. Either way, it seems clear he’s running well behind where he stood in the run-up to the 2020 election, while his opponent is running at least five points ahead.

This is a smaller shift than the 20-plus point change implied by the comparison between the polls and the final election studies, but it’s still quite significant. It’s also quite comparable to other demographic shifts in recent years, like Mr. Trump’s gains among white ***working-class*** voters in 2016 or his gains among Hispanic voters in 2020. At this time in both cycles, no one imagined that Mr. Trump [*would make*](https://www.nytimes.com/2016/11/10/us/politics/donald-trump-voters.html) 40-point gains in Obama counties in rural Iowa, and then [*big improvements*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/12/20/us/politics/election-hispanics-asians-voting.html) near the Rio Grande four years later. In the end, he gained about seven points of major party vote share among these groups nationwide — about the same shift we see in the polling today.

Turnout is another option

If you’re still skeptical that Mr. Trump can make gains among nonwhite voters, it’s worth remembering that there’s another possibility: Many disillusioned or disaffected nonwhite voters might just stay home.

That possibility seems especially plausible today, with so much of Mr. Biden’s weakness concentrated among younger voters and those without a robust track record of voting. That’s exactly what happened in the last midterm election, when the Black share of the electorate [*fell to multi-decade lows*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/11/30/upshot/midterms-election-black-turnout.html) amid weak polling for Democrats.

Looking back over the last few decades, there’s a clear relationship between the racial turnout gap — the difference between white and Black turnout — and the proportion of Black registered voters who back Democrats in pre-election polls since 1980. Or put differently: When Black voters don’t support Democrats, they tend not to vote.

It’s possible that the Black voters who back Mr. Trump in the polls today will ultimately show up for him next November. But for now, when I see Mr. Biden’s share among Black voters slip into the 60s and 70s in the polls, I mostly see yet another decline in the Black share of the electorate, at least “if the election were held today.”

If there’s any good news for Mr. Biden here, it’s that the election is still 14 months away.

PHOTO: (PHOTOGRAPH BY FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** September 6, 2023

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[***For Rishi Sunak, Family Wealth From Outsourcing Adds to a Secretive Fortune***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:66R3-PH01-JBG3-608F-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

October 28, 2022 Friday 23:01 EST

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**Section:** WORLD; europe

**Length:** 2117 words

**Byline:** Jane Bradley

**Highlight:** Britain’s new prime minister married into an $800 million stake in Infosys, a company that does not fit neatly into his party’s views on immigration.

**Body**

LONDON — As Rishi Sunak made his rapid ascent in British politics, campaigning for Brexit and greater immigration controls to preserve jobs for Britons, the company that made his family exceedingly wealthy was becoming a political lightning rod as one of the world’s biggest outsourcing firms.

Infosys, the Indian outsourcing giant founded by Mr. Sunak’s father-in-law, became notorious among both American political parties for helping companies replace their workers with thousands of Indian immigrants or move their positions to the sprawling Infosys complex in Bangalore.

As the company grew to a market value of nearly $80 billion, it also paid record fines and faced repeated accusations that it broke immigration laws and helped companies discriminate against American workers.

At a perilous time in British politics, with markets on edge, his party in turmoil and inflation rising, Mr. Sunak’s financial ties to Infosys blend two volatile political issues: immigration and inequality. Though Mr. Sunak’s family members are no longer company directors, they are major shareholders, and the company’s outsourcing history does not neatly fit with his party’s stance on limiting immigration to protect jobs. And his wife’s $800 million stake in the company is the biggest source of his wealth, which has emerged as an early source of unease at a time when the government appears ready to cut benefits for ***working-class*** families and the poor.

Infosys is also a British government contractor that has made more than $120 million in public sector deals since Mr. Sunak entered government, [*according to an analysis of records from Tussell*](https://client.tussell.com/award_notices/679340-b2eeac11733b65b454c7bef27e481a17-qat013-infrastructure-testing), a research firm that tracks public spending.

That includes an $8.6 million technology contract with the Home Office, the government department responsible for immigration. The contract, which has not previously been reported, was made public only this May, years after it was signed, despite rules requiring contracts to be made public within 30 days.

Mr. Sunak, who was a member of Parliament when the deal was signed and became chancellor of the Exchequer later in the contract term, did not disclose his wife’s stake in the company. British [*financial disclosure rules*](https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201719/cmcode/1882/188204.htm) do not uniformly require disclosure of spousal earnings, but lawmakers are supposed to reveal financial interests that might “reasonably be thought by others to influence” their actions.

“After years of sleaze and scandal, public confidence in the U.K. standards system is already at rock bottom,” Angela Rayner, deputy leader of the opposition Labour Party, said on Thursday. “There has been a worrying lack of transparency over what processes were put in place in the case of Infosys.”

A spokeswoman for Mr. Sunak declined to respond to questions seeking comment. Infosys did not respond to repeated requests for comment.

The revelations add to a growing picture of Mr. Sunak’s closely guarded wealth, one flecked by tax controversies, offshore accounts and millions of dollars in potential conflicts of interests that went undeclared. He and his wife, Akshata Murty, have a net worth of $845 million, according to the Rich List, the annual catalog of British wealth published in [*The Sunday Times*](https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/rishi-sunak-akshata-murty-net-worth-sunday-times-rich-list-86ls8n09h).

Robert Ford, a University of Manchester political scientist, said Infosys represented a “fairly obvious potential conflict of interest.” Coming after the scandals of Boris Johnson’s administration, he said, “you would think Sunak would want to avoid even the mildest hint of anything like that.”

“Yet we do have a situation where he is married into a family that has government contracts, has an interest in extending those contracts and in extending trade with Britain,” Professor Ford said.

Mr. Sunak, a former Goldman Sachs banker and hedge fund manager, is wealthy in his own right. His early fiscal policies and his finance background have helped steady British markets after his predecessor, Liz Truss, so unsettled the markets that she resigned after 44 days in office.

But [*Mr. Sunak’s critics have seized on his wealth*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2022/10/25/world/uk-prime-minister-rishi-sunak/some-britons-fear-sunak-is-too-rich-to-understand-working-class-suffering?smid=url-share) to argue he is too out of touch to shepherd the country through a cost-of-living crisis. Unlike the United States, which put a Kennedy, a Trump and a pair of Roosevelts in the White House, Britain does not have a history of ultrawealthy prime ministers.

Infosys has at times become a political issue for Mr. Sunak. His critics have accused the Conservative government of cutting a 2021 post-Brexit trade deal with India that benefited Infosys at a time when Mr. Sunak was chancellor — the British equivalent of Treasury secretary. That criticism was [*overly simplistic at best*](https://fullfact.org/online/infosys-india-trade-deal/), but Mr. Johnson, the prime minister at the time, did praise the company during the deal for announcing new jobs in Britain. “We need more firms like Infosys with a commitment to investing in people to help the U.K. build back better,” [*he said*](https://www.prnewswire.co.uk/news-releases/infosys-to-create-1-000-digital-jobs-in-the-uk-to-fuel-post-pandemic-growth-828630386.html).

A Familiar Story

Mr. Sunak represents many firsts, including the first prime minister of color and the first Hindu prime minister. But in other ways, his is a familiar story in British politics.

The eldest son of immigrants of Indian heritage who moved to Southampton, on the southern English coast, Mr. Sunak’s father was a family doctor and his mother ran a pharmacy.

Mr. Sunak was educated at private schools, including the prestigious Winchester College, which today is one of the most expensive in the country, with fees of roughly $50,000 a year. When his political allies briefed reporters about his early life, they said he attended on scholarship. But his parents had described saving up to pay the fees.

He went on to study politics, philosophy and economics at Oxford University — where six of the last seven prime ministers and [*more than half of all British prime ministers*](https://www.ox.ac.uk/about/oxford-people/british-prime-ministers) since 1721 also studied.

Earlier this year, footage emerged of a 20-year-old Mr. Sunak telling documentary filmmakers: “I have friends who are aristocrats. I have friends who are upper class. I have friends who are, you know, ***working class***, but — well, not ***working class***.”

His parents helped him buy his first apartment, in an affluent London neighborhood, at age 21, and he worked as an analyst for Goldman Sachs for nearly four years — something he makes no mention of in his public résumé.

Around 2006, Mr. Sunak, by then living in the United States, became a partner at Children’s Investment Fund Management, a hedge fund known as T.C.I. that was owned by a Cayman Islands company and co-founded by the billionaire Sir Christopher Hohn.

During Mr. Sunak’s time there, the fund campaigned for the breakup of a Dutch bank, ABN Amro. That led to the bank’s acquisition by the Royal Bank of Scotland, a deal that saddled the company with debt, contributed to its near collapse and helped trigger a government bailout and the 2008 financial crisis.

Soon after Mr. Sunak became prime minister, his political opponents began circulating lists of T.C.I.’s investments during his time there, including the tobacco company Philip Morris International; News Corp; and Sterlite Industries, a mining company with a history of environmental pollution and fines in India.

Mr. Sunak moved next to Theleme Partners, another offshore-linked hedge fund. The fund launched with an initial investment of more than $620 million, and partners were paid a share of the offshore funds they managed, according to [*corporate filings first reported by Channel 4 News.*](https://www.channel4.com/news/rishi-sunak-inside-the-tory-leadership-candidates-fortune)

His time at the two funds made Mr. Sunak wealthy. But his net worth was tiny compared to the fortune he married into in 2009 with his wedding to Ms. Murty at a Bangalore hotel.

‘Fresh Questions’

Ms. Murty’s father, N. R. Narayana Murthy, [*founded Infosys*](https://www.nytimes.com/1999/12/16/world/india-s-high-tech-and-sheepish-capitalism.html) in 1981. By the time Mr. Sunak married into that fortune, the company was revolutionizing the way international companies did business. Rather than hire their own programmers or software engineers, companies could hire temporary Infosys workers on visas or let the company handle all their technology needs from Bangalore.

But the company’s rise was marked by whistle-blower complaints, congressional [*hearings*](https://www.grassley.senate.gov/news/news-releases/whistleblower-talks-about-employer-using-b-1-visas-subterfuge-h-1b-visa) and lawsuits. In 2013, the company [*paid a record $34 million*](https://www.ice.gov/news/releases/indian-corporation-pays-record-34-million-fine-settle-allegations-systemic-visa-fraud) to settle a Justice Department lawsuit alleging years of “systemic visa fraud.” In 2019, [*the company settled*](https://oag.ca.gov/news/press-releases/attorney-general-becerra-announces-800000-settlement-against-infosys) a tax and immigration investigation by the state of California.

The company denied any wrongdoing in both cases. But what was undeniable was that Infosys benefited from, and accelerated, the very globalization forces that helped fuel populist campaigns like Brexit.

Professor Ford, the University of Manchester scholar, said that while Mr. Sunak’s wife profited from those same sources, it was unfair to say that Mr. Sunak did, too. He benefited from marrying into a family, Professor Ford said. But he said the family’s ties to Infosys would hang over future trade negotiations with India.

“I would imagine that Infosys would benefit a lot from liberalization and trade with Britain,” he said. That will raise fresh questions, he said. “Would Rishi Sunak’s extended family benefit from a trade deal between Britain and India for facilitated outsourcing?”

In 2013, Mr. Sunak and his wife founded a start-up investment fund, Catamaran Ventures U.K. The Murthy family seeded the fund with money from the Infosys investments, according to an [*investigation by The Guardian*](https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2020/nov/27/huge-wealth-of-sunaks-family-not-declared-in-ministerial-register).

Mr. Sunak transferred his stake in Catamaran to his wife just before he was elected to Parliament in 2015. Under British financial disclosure rules, that means Mr. Sunak is not required to reveal any details about his financial interests in the company — including where the money is invested — other than the fact that his wife owns it.

Property records show that the couple has amassed a real estate portfolio that includes a penthouse in Santa Monica, Calif.; an $8 million, five-bedroom townhouse and a nearby apartment in London’s Kensington neighborhood; and a $2.3 million manor house in the Yorkshire countryside that is undergoing renovations to build a $460,000 swimming pool.

The Politics Era

Until he entered the Conservative leadership race this spring, Mr. Sunak had enjoyed a rose-tinted political career and a meteoric rise through Westminster.

First, the party tapped him to run for one of the nation’s safest Conservative seats. Then, as chancellor, he had at his disposal an almost limitless pot of money to help companies during the coronavirus pandemic. Businesses hailed him as a savior for helping them survive lockdowns, and his public popularity soared.

But when he announced his intention to run for leader, his family’s wealth and his own privileged background came under intense scrutiny for the first time.

In April, [*The Independent*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/rishi-sunak-akshata-murthy-non-dom-wife-tax-b2052251.html) revealed that Ms. Murty had used what is known as a non-domiciled tax status that lets people avoid paying British taxes on money earned abroad. The status saved her an estimated $23 million in taxes. Ms. Murty defended the strategy but quickly promised to pay taxes on her worldwide income in the future because she did not want the issue “to be a distraction for my husband.”

Keir Starmer, the Labour Party leader, accused Mr. Sunak of “taxation hypocrisy” for raising taxes on ***working-class*** Britons while maneuvering to reduce his own family’s tax bill.

Journalists also raised questions about why Mr. Sunak [*held a U.S. green card*](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-61044847), allowing permanent residence in America, until last year — including while he was Britain’s chancellor.

The scrutiny followed a [*Guardian report*](https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2020/nov/27/huge-wealth-of-sunaks-family-not-declared-in-ministerial-register) that showed that Mr. Sunak had not publicly disclosed a number of his family’s financial interests during his time as chancellor, including its Infosys holdings and an investment in a $1 billion-a-year joint venture with Amazon in India. An independent investigation concluded that Mr. Sunak had not broken any rules.

Mr. Sunak’s official register of interests remains relatively bare for someone with such wealth. That is largely because he transferred his assets into a blind trust when he was appointed chancellor in July 2019.

Under typical blind trust arrangements, people cannot know the details about how their money is invested or make decisions about those investments. But parliamentary rules allow Mr. Sunak to give “general direction” about his investments. And Mr. Sunak knows what assets the trust holds, while the public does not.

Sarah Hurtes contributed reporting from Brussels.

Sarah Hurtes contributed reporting from Brussels.

PHOTOS: When Prime Minister Rishi Sunak, above, was in Parliament, he did not disclose that his wife, Akshata Murty, far left, had an $800 million stake in Infosys, an outsourcing company founded by her father that contracted with the British government. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY PETER NICHOLLS/REUTERS; HANNAH MCKAY/REUTERS) (A10) This article appeared in print on page A1, A10.

**Load-Date:** October 30, 2022

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[***J.D. Vance’s Rise From ‘Hillbilly Elegy’ Author to Senate Nominee***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65CB-N741-DXY4-X440-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

May 3, 2022 Tuesday 12:56 EST

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**Section:** US; politics

**Length:** 900 words

**Byline:** Trip Gabriel

**Highlight:** Now the Republican nominee for Senate in Ohio, Mr. Vance owes his ascendant political career in large part to Donald Trump, whose style he has tried to emulate.

**Body**

Now the Republican nominee for Senate in Ohio, Mr. Vance owes his ascendant political career in large part to Donald Trump, whose style he has tried to emulate.

Before the 2016 election, J.D. Vance called Donald J. Trump “[*cultural heroin*](https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2016/07/opioid-of-the-masses/489911/)” and a demagogue who was “[*leading the white* ***working class***](https://slate.com/news-and-politics/2016/08/hillbilly-elegy-author-j-d-vance-on-trump-racism-and-how-the-media-is-failing-the-white-working-class.html) to a very dark place.”

On Tuesday, Mr. Vance’s [*triumph in a crowded Republican field*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2022/05/03/us/ohio-indiana-primary-election/jd-vance-ohio) for Senate in Ohio was thanks largely to [*an endorsement*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/04/15/us/politics/ohio-jd-vance-trump-endorsement.html), late in the race, from the former president he once denounced.

The conversion of Mr. Vance, an author and venture capitalist, from Trump skeptic to full-on Trump ally might fill a second memoir, a sequel to his best-selling “[*Hillbilly Elegy*](https://www.nytimes.com/2016/08/11/books/review-in-hillbilly-elegy-a-compassionate-analysis-of-the-poor-who-love-trump.html),” Mr. Vance’s story of growing up poor in Kentucky and Ohio. When that book was published in 2016, it was devoured by the “coastal elites” he now rails against as a means for them to decode white ***working-class*** support for Mr. Trump.

Mr. Vance’s book pointed inward to explain the woes of his community: He blamed a personal “lack of agency” for drug abuse, welfare dependency and chaotic lives. But as a politician, he has pointed the finger outward, at external enemies, just as Mr. Trump did.

On the campaign trail, Mr. Vance blamed corporations for shipping jobs to China and accused liberals of opening borders to cheap labor and opioid traffickers. The intimate voice of “Hillbilly Elegy” yielded to a darker tone and language. He castigated “idiots” in Washington and “scumbags” in the news media.

His critics, including Republican rivals in Ohio, said he had turned himself inside-out to mimic Mr. Trump’s bellicosity in pursuit of votes. Opponents spent millions on attack ads to remind voters that Mr. Vance had once called himself “a Never Trump guy” and had said some voters backed Mr. Trump “for racist reasons.”

Mr. Vance, on a slog across Ohio he called the “No B.S. Town Hall Tour,” explained to modest crowds that he had undergone a political evolution, recognizing that Mr. Trump was right on issue after issue.

“I was like, ‘Man, you know, when Trump says the elites are fundamentally corrupt, they don’t care about the country that has made them who they are, he was actually telling the truth,’” he told a conservative podcaster last year.

Today, Mr. Vance, who graduated summa cum laude from Ohio State University and went on to Yale Law School, has found a political home with the movement known as national conservatism, an effort to add an intellectual framework to Trumpism. National conservatives lean right on issues like diversity and immigration restrictions but lean left on economics, opposing unfettered free trade, especially with China.

Mr. Vance, 37, grew up in Middletown, Ohio, where a grandfather had moved from Kentucky for a steel mill job. In the years after J.D. Vance was born in 1984, the city hollowed out as blue-collar jobs left, opioids arrived, marriages dissolved and much of the industrial Midwest became “a hub of misery” for the white ***working class***, he wrote in his memoir.

Mr. Vance’s mother, Bev, struggled with drug addiction. He was raised largely by his maternal grandparents, particularly the grandmother he called Mamaw, who “loved the Lord,” “loved the F-word” and owned 19 handguns, he said on the campaign trail.

Out of high school, Mr. Vance enlisted in the Marines and served in Iraq doing public affairs work. He returned home a man in a hurry, sailing through Ohio State in under two years.

At Yale, he met a fellow student he would marry, Usha Chilukuri, who went on to clerk for an appeals court judge, Brett M. Kavanaugh. Democrats’ fierce opposition to Mr. Trump’s nomination of Judge Kavanaugh to the Supreme Court in 2018 appeared to be a turning point in Mr. Vance’s political transformation.

“Trump’s popularity in the Vance household went up substantially during the Kavanaugh fight,” he recalled in 2019.

Mr. Vance went to work as a venture capitalist in San Francisco for Peter Thiel, a billionaire founder of PayPal, whom he had heard speak at Yale. Mr. Thiel, a Silicon Valley conservative, also influenced Mr. Vance’s politics, especially his opposition to China and to immigration.

When Mr. Vance moved his family, which now includes three children, back to Ohio, he raised money from Mr. Thiel for a venture capital fund of his own — and followed the Thiel tradition by naming the business, Narya Capital, with a “Lord of the Rings” reference.

Mr. Thiel poured $13.5 million into a political action committee to support Mr. Vance’s race.

As a candidate, Mr. Vance had struggled to translate celebrity as an author into broad recognition and support from the Republican base. He was perpetually running behind his rivals in polling, and Mr. Thiel’s millions were nearly gone.

But all that turned around with Mr. Trump’s endorsement on April 15. Most of the Republican field had aggressively auditioned for the former president’s seal of approval. Mr. Vance first pitched Mr. Trump at a meeting at Mar-a-Lago brokered by Mr. Thiel. Donald Trump Jr. and the Fox News host Tucker Carlson also lobbied for Mr. Vance.

“J.D. Vance may have said some not so great things about me in the past,” Mr. Trump said in announcing his choice, “but he gets it now, and I have seen that in spades.”

PHOTO: J.D. Vance’s campaign turned around last month when former President Donald J. Trump endorsed him. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Maddie McGarvey for The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** May 4, 2022

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[***‘Young Mungo’ Explores Love and Violence in Emotional Technicolor***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:654T-3461-JBG3-64RH-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

April 3, 2022 Sunday 23:01 EST

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**Section:** BOOKS

**Length:** 896 words

**Byline:** Molly Young

**Highlight:** Douglas Stuart’s follow-up to his Booker Prize-winning novel “Shuggie Bain” is, like that novel, the story of a boy and his alcoholic mother in ***working-class*** Glasgow.

**Body**

Douglas Stuart’s follow-up to his Booker Prize-winning novel “Shuggie Bain” is, like that novel, the story of a boy and his alcoholic mother in ***working-class*** Glasgow.

YOUNG MUNGO

By Douglas Stuart

390 pages. Grove Press. $27.

A critic could generate a whole book review simply by reproducing her marginalia. It would be boring to read but accurate, like an EKG printout. If the book in question were “Young Mungo,” by Douglas Stuart, it might begin with observations like “Gorgeous writing!” and “Wow,” before graduating to expletives and exclamation marks and wobbly underlines and question marks. Family-friendly adjectives do not always describe the yanking of certain heart strings in this lovely but occasionally overworked novel.

“Young Mungo” is a cousin to Stuart’s debut, [*“Shuggie Bain,”*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/11/books/review/shuggie-bain-douglas-stuart.html) which was awarded the [*Booker Prize in 2020*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/19/books/booker-prize-winner-douglas-stuart-shuggie-bain.html) and was a finalist for the National Book Award. As with that novel, this one tells the story of a boy and his alcoholic mother in ***working-class*** Glasgow. The novels share a brutality and a squirmy, claustrophobic evocation of family life. And they offer a world of exquisite detail: If a perfume creator wished to bottle the olfactory landscape of post-Thatcher-era Glasgow, all the necessary ingredients could be found in Stuart’s descriptions of sausage grease, fruity fortified wine, pigeon droppings and store-bought hair bleach.

Mungo is 15 years old and the youngest of three children. His mother, Maureen, also known as Mo-Maw, is a boozy wreck given to frequent disappearances. This is not the sort of woman who, when she vanishes, is presumed to be on an [*“Eat, Pray, Love”*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/10/21/books/review-eat-pray-love-elizabeth-gilbert.html)-style voyage of self-discovery. This is the sort of woman whose children immediately fear her to be not only dead but gruesomely and specifically dead: gutted with a steak knife and dumped naked in a river.

We first encounter Mungo as he is taken from his house by two strange men for a weekend of camping and fishing. The full, dark purpose of the trip is unclear, and the fact that it has been sanctioned by Maureen — who waves her son away with pink-painted fingernails from the window of the family’s tenement flat — is ominous.

The grisly events of that trip are interspersed with chapters about James, an older boy from the neighborhood whom Mungo meets on an empty lot beside a motorway, where the elder has built a “doocot” structure for keeping pigeons. James’s touch, unlike that of other local boys, doesn’t cause Mungo to flinch in defense. The two fall in love, and how could they not? James is resourceful and looks “like an oil painting”; Mungo is undefended and graceful, with skin “so creamy that you wanted to take a spoon to him.” With James, Mungo discovers a love not rooted in subjugation.

But homophobia is a noxious fog. Both boys are told, amply and colorfully, to man up. The terms of manhood in this biome are to possess an outrageously high pain threshold and the capacity to inflict torture. A boy might be considered a man if, for example, he can fall off a piece of construction equipment at a great height, shatter his arm, urinate on himself from the pain and yet avoid wailing like a baby. He may be a man if he is able to smash a brick over a cop’s head, stab a night watchman, slash faces and shatter teeth.

The question, then, is whether love can survive this unimaginably hostile environment. Just when you think the soil is too acidic for these tender sprouts to flourish, Mungo and James find new reserves of durability. Being sensitive to the world means being pummeled by it, but it also allows one to adapt.

When Stuart errs, it’s on the side of excess. Many passages might have profited from being left as subtext. In these, it is as though Stuart has allowed the CliffsNotes version of “Young Mungo” to barge directly into the novel. We understand how Mungo feels when someone undermines his humanity with a snarky comment; we don’t need the exposition of: “Here was yet another person telling him what he needed, how he should act, the person he should be. Another person who didn’t think he was enough just as he was.”

This happens with increasing frequency, and it presents a riddle: When an author repeatedly insists on telling what he has already shown, is it because he doesn’t trust the reader’s attentiveness or because he questions his own effectiveness? Is it condescension or self-doubt?

Here, as he did in “Shuggie Bain,” Stuart mixes the self-aware floridity and emotional Technicolor of a Douglas Sirk melodrama with the ambient violence of Elena Ferrante’s Neapolitan novels. As Mungo undergoes one atrocity after the next — beatings, sexual assault, abuse and exploitation of every form — the specificity of each episode risks blurring into an aesthetic of generalized wretchedness.

Some readers will feel themselves thrust into the role of a misery tourist. Others will respond the way the director Rainer Werner Fassbinder responded to Sirk’s films, dazzled into inarticulate reverence. “A great, crazy movie about life and about death,” is how Fassbinder described Sirk’s “Imitation of Life.”

There is crazy greatness in “Young Mungo,” along with corny lapses and moments with the expository flatness of a TV voice-over. Still, faulting a novel of this register for intemperance feels like faulting an opera for being “too loud.” The volume is part of the point. Sometimes you wince. Often you exult.

PHOTOS

**Load-Date:** April 3, 2022

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[***Former Aide Emerges From Rabbit Hole With Trump Stories to Tell***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:697R-CXK1-DXY4-X0V1-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Length:** 1390 words

**Byline:** By Robert Draper

**Body**

''I would like not to be a hermit,'' the former White House aide says upon the publication of a memoir about her journey down a political rabbit hole.

Cassidy Hutchinson, now 26, dropped out of sight last year after she testified in damning detail in a nationally televised committee hearing about President Donald J. Trump's actions during and after the Capitol riot on Jan. 6, 2021. Facing blistering social media attacks from Mr. Trump and threats from his supporters, she retreated from Washington and cut off contacts with her former White House world.

Some 15 months later, the onetime staff member in Mr. Trump's West Wing is heading back into the maelstrom with the publication of ''Enough,'' a memoir about her time as a top aide to Mark Meadows, Mr. Trump's last chief of staff. On a recent Sunday morning, she spoke in the kitchen of her Washington high-rise with the blinds to her living room window open, a recent development in her reclusive life.

''I would like not to be a hermit,'' she said. But, she added, ''I am not a victim in any of this. I did what I did and I knew what I was getting myself into.''

If anything, becoming a target of the right after publicly disclosing what she had learned in the White House was perhaps the least surprising thing that Ms. Hutchinson had encountered over the past three years. Some of her most vivid testimony to the Jan. 6 committee was her description of an enraged Mr. Trump hurling his plate of lunch across the room after hearing Attorney General William P. Barr say he saw no evidence of widespread fraud in the 2020 election.

''I grabbed a towel and started wiping the ketchup off of the wall to help the valet out,'' Ms. Hutchinson testified.

Both in print and in the conversation in her high rise, Ms. Hutchinson described a journey down a political rabbit hole that might have tested the psychological stamina of a more seasoned operative. It was one in which loyalty to Mr. Trump surmounted all else, to the point where White House staffers routinely laid ''leak traps'' in hopes of discovering who was feeding information to the media. Once Mr. Meadows asked Ms. Hutchinson if she would ''take a bullet'' for the president. (Perhaps in the thigh, she nervously joked in reply.)

It was, by her telling, an administration awash in paranoia, with Mr. Meadows and others refusing to dispose of daily litter in ''burn bags'' for fear that someone from the ''deep state'' might intercept the contents. Instead, she writes, Mr. Meadows burned so many documents in his fireplace in the final days of the Trump presidency that his wife complained to Ms. Hutchinson about how expensive it had become to dry-clean the ''bonfire'' aroma from his suits.

For all its obsession with secrecy, the Trump White House was also strangely unpoliced, she writes, particularly in the waning days of the administration. On Jan. 15, 2021, Ms. Hutchinson encountered Mike Lindell, the conspiracy-minded My Pillow entrepreneur, roaming the building unescorted, declaring, ''We can still win.''

She saw Representative Matt Gaetz, a far-right Florida Republican and a Trump ally under federal investigation at the time for sex trafficking, show up without an appointment to lobby Mr. Meadows for a pardon. (Justice Department officials ended the investigation earlier this year after determining they could not make a strong enough case in court, people familiar with the matter said.)

And she writes that Rudolph W. Giuliani, the former New York mayor who has pleaded not guilty to racketeering and conspiracy charges for trying to overturn the results of the 2020 election in Georgia, groped her under her skirt ''like a wolf closing in on its prey'' in a tent behind Mr. Trump's speech to supporters on the Ellipse on Jan. 6, 2021.

''I feel his frozen fingers trail up my thigh,'' she writes, then recounts how she stormed away. In an interview on Newsmax, Mr. Giuliani called the claim ''completely absurd.''

But what most defined Ms. Hutchinson's swift ascent and sudden estrangement were her two superiors, Mr. Meadows and Mr. Trump. Coming from a ***working-class*** and politically disengaged family in Pennington, N.J., Ms. Hutchinson was a college sophomore when she first attended a Trump rally in April 2017.

''I was maybe six rows from the stage,'' she recalled, ''and I was surrounded by all these people I felt I could relate to.'' That included the president, whose coarse and boastful rhetoric sounded to her like her father, a self-employed landscaper and aficionado of ''The Apprentice,'' Mr. Trump's long-running reality show.

Even today, Ms. Hutchinson seems somewhat at pains to understand how she fell so deeply in the sway of a president she now describes as ''dangerous to our democracy.'' To Jonathan Karp, the president of Simon & Schuster, which is publishing ''Enough,'' Ms. Hutchinson's continued inner conflicts are understandable: ''This book is about trauma, and about trying to overcome trauma. And it was written in the white heat of the moment.''

Her collaborator on the project, Mark Salter, the author and longtime consigliere of Senator John McCain, did not disguise to Ms. Hutchinson his contempt for Mr. Trump. ''She put in that line in the book, 'I adored the president,''' Mr. Salter recalled in an interview. ''I told her, 'That makes me wince.' But it's hard to blame her. She was in a pretty heady situation for her age. When I was 24, I was still smoking dope and pounding railroad spikes.''

Ms. Hutchinson landed in the White House after two internships on Capitol Hill and then a third in the White House Office of Legislative Affairs, where her organizational skills caught the notice of senior staffers. Straight out of college in June 2019, Ms. Hutchinson, then 22, became a White House legislative staff assistant.

Two months into the job, she found herself in conversation with a key Trump ally on the Hill, Representative Mark Meadows, a North Carolina Republican and then the House Freedom Caucus chairman, who hugged her and took down her personal contact information. The two began to talk almost daily.

When Mr. Meadows became Mr. Trump's chief of staff in March 2020, he asked Ms. Hutchinson to join him in the West Wing. ''You're going to be my eyes and ears,'' he said, adding, ''I want you with me all the time.''

By her account and that of former colleagues, Ms. Hutchinson zealously dedicated herself to her two bosses. She could be brusque to junior aides who did not perform up to her standards. She readily excused Mr. Trump's shortcomings, blaming herself and other staffers for his tantrums, all the way up to the end of his presidency.

''In my mind at the time,'' she said, ''I felt like Jan. 6 largely happened because we didn't do enough to stop it.''

During the interview, Ms. Hutchinson recalled the final Trump rally she attended, in Rome, Ga., two days before the 2020 election, and how starkly different her reaction was from the first such event she had attended only three and a half years earlier.

''I'm getting goose bumps thinking about it,'' she said. ''I was weaving in and out of the crowd. I remember thinking, 'Why do I feel so disconnected from everything that's going on?' Just looking at everyone looking at this man onstage the way I had. But now I'm on the other side of it, thinking, 'They're being fooled by him.'''

Even so, she stayed after the election and after Jan. 6. Though she regarded Mr. Trump's conduct that day as worthy of impeachment, she nonetheless sought a job with the former president at Mar-a-Lago. Suspected by Mr. Trump of having been insufficiently loyal, Mr. Meadows informed her that her prospects there looked dim. For fully a year, she entertained vague ambitions of being a chief of staff to a CEO or perhaps a lobbyist at a place like Amazon.

Then, in February last year, federal marshals delivered her a subpoena to appear before the Jan. 6 committee.

From that moment, Ms. Hutchinson said, she drew the blinds in her apartment, feeling deeply alone and unsure of what awaited her. Today, she admits to nervousness about how the world will react as she returns to it. Mr. Salter said there was reason to believe she would rise above her self-doubt.

''I watched her testimony a million times,'' he said. ''I'm sure she was a wreck. But you could not tell.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/23/us/politics/cassidy-hutchinson-trump.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/23/us/politics/cassidy-hutchinson-trump.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Cassidy Hutchinson testified about the events of Jan. 6, 2021, at a hearing last year. In her memoir, left, about her time as a top aide to Mark Meadows, she writes: ''I am not a victim in any of this.'' (PHOTOGRAPHS BY DOUG MILLS/THE NEW YORK TIMES

SIMON & SCHUSTER, VIA ASSOCIATED PRESS) This article appeared in print on page A21.

**Load-Date:** September 24, 2023

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[***In the U.K., a Disaster No One Wants to Talk About; Michelle Goldberg***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68RX-Y4M1-DXY4-X14D-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 1057 words

**Byline:** Michelle Goldberg

**Highlight:** The political taboo around Bregret.

**Body**

There’s a growing understanding in Britain that the country’s vote to quit the European Union, a decisive moment in the international rise of reactionary populism, was a grave error.

Just as critics predicted, Brexit has led to inflation, labor shortages, business closures and travel snafus. It has created supply chain problems that put the [*future*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/18/business/stellantis-uk-auto-industry-cars.html) of British car manufacturing in danger. Brexit has, in many cases, turned travel between Europe and the U.K. into a [*punishing ordeal*](https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2022/jul/23/travel-chaos-is-the-new-normal-after-brexit-british-tourists-are-warned), as I learned recently, spending hours in a chaotic passport control line when taking the train from Paris to London. British musicians are finding it hard to tour in Europe because of the costs and red tape associated with moving both people and equipment across borders, which Elton John called “[*crucifying*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/brexit-elton-john-furnish-festivals-b2338658.html).”

According to the U.K.’s Office for Budget Responsibility, leaving the E.U. has shaved 4 percent off Britain’s gross domestic product. The damage to Britain’s economy, the O.B.R.’s chairman has [*said*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/brexit-damage-uk-economy-covid-b2308178.html), is of the same “magnitude” as that from the Covid pandemic.

All this pain and hassle has created an anti-Brexit majority in Britain. According to a YouGov poll [*released*](https://yougov.co.uk/topics/politics/articles-reports/2023/07/18/britons-would-vote-rejoin-eu) this week, 57 percent of Britons say the country was wrong to vote to leave the E.U., and a slight majority wants to rejoin it. Even Nigel Farage, the former leader of the far-right U.K. Independence Party sometimes known as “[*Mr. Brexit*](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/election-2019-50565543),” told the [*BBC in May*](https://www.politico.eu/article/nigel-farage-uk-eu-brexit-has-failed/), “Brexit has failed.”

This mess was, of course, both predictable and [*predicted*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UX4HZOBxHTA). That’s why I’ve been struck, visiting the U.K. this summer, by the curious political taboo against discussing how badly Brexit has gone, even among many who voted against it. Seven years ago, Brexit was an early augur of the revolt against cosmopolitanism that swept Donald Trump into power. (Trump even [*borrowed*](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/01/27/opinion/sunday/is-donald-trump-mr-brexit.html) the “Mr. Brexit” moniker for himself.) Both enterprises — Britain’s divorce from the E.U. and Trump’s reign in the U.S. — turned out catastrophically. Both left their countries fatigued and depleted. But while America can’t stop talking about Trump, many in the U.K. can scarcely stand to think about Brexit.

“It’s so toxic,” Tobias Ellwood, a Tory lawmaker who has called on his colleagues to admit that Brexit was a mistake, told me. “People have invested so much time and pain and agony on this.” It’s like a “wound,” he said, that people want to avoid picking at. The London mayor, Sadiq Khan, one of the few Labour Party leaders eager to discuss the consequences of leaving the E.U., described an “omertà,” or vow of silence, around it. “It’s the elephant in the room,” he told me. “I’m frustrated that no one’s talking about it.”

Part of the reason that no one — or almost no one — is talking about Brexit’s consequences lies with the demographics of the Labour Party. [*Somewhere*](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-48039984) between a quarter and a third of Labour voters supported Brexit, and those voters are concentrated in the so-called Red Wall — ***working-class*** areas in the Midlands and Northern England that once solidly supported Labour but swung right in the 2019 election. “Those voters do not want to have a conversation about Brexit,” said Joshua Simons, the director of Labour Together, a think tank close to Labour leadership.

Sheer exhaustion also contributes to making Brexit talk unwelcome: Between the vote to leave the European Union in 2016 and the final agreement in 2020, the issue consumed British politics, and many people just want to move on. Simons argues there’s also a third factor: a sense that the results of a democratic referendum must be honored. He cites a point that a mentor of his, the political philosopher Danielle Allen, made after the 2016 vote. “In the end, in democracy, sometimes you all do crazy things together,” Simons said. “And what becomes more important is not whether the crazy thing was a good or bad thing to do. It’s that you’re doing it together.”

As someone from a far more polarized country, I found this idea somewhat foreign. If the Trumpist electorate had imposed such a costly and ultimately unpopular policy on the country, I suspect there would be a rush among Democrats to reverse it. But in the U.K., referendums — which are rare and held only to address major issues — have a political gravity that is hard for an outsider like me to understand.

“You’ve got to respect the referendum,” said Khan. “What you can’t have is never-endums, referendum after referendum after referendum. That disrespects the electorate.”

Still, he argues that without facing the harm that Brexit has caused, the country can’t move forward: “Unless you can diagnose what the problem is, how can there be a prognosis?” Britain is not, at least in the near term, going to rejoin the E.U. But both Khan and Ellwood argue that it can still forge closer trade and immigration ties than it has now, and perhaps eventually return to the European single market, the trade agreement encompassing the E.U. countries, Norway, Switzerland, Iceland and Liechtenstein.

“After the next election, I can see all parties embracing the idea of rejoining the single market,” said Ellwood, adding, “I put money on it that it happens in the next five years.”

One silver lining to Brexit is that it offers a cautionary tale for the rest of Europe. After Britain voted to leave the E.U. in 2016, there’s been fear, among some who care about the European project, that [*France*](https://foreignpolicy.com/2016/06/29/frexit-is-coming-brexit-france-le-pen/) or [*Italy*](https://www.politico.eu/article/the-race-to-be-italys-nigel-farage-paragone-sgarbi/) could be next. But as The Guardian [*reported*](https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/jan/12/support-for-leaving-eu-has-fallen-significantly-across-bloc-since-brexit), as of January, support for leaving the E.U. has declined in every member state for which data is available. As governments across the continent move rightward, the E.U. itself is moving in a more [*conservative*](https://www.politico.eu/article/far-right-giorgia-meloni-europe-swings-right-and-reshapes-the-eu/) direction, but it’s not coming apart.

“I don’t think you’re going to see other countries in the E.U. leaving the E.U. if for no other reason than because they’ve seen the impact on us,” said Khan. But there’s a larger lesson, one most Western countries seemingly have to continually relearn. Right-wing nationalist projects begin with loud, flamboyant swagger. They tend to end unspeakably.

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[***How the Real Estate Broker Business Could Change; DealBook Newsletter***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69JG-5S91-JBG3-62BS-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Length:** 1825 words

**Byline:** Michael J. de la Merced and Jordyn Holman

**Highlight:** Industry experts say a federal jury ruling this week against the National Association of Realtors and large brokerages makes the current commission model likely to change.

**Body**

Industry experts say a federal jury ruling this week against the National Association of Realtors and large brokerages makes the current commission model likely to change.

A federal jury dealt the biggest blow to the American home-buying industry in perhaps a century this week when it found that the powerful National Association of Realtors and several large brokerages had conspired to [*keep agent commissions artificially high*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/31/realestate/nar-antitrust-lawsuit.html).

Brokers, analysts and consumer advocates called the decision — which awarded plaintiffs nearly $1.8 billion in damages — a game changer. More antitrust lawsuits against the association and brokerages are awaiting trial, while federal regulators are [*looking to intervene*](https://www.housingwire.com/articles/doj-tells-appeals-court-to-overturn-nar-commission-ruling/) as well.

Here’s what changes might be in store for the home brokerage industry, which pulls in an estimated $100 billion in commissions each year.

Real estate experts say the current system won’t stand. Right now, home sellers essentially pay fees for both their own agent and the buyers’ agent, with a typical commission around 5 to 6 percent, split between the two brokers.

That structure is largely enforced by the National Association of Realtors, which has about 1.5 million dues-paying members. If a seller doesn’t agree to those terms, the listing isn’t shown on the multiple listing services that underpin most home sales.

This week’s decision may have changed that. “The industry can no longer believe that any jury will decide in favor of their price-setting system,” Steve Brobeck, senior fellow at the Consumer Federation of America, told DealBook.

Experts identified a range of potential shifts, including:

* Making commission sharing optional, so that sellers’ agents who don’t want to pay buyers’ agent fees can still list on databases.

1. Negotiating to have the home seller cover the buyer’s broker costs as part of the transaction price. Or, if banks and federal regulators agree, home-lending rules could be changed to allow mortgages to directly finance buyers’ agent fees.
2. Having buyers’ agents charge flat fees, bill by the hour or offer a menu of services that home shoppers could choose from.
3. Forgoing buyers’ agents altogether, as buyers in most countries do.

According to analysts at the investment bank Keefe, Bruyette &amp; Woods, as much as 30 percent of the industry’s commissions could disappear.

Start-ups are trying different business models. Some, including CoStar’s Homes.com, promote house listings instead of selling buyer leads to agents, as Zillow and Realtor.com do. (Agents can pay Homes.com to promote their listings more prominently.) And companies known as iBuyers, like Opendoor and Offerpad, try to remain independent from multiple-listing services by listing homes they own. Shares in those companies have risen sharply since the Realtors verdict.

The brokerage industry could contract. Lower fees could drive down the number of U.S. agents as much as 80 percent, according to the KBW analysts. Among those at risk are part-time brokers or underperformers. “We’ll find out who the real professionals are,” said Jason Haber, an agent at Compass.

Such a drop could have disastrous consequences for the National Association of Realtors, which collects about $150 from each member annually. According to the nonprofit’s [*most recent annual tax filing*](https://projects.propublica.org/nonprofits/organizations/361520690), it earned $79 million in net income on $327 million in revenue.

The group has said [*it will appeal*](https://www.nar.realtor/breaking-news/update-in-case-of-burnett-v-nar-et-al) the court ruling. — Michael J. de la Merced

IN CASE YOU MISSED IT

Sam Bankman-Fried was found guilty on all counts. The founder of the FTX cryptocurrency exchange was [*convicted on seven charges of fraud and conspiracy*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/02/technology/sam-bankman-fried-fraud-trial-ftx.html) and could face up to 110 years in prison. The verdict cements the fall of the crypto industry’s former poster child.

Efforts were taken to regulate artificial intelligence on both sides of the Atlantic. President Biden issued an executive order requiring companies to test A.I. tools that could be a threat to national security and share the results with the government. At the first [*global A.I. safety summit,*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/01/world/europe/uk-ai-summit-sunak.html) hosted by Rishi Sunak, the British prime minister, 28 governments agreed to cooperate on risk management.

Autoworkers ended their strike. General Motors [*agreed to a tentative deal*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/30/business/economy/gm-uaw-contract-deal.html) with the United Automobile Workers, the last of the three big Detroit manufacturers to do so, after weeks of labor strife. The concessions were seen as a big win for the union.

An old trade rule causes new problems for U.S. retailers

American retailers have faced an existential crisis since e-commerce disrupted the industry’s traditional business models. But their latest threat, a group of retailers and policymakers say, is coming from a nearly century-old trade rule, The Times’s Jordyn Holman reports for DealBook.

The rule, de minimis, exempts packages shipped into the United States from duties and fees if they are worth less than $800.

Critics of de minimis point out that because Chinese-founded online retailers like Shein and Temu deliver merchandise straight from their overseas warehouses to shoppers’ homes, few of their packages are worth at least $800. But products made overseas and shipped in bulk to the United States — where retailers store them in warehouses before sending them to customers — are less likely to fall under the threshold.

U.S. retailers want that rule changed. If it isn’t, they argue, U.S. jobs are at risk.

De minimis “played a significant role” in financial strain that led to David Bridal’s bankruptcy in April, which was its second in five years, Jim Marcum, the company’s chief executive, told DealBook. The company said it paid about $20 million in fees to U.S. Customs last year while its Chinese-based competitors that ship dresses straight to shoppers paid nothing, Mr. Marcum said. Over six years, that amounted to about $100 million in duties that could have been invested in modernizing the business, he added.

Temu and Shein most likely account for 30 percent of packages shipped daily under the provision, according to a [*report*](https://selectcommitteeontheccp.house.gov/documents/reports) from the House Select Committee on the Chinese Communist Party. A Shein spokeswoman said de minimis “is not critical to the success of our business,” and in July, Shein’s executive vice chairman said the company was “eager” to work with lawmakers to help change the rule. A Temu spokeswoman said that its “growth isn’t dependent on the de minimis policy” and that the company was “supportive of any policy adjustments made by legislators that align with consumer interests.”

One group of U.S. retailers wants Congress to expand de minimis so that it applies to U.S. distribution centers in foreign trade zones. In these zones, companies are not required to immediately pay duty fees for imported products. Instead, they pay the fees when they ship those products to customers. That delay helps them manage cash flow, but unlike packages shipped out of a warehouse abroad, packages shipped out of warehouses in foreign trade zones aren’t exempt from fees if they’re worth less than $800. “What we want is parity,” said Ron Sorini, a lobbyist and trade expert working with the group.

Some favor other approaches. Kim Glas, the president of the National Council of Textile Organizations, said it would be better to limit the use of de minimis to fewer retailers. She supports a [*bill*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/15/business/ecommerce-shein-us-china-trade.html), introduced in Congress in June, that would exclude “nonmarket economies,” such as China and Russia, from using the exception, though she would like to see legislation ban all e-commerce shipments from using the de minimis exception.

“We don’t want to have a law in existence that creates an incentive to move your distribution offshore,” Sorini said. “And that’s the incentive that exists today.”

Dissecting the American dream

In [*“Ours Was the Shining Future,”*](https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/217260/ours-was-the-shining-future-by-david-leonhardt/) The Times’s David Leonhardt examines the rise and fall of the American dream, arguing for progressive policies aimed at economic improvement for the ***working class***. In a recent interview, Leonhardt answered questions from Andrew. His responses have been condensed and edited.

You write that the U.S. started to lose its way in the early 1980s when wages stagnated. What do you make of the argument that the period between World War II and 1980 was a historical aberration — the rest of the world was largely out of business — and that it was global competition that led to wage stagnation?

I think that’s partly true. But the United States also made a set of decisions that have damaged most people’s economic prospects. We used to be the most educated country in the world, and we’ve fallen behind. We didn’t have to. We used to have some of the best transportation infrastructure in the world, and we’ve fallen behind. We used to spend more of our government funds on scientific research than we do. Our economy is vastly more unequal than it used to be. And that didn’t have to happen, either.

The book makes the case for stronger labor unions, something we’re now seeing play out in the U.S. However, some automakers — and even employees — have a view that in the past, auto unions extracted so much money that the industry ultimately fell into bankruptcy. Do you agree with that?

I think there are particular cases of unions overreaching in the past, and I think the auto industry, particularly in the 1970s, might be a good example. But the bigger problem in the United States has been low wages for too many workers. Inequality has absolutely soared. And historically, there is a very strong relationship between the labor unions and the wages of most workers. Can unions sometimes be too strong? Yes. Has that been the main problem in the U.S. economy in recent decades? No. The main problem has been that we’ve had weak unions, weak wage growth for most workers and really high inequality.

You appear to praise Franklin D. Roosevelt’s entitlement programs. Given the nation’s debt problem, how would you think about revising those entitlement programs?

I understand why Roosevelt made them universal. It was a political decision. But I think there’s a very good argument that they should no longer be universal. The United States today sometimes spends more government money on affluent old people than it does on poor children. One of the ways to address our long-term debt problems, which are real, is to cut spending on affluent retirees. And I don’t just mean the very rich. I also mean upper-middle-class people who are more numerous than the very rich, many of whom don’t need as generous benefits as they receive. There’s also room in our economy to raise taxes, and there is room to cut a bunch of other benefits that flow largely to well-off people, like the mortgage interest deduction.

Thanks for reading! We’ll see you Monday.

Please email thoughts and suggestions to [*dealbook@nytimes.com*](mailto:dealbook@nytimes.com).

PHOTO: A federal jury found that the National Association of Realtors and several large brokerages had conspired to keep agent commissions artificially high. (PHOTOGRAPH BY CAITLIN O’HARA FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page B6.

**Load-Date:** November 5, 2023

**End of Document**



[***Consistent Signs of Erosion in Black and Hispanic Support for Biden***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:693N-DVD1-JBG3-63MH-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

September 5, 2023 Tuesday 23:37 EST

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**Section:** UPSHOT

**Length:** 1326 words

**Byline:** Nate Cohn

**Highlight:** It’s a weakness that could manifest itself as low Democratic turnout even if Trump and Republicans don’t gain among those groups.

**Body**

It’s a weakness that could manifest itself as low Democratic turnout even if Trump and Republicans don’t gain among those groups.

An article explaining how to interpret the data [*is here*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/06/upshot/biden-polls-black-voters.html).

President Biden is underperforming among nonwhite voters in New York Times/Siena College national polls over the last year, helping to keep the race close in a hypothetical rematch against Donald J. Trump.

On average, Mr. Biden leads Mr. Trump by just 53 percent to 28 percent among registered nonwhite voters in a compilation of Times/Siena polls from 2022 and 2023, which includes over 1,500 nonwhite respondents.

The results represent a marked deterioration in Mr. Biden’s support compared with 2020, when he won more than 70 percent of nonwhite voters. If he’s unable to revitalize this support by next November, it will continue a decade-long trend of declining Democratic strength among voters considered to be the foundation of the party.

Mr. Biden’s tepid support among these voters appears to be mostly responsible for the close race [*in early national surveys*](https://projects.fivethirtyeight.com/polls/president-general/), which show Mr. Biden and Mr. Trump all but tied among registered voters even as Mr. Biden runs as well among white voters as he did four years ago.

With more than a year to go until the election, there’s plenty of time for Mr. Biden to re-energize his former supporters. Indeed, the Times/Siena data suggests that Mr. Biden could approach — though not match — his 2020 standing simply by reclaiming voters who say they backed him in the last election.

But the possibility that his standing will remain beneath the already depressed levels of the last presidential election should not be discounted. Democrats have lost ground among nonwhite voters in almost every election over the last decade, even as racially charged fights over everything from a border wall to kneeling during the national anthem might have been expected to produce the exact opposite result. Weak support for Mr. Biden could easily manifest itself as low turnout — as it did in 2022 — even if many young and less engaged voters ultimately do not vote for Mr. Trump.

Many of Mr. Biden’s vulnerabilities — like his age and inflation — could exacerbate the trend, as nonwhite voters tend to be younger and less affluent than white voters. Overall, the president’s approval rating stands at just 47 percent among nonwhite voters in Times/Siena polling over the last year; his favorability rating is just 54 percent.

Issues like abortion and threats to democracy may also do less to guard against additional losses among Black and Hispanic voters, who tend to be more conservative than white Biden voters. They may also do less to satisfy voters living paycheck to paycheck: Mr. Biden is underperforming most among nonwhite voters making less than $100,000 per year, at least temporarily erasing the century-old tendency for Democrats to fare better among lower-income than higher-income nonwhite voters.

The Times/Siena data suggests the emergence of a fairly clear education gap among nonwhite voters, as Mr. Biden loses ground among less affluent nonwhite voters and those without a degree. Overall, he retains a 61-23 lead among nonwhite college graduates, compared with a mere 49-31 lead among those without a four-year degree.

If the gap persists until the election, it will raise the possibility that the political realignment unleashed by Mr. Trump’s brand of conservative populism has spread to erode the political loyalties of ***working-class*** voters, of all races, who were drawn to the Democrats by material interests in an earlier era of politics.

Mr. Biden’s weakness among nonwhite voters is broad, spanning virtually every demographic category and racial group, including a 72-11 lead among Black voters and a 47-35 lead among Hispanic registrants. The sample of Asian voters is not large enough to report, though nonwhite voters who aren’t Black or Hispanic — whether Asian, Native American, multiracial or something else — back Mr. Biden by just 40-39. In all three cases, Mr. Biden’s tallies are well beneath his standing in the last election.

The findings are echoed by other high-quality national surveys. These show Mr. Biden faring as poorly among nonwhite voters (or even somewhat worse) as he does in the Times/Siena data. On average, he leads by 74-19 among Black voters and by 50-40 among Hispanic voters across 12 high-quality national surveys so far this year.

The shift is also echoed in how nonwhite Times/Siena respondents say they voted in 2020. Overall, nonwhite respondents who divulged their vote in the last election reported backing Mr. Biden by a margin of 70 percent to 24 percent, a figure neatly in line with postelection studies. Nonetheless, Mr. Biden does not approach those tallies in a hypothetical rematch among the very same group of respondents.

The survey finds evidence that a modest but important 5 percent of nonwhite Biden voters now support Mr. Trump, including 8 percent of Hispanic voters who say they backed Mr. Biden in 2020. Virtually no nonwhite voters who say they supported Mr. Trump — just 1 percent — say they will back Mr. Biden this time around. In comparison, white Biden and white Trump supporters from 2020 say they will return to their previous candidate in nearly identical numbers.

Beyond voters who have flipped to Mr. Trump, a large number of disaffected voters who supported Mr. Biden in 2020 now say they’re undecided or simply won’t vote this time around. As a consequence, his weakness is concentrated among less engaged voters on the periphery of politics, who have not consistently voted in recent elections and who may decide to stay home next November.

Overall, Mr. Biden leads by 81-8 among Black voters who turned out in 2022, but by just 62-14 among those who skipped the midterm elections. Similarly, he leads by 53-33 among Hispanics who voted in the midterms, compared with just a 42-37 lead among those who did not vote.

Young people of color, who make up a disproportionate share of nonvoters, are an important part of Mr. Biden’s challenge. He holds a 48-29 lead among nonwhite registered voters under age 45, compared with a 58-28 lead among those over 45. In contrast, there was little difference among nonwhite voters over or under 45 in their share of support for Mr. Biden in 2020 — a result that’s echoed in the self-reported recalled 2020 vote choice of the Times/Siena survey respondents.

The generational divide is most striking among Black voters, who have typically offered all but unanimous support to Democrats. That overwhelming support persists among Black registered voters over 45. They back Mr. Biden, 83-8, but Mr. Biden holds just a 59-14 lead among the 152 registered Black respondents under 45.

The dissatisfaction of younger and lower-turnout voters raises the possibility that Mr. Biden’s weakness in the polls may show up primarily as low turnout among Black and Hispanic voters, rather than as a titanic shift toward Mr. Trump. Something similar might have happened in the last midterm election, when Democrats appeared to maintain usual shares of support among Black voters, but the racial turnout gap [*increased to multi-decade highs*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/11/30/upshot/midterms-election-black-turnout.html).

Indeed, Mr. Biden’s lead among nonwhite voters expands to 57-27 among those who voted in 2020 or 2022, compared with 53-28 among all registered nonwhite voters. And his lead among those recent voters could grow further, to 63-29, if undecided and dissenting voters are assigned to the candidate whom they said they backed in the last presidential election.

A 63-29 lead would be much closer to Mr. Biden’s standing among nonwhite voters in the last presidential election, as would his 84-11 lead among Black voters and his 55-37 lead among Hispanic voters in that same scenario.

Yet even after allocating the remaining undecided voters, these tallies might still be the worst for a Democratic leader among Black and Hispanic voters since Walter Mondale in 1984.

This article appeared in print on page A14.

**Load-Date:** September 12, 2023

**End of Document**



[***The First Magazine for Black Children Is Revisited, Its Message Still Resonant***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69BY-4HY1-JBG3-61C2-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

October 9, 2023 Monday 15:45 EST

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**Section:** BOOKS

**Length:** 1529 words

**Byline:** Celia McGee

**Highlight:** An anthology that combines new work with selections from The Brownies’ Book, a children’s magazine launched by W.E.B. Du Bois, is bringing its mission to bear in a new national context.

**Body**

An anthology that combines new work with selections from The Brownies’ Book, a children’s magazine launched by W.E.B. Du Bois, is bringing its mission to bear in a new national context.

The first magazine created especially for Black children, The Brownies’ Book, debuted in January 1920, its pages filled with the voices of children and their parents, of poets and college coeds, biographers and advice columnists, schoolgirls and scholars, spinners of fables and gatherers of folk tales, and a panoply of Black figures staking a claim in the history of a country that would rather not acknowledge them. It brimmed with playful illustrations, photographs, and travelers’ sketches. On the cover was a portrait of an adolescent ballet dancer, pearls at her neck, a crown on her head, arms aloft; a picture of self-confidence and elation.

Subtitled “A Monthly Magazine for the Children of the Sun,” The Brownies’ Book was conceived by W.E.B. Du Bois, who named the writer Jessie Redmon Fauset literary editor. It was a spinoff of the annual Children’s Number of The Crisis, the powerful and widely read house organ of the N.A.A.C.P. that Du Bois had edited since 1910, and it had a strong message to send into the headwinds of racial prejudice and post-Reconstruction violence in early 20th-century America: “to make colored children realize,” as Du Bois wrote, “that being ‘colored’ is a normal, beautiful thing.”

Langston Hughes was first published there, along with other writers and artists of the nascent movement that would come to be known as the Harlem Renaissance, Nella Larsen, Arna Bontemps and Hilda Rue Wilkinson among them. A poem by Fauset that ran in the inaugural issue served as the new venture’s dedication:

To Children, who with eager look

Scanned vainly library shelf and nook,

For History or Song or Story

That told of Colored Peoples’ glory….”

Yet despite its groundbreaking mission and cultural consequence, once The Brownies’ Book ceased publication at the end of 1921 in the wake of a nationwide depression, it languished largely forgotten by a wider public, referred to occasionally in exhibitions, in scholarly books on Black children’s literature, in children’s literature courses or in research into early Black journalism.

Now a growing interest in the historical moment exemplified by the magazine has focused wider attention on its pages, making its mission and message resonate in new ways. Karida L. Brown, a professor of sociology at Emory University and co-author of “The Sociology of W.E.B. Du Bois,” has compiled — with her husband, the artist and illustrator Charly Palmer — a tribute anthology of work by contemporary artists and writers punctuated with selections from the original magazine. “The New Brownies’ Book: A Love Letter to Black Families,” will be published on Oct. 10 by Chronicle Books.

In late August, Brown and Palmer visited the New York Public Library to see, in the “Polonsky Exhibition of The New York Public Library’s Treasures,” a copy of the May 1920 Brownies’ Book from the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture. On it its cover, “Winding the May Pole,” seven young brown-skinned girls in fashionable Kate Greenaway dresses daintily execute a springtime dance.

Over lunch after her visit to the library, Brown said that the genesis of “The New Brownies’ Book” was her sense that the original magazine and its context offered parallels with the present and inspiration for how to confront a corrosive turning back of the national discourse, whether in the [*banning of books*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/01/30/books/book-ban-us-schools.html) for or about Black children, the [*removal of Black history*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/16/us/florida-textbooks-african-american-history.html) from school curriculums or an ongoing news scroll of police brutality and racially-motivated violence.

“I had just witnessed George Floyd being murdered on TV, and Breonna Taylor, and, and, and,” she said. “I thought, ‘If I’m feeling this level of despair because of this, what must a Black child feel?’”

“‘The New Brownies’ Book,’” said the journalist and author Damon Young, a contributor, “is vital and critical” as a corrective and retort to the ongoing proscription of Black history and culture in library and school systems nationwide.

Brown said, “I realized that a new version of The Brownies’ Book could be, like Du Bois’s, an opportunity to say to Black children, ‘We love you, we have faith in you,’ to come not from a place of deficit and despair but of joy, love, unity and care.

Du Bois announced The Brownies’ Book in the October 1919 issue of The Crisis, just months after the so-called Red Summer, when Black troops, expecting to return from World War I to heroes’ welcomes, were met once again with bigotry and the legalized segregation of Jim Crow. Deadly race riots broke out from Washington, D.C. to Elaine, Ark., and the number of lynchings in the U.S. rose exponentially.

These atrocities were graphically chronicled in The Crisis. The Brownies’ Book wanted to shield its young readership from such content without denying either the realities of racism at home or the inequities and struggles across a globe where colonialism was being questioned. Proper parenting, it also suggested, was a civil rights pursuit.

Also urgent, Du Bois and Fauset believed, was the emotional well-being of their young readers. If Black children saw themselves represented at all in the prevailing culture of the 1920s, it was in degrading caricatures in advertising and on consumer packaging, in magazines, newspapers and children’s literature itself.

In its founding, The Brownies’ Book had a specific bone to pick with St. Nicholas Magazine, the country’s dominant children’s periodical, which even in its popular “Brownies” series — about a global mix of naughty, tannish-colored elves — excluded any of African descent, restricting fairyland itself.

The Brownies’ Book set out to counter “these gross stereotypes,” said Farah Jasmine Griffin, a professor of literature and African American studies at Columbia University, “by taking seriously the shaping of Black children’s sense of identity and self-worth.”

The magazine aimed to instill self-respect, self-assurance and a finely tuned social conscience in the next generation, a key to Black progress that would otherwise be thwarted by the forces ranged against it. A moral to its every story, it expounded on history that foregrounded Black icons and their achievements. A regular section written by Du Bois, “As the Crow Flies,” touched on headline events around the world.

“Our little girl is dark brown,” wrote Bella Seymour of New York City in a letter that ran in a section called “The Grown-ups Corner,” applauding the launch of The Brownies’ Book, “and we want her to be proud of her color and to know that it isn’t the kind of skin people have that makes them great.”

Like a run-up to the glamorous and genteel Jazz Age vignettes that the photographer James Van Der Zee captured of upper-crust Harlem, The Brownies’ Book depicted, in pictures and in prose, middle-class and aspirational ***working-class*** Black life as it thrived and strived for equality despite the obstacles in its way. Joy Bivins, the director of the Schomburg, said of her first encounter with the magazine, “the word I would use is ‘delight.’”

“It was just wonderful to see the pictures, the Black Boy Scout troop, the young girls of a debate team, the photographs from baby contests,” Bivins said. “Despite the awareness of the hardships of segregation, of discrimination, it was still kids just being kids.”

Jelani Cobb, a writer for The New Yorker and the dean of the Columbia Journalism School, sees a direct link between the magazine and Du Bois’s famous formulation from 1903, in “The Souls of Black Folk,” of “a double consciousness.”

“The Brownies’ Book is of a piece with Du Bois’s profound concern with the idea of how Black people saw themselves while also looking at themselves through the eyes of people who hated them,” Cobb said. “There’s who we are to the larger white world and who we are inwardly. The Brownies’ Book was countering the propaganda of white supremacy in both directions. It’s amazing how prescient it was.”

The closing announcement for The Brownies’ Book ran in the issue of December 1921. It would be five decades before another periodical for Black children appeared, Ebony, Jr. magazine, launched in 1973 by Johnson Publishing and folded in 1985.

“We are sorry,” Du Bois wrote in his farewell, “much sorrier than any of you, for it has all been such fun. After all — who knows — perhaps we shall meet again.” A full-page illustration by Hilda Rue Wilkinson, of a crestfallen child, was called simply, “Good-Bye.”

PHOTOS: The Brownies’ Book began in January 1920 and ended with the December 1921 issue. Langston Hughes, Nella Larsen, Arna Bontemps and Hilda Rue Wilkinson were among some of the magazine’s writers and artists. (PHOTOGRAPHS VIA LIBRARY OF CONGRESS); Center left, “The New Brownies’ Book: A Love Letter to Black Families,” an anthology that will be published on Tuesday by Chronicle Books. Center, “Scout,” by Tokie Rome-Taylor, which is among the works to be featured in the new version, as is Lynthia Edwards’s “Sassy Mouth,” above. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY CHRONICLE BOOKS) This article appeared in print on page C5.

**Load-Date:** October 10, 2023

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[***Cassidy Hutchinson Reappears. She Has More Trump Stories to Tell.***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:697G-X381-DXY4-X0FG-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

September 23, 2023 Saturday 11:50 EST

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**Section:** US; politics

**Length:** 1429 words

**Byline:** Robert Draper

**Highlight:** “I would like not to be a hermit,” the former White House aide says upon the publication of a memoir about her journey down a political rabbit hole.

**Body**

“I would like not to be a hermit,” the former White House aide says upon the publication of a memoir about her journey down a political rabbit hole.

Cassidy Hutchinson, now 26, dropped out of sight last year after she testified in damning detail in a nationally televised committee hearing about President Donald J. Trump’s actions during and after the Capitol riot on Jan. 6, 2021. Facing blistering social media attacks from Mr. Trump and threats from his supporters, she retreated from Washington and cut off contacts with her former White House world.

Some 15 months later, the onetime staff member in Mr. Trump’s West Wing is heading back into the maelstrom with the publication of “Enough,” a memoir about her time as a top aide to Mark Meadows, Mr. Trump’s last chief of staff. On a recent Sunday morning, she spoke in the kitchen of her Washington high-rise with the blinds to her living room window open, a recent development in her reclusive life.

“I would like not to be a hermit,” she said. But, she added, “I am not a victim in any of this. I did what I did and I knew what I was getting myself into.”

If anything, becoming a target of the right after publicly disclosing what she had learned in the White House was perhaps the least surprising thing that Ms. Hutchinson had encountered over the past three years. Some of her most vivid testimony to the Jan. 6 committee was her description of an enraged Mr. Trump hurling his plate of lunch across the room after hearing Attorney General William P. Barr say he saw no evidence of widespread fraud in the 2020 election.

“I grabbed a towel and started wiping the ketchup off of the wall to help the valet out,” Ms. Hutchinson testified.

Both in print and in the conversation in her high rise, Ms. Hutchinson described a journey down a political rabbit hole that might have tested the psychological stamina of a more seasoned operative. It was one in which loyalty to Mr. Trump surmounted all else, to the point where White House staffers routinely laid “leak traps” in hopes of discovering who was feeding information to the media. Once Mr. Meadows asked Ms. Hutchinson if she would “take a bullet” for the president. (Perhaps in the thigh, she nervously joked in reply.)

It was, by her telling, an administration awash in paranoia, with Mr. Meadows and others refusing to dispose of daily litter in “burn bags” for fear that someone from the “deep state” might intercept the contents. Instead, she writes, Mr. Meadows burned so many documents in his fireplace in the final days of the Trump presidency that his wife complained to Ms. Hutchinson about how expensive it had become to dry-clean the “bonfire” aroma from his suits.

For all its obsession with secrecy, the Trump White House was also strangely unpoliced, she writes, particularly in the waning days of the administration. On Jan. 15, 2021, Ms. Hutchinson encountered Mike Lindell, the conspiracy-minded My Pillow entrepreneur, roaming the building unescorted, declaring, “We can still win.”

She saw Representative Matt Gaetz, a far-right Florida Republican and a Trump ally under federal investigation at the time for sex trafficking, show up without an appointment to lobby Mr. Meadows for a pardon. (Justice Department officials ended the investigation earlier this year after determining they could not make a strong enough case in court, people familiar with the matter said.)

And she writes that Rudolph W. Giuliani, the former New York mayor who has pleaded not guilty to racketeering and conspiracy charges for trying to overturn the results of the 2020 election in Georgia, groped her under her skirt “like a wolf closing in on its prey” in a tent behind Mr. Trump’s speech to supporters on the Ellipse on Jan. 6, 2021.

“I feel his frozen fingers trail up my thigh,” she writes, then recounts how she stormed away. In an interview on Newsmax, Mr. Giuliani called the claim “completely absurd.”

But what most defined Ms. Hutchinson’s swift ascent and sudden estrangement were her two superiors, Mr. Meadows and Mr. Trump. Coming from a ***working-class*** and politically disengaged family in Pennington, N.J., Ms. Hutchinson was a college sophomore when she first attended a Trump rally in April 2017.

“I was maybe six rows from the stage,” she recalled, “and I was surrounded by all these people I felt I could relate to.” That included the president, whose coarse and boastful rhetoric sounded to her like her father, a self-employed landscaper and aficionado of “The Apprentice,” Mr. Trump’s long-running reality show.

Even today, Ms. Hutchinson seems somewhat at pains to understand how she fell so deeply in the sway of a president she now describes as “dangerous to our democracy.” To Jonathan Karp, the president of Simon &amp; Schuster, which is publishing “Enough,” Ms. Hutchinson’s continued inner conflicts are understandable: “This book is about trauma, and about trying to overcome trauma. And it was written in the white heat of the moment.”

Her collaborator on the project, Mark Salter, the author and longtime consigliere of Senator John McCain, did not disguise to Ms. Hutchinson his contempt for Mr. Trump. “She put in that line in the book, ‘I adored the president,’” Mr. Salter recalled in an interview. “I told her, ‘That makes me wince.’ But it’s hard to blame her. She was in a pretty heady situation for her age. When I was 24, I was still smoking dope and pounding railroad spikes.”

Ms. Hutchinson landed in the White House after two internships on Capitol Hill and then a third in the White House Office of Legislative Affairs, where her organizational skills caught the notice of senior staffers. Straight out of college in June 2019, Ms. Hutchinson, then 22, became a White House legislative staff assistant.

Two months into the job, she found herself in conversation with a key Trump ally on the Hill, Representative Mark Meadows, a North Carolina Republican and then the House Freedom Caucus chairman, who hugged her and took down her personal contact information. The two began to talk almost daily.

When Mr. Meadows became Mr. Trump’s chief of staff in March 2020, he asked Ms. Hutchinson to join him in the West Wing. “You’re going to be my eyes and ears,” he said, adding, “I want you with me all the time.”

By her account and that of former colleagues, Ms. Hutchinson zealously dedicated herself to her two bosses. She could be brusque to junior aides who did not perform up to her standards. She readily excused Mr. Trump’s shortcomings, blaming herself and other staffers for his tantrums, all the way up to the end of his presidency.

“In my mind at the time,” she said, “I felt like Jan. 6 largely happened because we didn’t do enough to stop it.”

During the interview, Ms. Hutchinson recalled the final Trump rally she attended, in Rome, Ga., two days before the 2020 election, and how starkly different her reaction was from the first such event she had attended only three and a half years earlier.

“I’m getting goose bumps thinking about it,” she said. “I was weaving in and out of the crowd. I remember thinking, ‘Why do I feel so disconnected from everything that’s going on?’ Just looking at everyone looking at this man onstage the way I had. But now I’m on the other side of it, thinking, ‘They’re being fooled by him.’”

Even so, she stayed after the election and after Jan. 6. Though she regarded Mr. Trump’s conduct that day as worthy of impeachment, she nonetheless sought a job with the former president at Mar-a-Lago. Suspected by Mr. Trump of having been insufficiently loyal, Mr. Meadows informed her that her prospects there looked dim. For fully a year, she entertained vague ambitions of being a chief of staff to a CEO or perhaps a lobbyist at a place like Amazon.

Then, in February last year, federal marshals delivered her a subpoena to appear before the Jan. 6 committee.

From that moment, Ms. Hutchinson said, she drew the blinds in her apartment, feeling deeply alone and unsure of what awaited her. Today, she admits to nervousness about how the world will react as she returns to it. Mr. Salter said there was reason to believe she would rise above her self-doubt.

“I watched her testimony a million times,” he said. “I’m sure she was a wreck. But you could not tell.”

PHOTOS: Cassidy Hutchinson testified about the events of Jan. 6, 2021, at a hearing last year. In her memoir, left, about her time as a top aide to Mark Meadows, she writes: “I am not a victim in any of this.” (PHOTOGRAPHS BY DOUG MILLS/THE NEW YORK TIMES; SIMON &amp; SCHUSTER, VIA ASSOCIATED PRESS) This article appeared in print on page A21.

**Load-Date:** September 24, 2023

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[***Governor Who Quit After Scandal Ponders New Jersey Mayoral Run***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:697G-HV11-JBG3-636J-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

September 23, 2023 Saturday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; National Desk; Pg. 19

**Length:** 1393 words

**Byline:** By Tracey Tully

**Body**

Jim McGreevey, New Jersey's 52nd governor, resigned after admitting to an extramarital affair with a male employee. Now he is preparing for a political comeback.

James E. McGreevey, a former New Jersey governor who resigned two decades ago in scandal, has built his career on reinvention. So much so that when he enters a classroom filled with newly freed felons hoping to make the most of their own second chance, they are not sure what to call him.

''Governor!'' the instructor bellows.

''Jim -- come on, guys -- it's just Jim!'' he counters affably as he fist-bumps several men enrolled in a post-prison career training program he founded and now leads as executive director.

Mr. McGreevey, 66, has tried on other titles since he quit politics in 2004 after announcing to his second wife and to the world that he was gay and had had an affair with a man who worked for him.

He published a book, ''The Confession,'' and starred in a documentary produced by Alexandra Pelosi, a daughter of the former House speaker. He earned a master's degree in divinity. He had hoped to be ordained an Episcopal priest, but amid the fallout of his bitter divorce the church turned him down.

And now Mr. McGreevey, a Democrat who once was thought to have the White House in his sights, is making plans to do what he had said he would not: re-enter politics.

Over the past several months, Mr. McGreevey has begun cobbling together support for an expected run for mayor of Jersey City, the state's second-largest city, where he has lived for eight years.

Minutes from New York and teeming with progressive newcomers, Jersey City enjoys a prominent place in regional lore, filled with immigrants, innovation and ***working-class*** brio. But it is also 63 miles away from the State House and its attendant power and trappings.

Mr. McGreevey, who was born in Jersey City, says he has no problem with the perceived downgrade in prestige.

''Being governor is so much about the budget, the dollar,'' he reasoned during an interview at the job training center in Kearny, N.J., run by his current employer, the New Jersey Reentry Corporation. ''Being mayor is about building strong communities.''

He added, ''It's also a worthy place to put my energies, to hopefully do some good.''

He expects to make a final decision before Thanksgiving.

''I'm getting closer to making that decision in the affirmative,'' he said.

At least three other Jersey City Democratic leaders are also seriously considering vying for the job. The current mayor, Steven Fulop, who is running for governor, does not intend to run for re-election. But the contest is not until November 2025, setting up a two-year runway in which anything might happen.

''I could be dead by then,'' said Gerald McCann, 73, a former Jersey City mayor now advising Mr. McGreevey.

Still, few would dispute that Mr. McGreevey is winning the race for buzz and institutional support among key power brokers in Hudson County.

Nine of the county's 12 mayors have publicly endorsed his candidacy. A recent fund-raiser for a nonprofit civic organization named for his parents, who, he stressed, were raised in Jersey City, drew labor leaders and local and state officials. And on Saturday he is convening the first of what he calls ''listening sessions.''

On a recent morning, he wandered the halls of the training center with the confidence of a school principal and the lively gait of a St. Patrick's Day parade grand marshal. He was eager to discuss the state-funded program in minute detail, including the 268,402 pounds of food it has provided this year to clients, the role of the on-site chaplain and the facility's free medical and dental services.

His phone rang during the interview, and he answered it cheerfully. It was a young detainee at a state psychiatric facility who had been assigned to him as part of the client caseload he maintains, even as executive director. He listened patiently and asked if the man had read the book he shared, ''Band of Brothers.''

It is his work with current and former prisoners and the insight it has offered about their lack of educational and workplace preparedness, and the realities of the impoverished communities they return home to, that most guides his current ambition, he said.

''My sense is Jersey City is at a tipping point, and it ought to be affordable for those families that have lived in the city for three or four generations,'' he said.

Fans of Mr. McGreevey's candidacy cite his decades of government experience. Before being elected governor, he was an assemblyman, state senator and mayor of Woodbridge, a sprawling suburban township in central New Jersey.

Mr. McGreevey's 21-year-old daughter, Jacqueline, who, with her older half sister, Morag, grew up in the shadow of their father's spectacular crash-landing from politics, said part of her wishes he would remain out of the limelight.

''I genuinely think that he would do a lot of good for a lot of people,'' she said between classes at Barnard College, ''so it feels kind of selfish to not want him to pursue it.''

''My dad always says, 'Do the next right thing,' '' she said, ''whether it means study for the next test or help the next person.''

''This seems to be kind of a natural progression of where he's been,'' she added, ''and what he wants to do.''

Whatever happens, Mr. McGreevey said he does not see the job as a steppingstone.

''I'm walking down the hill,'' he said. ''This is it.''

Jersey City's mayoral elections are nonpartisan, a detail that diminishes the ability of county political bosses to design the ballot to all but guarantee a win for their handpicked candidates, as occurs in many other places in New Jersey.

Mr. Fulop, who did not have the backing of the county Democratic Party when he was first elected mayor, has not commented on Mr. McGreevey's potential candidacy. The two have a fraught history: Mr. McGreevey was fired from a job in Jersey City in 2019 after Mr. Fulop and his aides suggested the former governor had misallocated funds, a claim Mr. McGreevey said was untrue and was disproved by independent audits.

The mayor of Union City, N.J., a powerful county leader, was first to champion Mr. McGreevey's candidacy, generating a cascade of early institutional support.

But two possible Democratic opponents, William O'Dea, a county commissioner, and James Solomon, a city councilman, argued that this outside support, while helpful for fund-raising, could also backfire.

''It's creating this overarching question: 'Why are these folks who have nothing to do with our city imposing their will on our city?' '' said Mr. O'Dea, who also held a political fund-raiser this week.

Mr. Solomon said voters were savvy enough to think for themselves.

''I haven't met a voter in Jersey City who is concerned with the opinions of power brokers outside of Jersey City,'' Mr. Solomon said. ''They're concerned about rents going through the roof and political cronies stealing their tax dollars. They're going to vote for the candidate who can make their life better.''

Politics is not the only community Mr. McGreevey has returned to.

After years as an Episcopalian, he has rejoined the Roman Catholic Church, unable to walk away for good from the faith that shaped him as a child and younger man.

He attends Mass regularly at Christ the King, a predominantly African American congregation in Jersey City, parishioners say. He is friendly and contributes to the upkeep of the parish. His homosexuality, which the catechism of the Catholic church does not approve of, is not an issue, they say.

''We accept him. He accepts us,'' said Ann Warren, 63, the parish business administrator.

Still, in a city where more than 75 percent of residents are nonwhite, Ms. Warren said the concerted push by county leaders to ''recycle their buddies'' and put him at the front of the line smacks of the ''hypocrisy of the Democratic Party.''

Joyce E. Watterman, the first Black woman to serve as City Council president in Jersey City, is among the three likely mayoral candidates pushed to the side as Mr. McGreevey was elevated.

''It's like, 'We're all for minorities and blah, blah, blah,'' said Ms. Warren, a lifelong resident of Jersey City.

''But we're not willing to invest the funds to put them in positions that matter. It's just the same old boy network.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/22/nyregion/mcgreevey-new-jersey-mayor-jersey-city.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/22/nyregion/mcgreevey-new-jersey-mayor-jersey-city.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: Ex-New Jersey Gov. James E. McGreevey with students at a career training center in Kearny, N.J. (PHOTOGRAPH BY BRYAN ANSELM FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A19.

**Load-Date:** September 23, 2023

**End of Document**



[***A Vision Emerges Inside the Domino Refinery***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67J0-3DB1-DXY4-X05S-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

February 12, 2023 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section RE; Column 0; Real Estate Desk; Pg. 9; BUILD

**Length:** 1233 words

**Byline:** By Debra Kamin

**Body**

After Two Trees took over the restoration of the refinery in Williamsburg, Brooklyn, the plan for offices, retail, housing and open space is coming into focus.

In the early 1900s, about 60 percent of the sugar consumed in America passed through the same spot -- the Domino Sugar Refinery, a brick monolith squatting on the edge of the East River in Williamsburg, Brooklyn. More than 100 years later, a sweeping redevelopment of the factory and its surrounding waterfront land is writing a second act for the space.

The process hasn't been entirely sweet.

The refinery shut down in the early 2000s and was initially purchased by the Community Preservation Corporation, a developer with a track record of gentrifying other areas of Brooklyn. In its rezoning plan for Domino, a site that had centered a century of bootstrap industry would be transformed into a collection of glass-and-steel luxury high-rises. Community protests ensued with slogans about ***working-class*** locals being pushed from the neighborhood in favor of housing for the rich.

For several years, the rusting factory sat vacant, occasionally housing public art projects like Kara Walker's A Subtlety. Community Preservation Corporation's $1.4 billion plan was eventually derailed by financial troubles and they defaulted on their loans. In 2012, they sold the 11-acre property to Two Trees Management, whose imprint is unmistakable in Brooklyn's Dumbo neighborhood, where luxury condominiums and warehouses converted into tech headquarters now dominate the cobblestone landscape.

The Two Trees plan focuses on adaptive reuse and open space, with a campus where public plazas, offices and retail shops are stitched in with luxury housing along more than half a mile of waterfront. And while some locals continue to balk at the march of trendy cafes, high-end boutiques and million-dollar condominiums into their once-gritty neighborhood, others have applauded the Two Trees plan as a model of sustainable development. The team scrapped Community Preservation Corporation's blueprint entirely and started from scratch, landing on a plan that includes a large public park (which opened in 2018) and 700 affordable housing units, priced below market rate and available through lottery for low- and middle-income families.

At its heart is the refinery building, whose brick shell, which has been declared a landmark, was carefully hollowed out and its roof removed. Tucked inside like a nesting doll, a 15-story glass structure -- a building within a building -- now stands, capped with a 30-foot glass dome penthouse where natural light streams through. Vertical gardens are planned for the negative space in between.

Two residential towers on the campus -- 325 Kent and One South First -- are open and fully occupied, as is Ten Grand Street, an office tower. The full development, which will include 4,000 apartments and 700,000 square feet of office space, is slated for completion in 2027.

In December, in a high-wattage homage to history, an LED replica of the original neon ''Domino Sugar'' sign was hoisted onto the walls of the sugar refinery and lit up. Inside that structure, Two Trees is currently seeking tenants for high-end office space.

These interviews have been lightly edited for clarity.

Lisa Switkin of James Corner Field Operations, head of landscape design

The refinery has this symbolic weight. There were these new glass walls on the inside of the refinery, and the brick facade on the outside. We were really excited about thinking about this in-between space.

There's a roughly 10- to 12-foot gap between the brick masonry of the building and the new glass interior. It creates this unique microclimate. It's open to light and sky. And we started to think: What if this was a garden? In some ways it operates as a palate cleanser between the old and the new.

We were inspired by American woodlands and Tennessee shade gardens, which have a thick understory of ferns and mosses and ground covers. It's a living threshold.

Al Henriquez, site manager

I've been working on this project for more than 10 years. The refinery building itself is unlike any other. That building was practically a machine wrapped in brick. It wasn't set up for future occupancy. So once we removed all the equipment that they used for the sugar-making process there was very little structure left to build on. It was very challenging to keep the facade intact and build within the shell. It's almost like building a ship within a bottle.

We built temporary towers on the exterior of the building and braced the facade from the exterior. Then we built a new structure inside the shell.

Every floor was different than the next. So we had to take our time and really study how they built the structure back in those days. I had worked on buildings that had been given landmark status in the past, but nothing of the scale that we're working on now.

Megan Sperry, documentary filmmaker, ''The Domino Effect''

I am a documentary filmmaker, an educator and an advocate. When the Domino Sugar Factory closed, I was working at Teddy's Bar and Grill in Williamsburg, which back then was a totally different community, with a lot of immigrant and blue-collar families. It was really sad when they closed Domino. Those folks came into the bar afterward, and they were at a loss.

The film followed the rezoning process for Domino. It became very personal because I was seeing all of these people getting pushed out of the neighborhood. The Achilles' heel for any community is that developers bet on ***working-class*** folks being too busy to be able to show up and have any real say in the process.

I think that it was smart for Two Trees to open the public park first, because you get the community out there and you give them all of these amenities. But I don't think it balances out. A studio apartment at the high-rises at Domino is around $4,300 a month. I don't know any low-income or even middle-income folks who could afford that.

Ruchika Modi, managing principal at PAU and main architect on project

The refinery could never have been just a standard got renovation. Our immediate instinct was to leave the beautiful masonry facade the way that it is, and to insert a brand-new building within the existing building. The whole added up to more than the sum of its parts. There was an incredibly interesting dialectical relationship between the new and the old.

This refinery's ground floor is public. It is part of, and an extension of, the park. Anyone can enter on the 10th Street side, walk in a very public passageway through the building, and out into the park.

Jed Walentas, developer, principal for Two Trees Management

When it comes to where talent and where human capital in New York lives, there's been a huge shift to Brooklyn. We wanted the plan to be something that we would be super proud of, and that we really thought was the right urban solution.

Our first principle was to prioritize the public open space, ahead of the development sites. The second big gesture was the mix of commercial and residential spaces.

That's why the refinery building is fully commercial. To be able to bring workers back into this building where literally thousands of people used come to work every day was our way of doing something radically different. History, including social history, is an important part of our city.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/02/06/realestate/domino-refinery-brooklyn-development.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/02/06/realestate/domino-refinery-brooklyn-development.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Painstaking effort was required to stabilize the exterior walls of the Domino Sugar Refinery while a glass building was being constructed within the interior. The full development, which will include 4,000 apartments and 700,000 square feet of office space, is to be completed in 2027. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY DESIREE RIOS/THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page RE9.

**Load-Date:** February 12, 2023

**End of Document**



[***At the Domino Sugar Refinery, a Glass Egg in a Brick Shell; build***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67J0-2GX1-JBG3-60M2-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

February 12, 2023 Sunday 14:45 EST

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**Section:** REALESTATE

**Length:** 1287 words

**Byline:** Debra Kamin

**Highlight:** After Two Trees took over the restoration of the refinery in Williamsburg, Brooklyn, the plan for offices, retail, housing and open space is coming into focus.

**Body**

After Two Trees took over the restoration of the refinery in Williamsburg, Brooklyn, the plan for offices, retail, housing and open space is coming into focus.

In the early 1900s, about 60 percent of the sugar consumed in America passed through the same spot — the Domino Sugar Refinery, a brick monolith squatting on the edge of the East River in Williamsburg, Brooklyn. More than 100 years later, a sweeping redevelopment of the factory and its surrounding waterfront land is writing a second act for the space.

The process hasn’t been entirely sweet.

The refinery [*shut down in the early 2000s*](https://www.nytimes.com/2004/01/31/nyregion/the-last-grain-falls-at-a-sugar-factory.html) and was initially purchased by the [*Community Preservation Corporation*](https://communityp.com/), a developer with a track record of gentrifying other areas of Brooklyn. In its rezoning plan for Domino, a site that had centered a century of bootstrap industry would be transformed into a collection of glass-and-steel luxury high-rises. [*Community protests*](https://gothamist.com/news/locals-slam-domino-sugar-refinery-development) ensued with slogans about ***working-class*** locals being pushed from the neighborhood in favor of housing for the rich.

For several years, the rusting factory sat vacant, occasionally housing public art projects like [*Kara Walker’s A Subtlety*](https://www.nytimes.com/2014/04/27/arts/design/kara-walker-creates-a-confection-at-the-domino-refinery.html). Community Preservation Corporation’s $1.4 billion plan was eventually derailed by financial troubles and they defaulted on their loans. In 2012, they sold the 11-acre property to Two Trees Management, whose imprint is unmistakable in Brooklyn’s Dumbo neighborhood, where luxury condominiums and warehouses converted into tech headquarters now dominate the cobblestone landscape.

The Two Trees plan focuses on adaptive reuse and open space, with a campus where public plazas, offices and retail shops are stitched in with luxury housing along more than half a mile of waterfront. And while some locals continue to balk at the march of trendy cafes, high-end boutiques and million-dollar condominiums into their once-gritty neighborhood, [*others have applauded*](https://www.nytimes.com/2013/10/17/nyregion/at-brooklyns-domino-sugar-site-waning-opposition-to-prospect-of-luxury-towers.html) the Two Trees plan as a model of sustainable development. The team scrapped Community Preservation Corporation’s blueprint entirely and started from scratch, landing on a plan that includes a large public park ([*which opened in 2018*](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/06/07/arts/design/playground-domino-park-williamsburg.html?searchResultPosition=27)) and 700 affordable housing units, priced below market rate and available through lottery for low- and middle-income families.

At its heart is the [*refinery building*](https://www.nytimes.com/video/nyregion/100000004993286/domino-sugar-brooklyn.html?action=click&amp;gtype=vhs&amp;version=vhs-heading&amp;module=vhs&amp;region=title-area&amp;cview=true&amp;t=55), whose[*brick shell*](https://www.nytimes.com/2007/09/26/nyregion/26domino.html), which has been declared a landmark, was carefully hollowed out and its roof removed. Tucked inside like a nesting doll, a 15-story glass structure — a building within a building — now stands, capped with a 30-foot glass dome penthouse where natural light streams through. Vertical gardens are planned for the negative space in between.

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Megan Sperry, documentary filmmaker, [*“The Domino Effect”*](https://thedominoeffectmovie.com/)

I am a documentary filmmaker, an educator and an advocate. When the Domino Sugar Factory closed, I was working at Teddy’s Bar and Grill in Williamsburg, which back then was a totally different community, with a lot of immigrant and blue-collar families. It was really sad when they closed Domino. Those folks came into the bar afterward, and they were at a loss.

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PHOTOS: Painstaking effort was required to stabilize the exterior walls of the Domino Sugar Refinery while a glass building was being constructed within the interior. The full development, which will include 4,000 apartments and 700,000 square feet of office space, is to be completed in 2027. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY DESIREE RIOS/THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page RE9.

**Load-Date:** April 28, 2023

**End of Document**



[***Top 10 Hardest and Easiest Spelling Bee Words, May 6-12***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6874-SMT1-JBG3-62NS-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

May 13, 2023 Saturday 05:00 EST

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**Section:** UPSHOT

**Length:** 768 words

**Byline:** Eve Washington, Josh Katz and Tom Giratikanon

**Highlight:** A difficult dance for those seeking to rise to the week&#39;s toughest challenge.

**Body**

A difficult dance for those seeking to rise to the week&#39;s toughest challenge.

This week, carioca — which is a dance resembling the samba, or the music for it — was the word least found by players of Spelling Bee, while black was the word most found.

This data is based on visitors to [*Spelling Bee Buddy*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/upshot/spelling-bee-buddy.html), a tool that shows hints and statistics for each word as you play Spelling Bee, and covers Saturday, May 6, to Friday, May 12. (Users of the tool are among the puzzle’s most dedicated solvers, so these percentages are probably higher than they would be for all Spelling Bee players.)

Here are the meanings of the least-found words that were used in recent Times articles:

1. carioca — a version of the samba, or the music for it:

Funk carioca, or baile funk, a vibrant rhythm that emerged in Rio de Janeiro’s predominantly Black ***working-class*** neighborhoods in the 1980s, is the soundtrack of choice at these gatherings, where sound systems often blast the genre’s signature tamborzão beat. — [*Can a Brazilian Pop Star Crack the U.S. Market? Anitta Says Yes.*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/04/07/arts/music/anitta-versions-of-me.html) (April 7, 2022)

2. callaloo — a [*stewed Caribbean dish*](https://cooking.nytimes.com/recipes/1019846-callaloo-leafy-greens-with-tomato-and-onion) of greens, tomatoes, onions and salt:

This collection of recipes establishes a more inclusive legacy of American food, one that might be recognizable to everyone: the America of jollof rice and ata din din; of cheesy grits, callaloo and collard greens; of jerk spice, curry powder and ginger-garlic purée. — [*The Best Cookbooks of 2022*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/12/13/dining/best-cookbooks-2022.html) (Dec. 13, 2022)

3. avocet — a long-legged bird with an upturned bill:

My grandmother, a passionate bird-watcher, passed her love on to me. Encountering avocets and stilts for the first time was a wondrous secret. — [*I Am Haunted by What I Have Seen at Great Salt Lake*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/25/opinion/great-salt-lake-drought-utah-climate-change.html) (March 25, 2023)

4. loggia — a covered exterior gallery or room:

The site in Trastevere identified as the oldest synagogue in Rome — a humble brick house with a small arched loggia at narrow, cobbled Vicolo dell’Atleta, 14 — is not classical but medieval.” — [*Rome, Sacred Ground for Nearly 3,000 Years, and Counting*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/01/travel/rome-sacred-places.html) (May 1, 2023)

5. cloaca — an opening at the end of the digestive tract, found in many animals:

It’s a cloaca: a multifunctional outlet named for the Latin word for “sewer,” through which some animals — including a menagerie of modern birds, reptiles, amphibians and even a few mammals — can defecate, urinate, copulate and/or extrude their offspring or eggs. — [*Finally in 3-D: A Dinosaur’s All-Purpose Orifice*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/19/science/dinosaur-cloaca-fossil.html) (Jan. 19, 2021)

6. loblolly — a fast-growing pine tree, native to the Southeast in the U.S. and often [*used to make cardboard*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/11/28/magazine/cardboard-international-paper.html):

Worse, the meltdown had arresting visuals — the mop-topped McIlroy deep in thorny woods, so far from the 10th fairway the broadcast cameras could barely find him through the maze of loblolly pine trees. — [*Rory McIlroy, Confident Before the Masters, Is Likely to Miss the Cut*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/04/07/sports/golf/masters-rory-mcilroy.html) (April 7, 2023)

7. cirri — a wispy cloud, or tendrils on an animal:

Later, I learned that even the barnacles contained an edible morsel, attained by biting off the leathery stalk of the animal and picking the feathery cirri from inside the barnacle’s rock-hard shell.— [*A Wet Climb Through a Green Wonderland*](https://www.nytimes.com/2005/06/02/travel/a-wet-climb-through-a-green-wonderland.html) (June 2, 2005)

8. laical — secular:

Were only two subcultures (the Christian Democratic and the Communist) in the contest, Italian politics would be grievously polarized. The existence of a third, the “laical,” of neither Catholic nor Marxist faith, and incarnated in half a dozen smaller parties, acts as an indispensable bridge or balance-wheel. — [*Politics as Spettacolo*](https://www.nytimes.com/1987/11/08/books/politics-as-spettacolo.html) (Nov. 8, 1987)

9. raffia — a type of palm tree or its fibers, which can be used to make baskets or clothing:

Among them were 30 stick chairs — mostly antique, with jaunty splayed legs and spindle backs — that had been embellished by the brand’s creative director, Jonathan Anderson, in collaboration with several artisans. One was covered in lilac and moss green felt, another with loops of raffia in the shades of Funfetti. — [*The 10 Best Things We Saw at Salone del Mobile*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/04/27/t-magazine/salone-del-mobile-milan-highlights.html) (April 27, 2023)

10. bacilli — rod-shaped bacteria:

“The C.I.A. plan was to dust the inside of the suit with a fungus producing Madura foot, a disabling and chronic skin disease, and also contaminating the suit with tuberculosis bacilli in the breathing apparatus,” the document states. — [*An Assassin’s Tool Kit: When Guns Are Not Enough*](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/03/17/world/assassination-ice-ax-poison.html) (March 17, 2018)

And the list of the week’s easiest words:

Each morning, you can see which of the day’s Spelling Bee words are stumping the hivemind (without spoilers!), and track your remaining words, by visiting [*Spelling Bee Buddy.*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/upshot/spelling-bee-buddy.html)

PHOTO: (PHOTOGRAPH BY The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** May 13, 2023

**End of Document**



[***How Do We Fix the Scandal That Is American Health Care?***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6908-DHG1-DXY4-X1TC-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

August 20, 2023 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

Copyright 2023 The New York Times Company

**Section:** Section SR; Column 0; Editorial Desk; Pg. 8

**Length:** 2467 words

**Byline:** By Nicholas Kristof and September Dawn Bottoms

**Body**

It's not just that life expectancy in Mississippi (71.9) now appears to be a hair shorter than in Bangladesh (72.4). Nor that an infant is some 70 percent more likely to die in the United States than in other wealthy countries.

Nor even that for the first time in probably a century, the likelihood that an American child will live to the age of 20 has dropped.

All that is tragic and infuriating, but to me the most heart-rending symbol of America's failure in health care is the avoidable amputations that result from poorly managed diabetes.

A medical setting cannot hide the violence of a saw cutting through a leg or muffle the grating noise it makes as it hacks through the tibia or disguise the distinctive charred odor of cauterized blood vessels. That noise of a saw on bone is a rebuke to an American health care system that, as Walter Cronkite reportedly observed, is neither healthy, caring nor a system.

Dr. Raymond Girnys, a surgeon who has amputated countless limbs here in the Mississippi Delta, one of the poorest and least healthy parts of America, told me that he has nightmares of ''being chased by amputated legs and toes.''

''It starts from the bottom up,'' Dr. Girnys said, explaining how patients arrive with diabetic wounds on the foot that refuse to heal in part because of diminished circulation when blood sugar is not meticulously managed in a person with diabetes. Dr. Girnys initially tries to clean and treat the lesions, but they grow deeper, until he has to remove a toe.

When more wounds develop, he takes off the foot in the hope of saving the rest of the leg. New wounds can force him to amputate the leg below the knee and perhaps, finally, above the knee. After that, Dr. Girnys said, the patient is likely to die within five years.

A toe, foot or leg is cut off by a doctor about 150,000 times a year in America, making the United States a world leader of these amputations.

I'll be blunt: America's dismal health care outcomes are a disgrace. They shame us. Partly because of diabetes and other preventable conditions, Americans suffer unnecessarily and often die young. It is unconscionable that newborns in India, Rwanda and Venezuela have a longer life expectancy than Native American newborns (65) in the United States. And Native American males have a life expectancy of just 61.5 years -- shorter than the overall life expectancy in Haiti.

But there are fixes, and three in particular would make a huge difference: expanding access to medical care; more aggressively addressing behaviors like smoking, overeating and drug abuse; and making larger societywide steps to boost education and reduce child poverty. One reason to believe that we can do better on health care outcomes is that much of the rest of the world already does.

This is the third essay in my series about how we can better help the millions of Americans left behind. We in journalism mostly cover problems: We typically write about planes that crash, not planes that land. But this series aims to offer solutions to challenges our nation faces.

A Superpower Where Many Citizens Die Young

A starting point is to avoid the myopia of Russia when it experienced a drop in life expectancy beginning in the 1980s and a rise in ''deaths of despair.'' Leaders took comfort in Russia's status as a military superpower and a standout in the sciences and performing arts; they blamed individuals' lack of personal responsibility for the deaths. They didn't understand that when so many people are sick and struggling, the ailment is deeper than individual weakness.

Americans sometimes blithely boast of the best medical care in the world, and there is some truth to that. I have a friend who is alive today because of the success of immunotherapy to fight stage IV cancer.

Our health technology and cutting-edge medicine is superb. Yet whatever the quantity and quality of our bone saws, the tragedy is that they are so often needed.

America's health crisis is most evident among low-education and low-income Americans, notably people of color and particularly men.

''The poorest men in the U.S. have life expectancies comparable to men in Sudan and Pakistan; the richest men in the U.S. live longer than the average man in any country,'' researchers with the Opportunity Insights team at Harvard concluded. But while the gaps we focus on have to do with mortality, there are also enormous gaps in quality of life.

''It's very rare that I've got somebody in that has just one health problem, or in for a wellness visit,'' said Yvonne Tanner, a nurse practitioner in the Mississippi Delta town of Itta Bena, with a population that is largely poor and Black. ''Everybody that I see is already very, very sick.'' Most have multiple diagnoses, she said, of hypertension, diabetes, arthritis and more.

Tanner choked up and her eyes welled as she told me of a patient she had just seen, a 47-year-old woman with poorly managed diabetes whose legs were severely swollen. The woman didn't know why; Tanner did. It was end-stage kidney failure.

That patient, who has teenage children, has a job, but it's not clear how she can keep it while getting three sessions of dialysis each week.

Type 2 diabetes, the kind that is linked to diet and inactivity, used to be called adult-onset diabetes but now affects children as well -- and it encapsulates American ill health. It reflects the brilliance of soda companies and fast-food companies at marketing their products -- in ways that are good for corporate profits but disastrous for American health. Type 2 diabetes often strikes the poor and marginalized who live chaotic lives without insurance, seek cheap calories in food deserts and struggle to manage budgets and insulin levels. The upshot is often dialysis, amputations and disability.

Statisticians have tried to calculate what they call ''healthy life expectancy'' in a population -- the number of years an average person in a country can live a normal life, before amputations, dialysis, blindness or other setbacks. In the United States, that is just 66.1 years, shorter than in Turkey, Sri Lanka, Peru, Thailand and other countries that are much poorer. My dad was an Armenian refugee who fled Romania and was thrilled to settle in America; now Armenia and Romania both have longer healthy life expectancy than the United States.

One Step Forward: Expand Access to Care

Here's a simple step to improve access to health care: Expand Medicaid.

Ten states, including Mississippi, still have not done so even though nearly all the funds would come from the federal government. Partly as a result, some hospitals are cutting back services in Mississippi and are at risk of closing.

A cartoon in Mississippi Today recently showed a patient asking a doctor, ''How long do I have, doc?'' The physician replies: ''Longer than this hospital.''

Even much poorer countries manage to provide universal health care. I visited hospitals recently in the West African nation of Sierra Leone, which mostly provides free prenatal care without any complicated bureaucracy, so 98 percent of women get some prenatal care -- which appears to be a hair higher than in Florida. Granted, Florida medicine is far more sophisticated than that in Sierra Leone, but that may not matter for those outside the health care system.

Dr. Kim Sanford, an ob-gyn in the Mississippi Delta, told me about a 74-year-old woman who came in recently to have an IUD removed. She had had it inserted after her daughter was born 46 years ago and hadn't seen a gynecologist since.

Some 28 million Americans lack medical insurance. An even larger number of Americans -- 77 million -- lack dental coverage.

Cost is often the argument against expanding access to health care. But it's hard to understand how just about every other advanced country can afford universal care and the United States can't. And consider that 94 percent of Americans with substance-use disorder do not get treatment, even though this pays for itself many times over. Our policy often seems driven less by cost considerations than by indifference, even cruelty.

Improving access to health care can also take other forms, such as improving outreach and increasing diversity in the ranks of health workers. Researchers have found, for example, that Black patients have better outcomes with Black doctors.

Rethinking Health Behaviors

Those of us on the left have mostly been fighting to increase health care coverage, and that's important. But outcomes are driven not just by access or socioeconomic status. Hispanics lack health insurance at high rates, yet have a longer life expectancy than white Americans and often a lower maternal mortality rate.

Part of the explanation for this ''Hispanic paradox'' may be strong families, community support systems and healthy behaviors. Raj Chetty, a Harvard economist, has found that behaviors -- such as smoking, eating habits and exercise -- affect life expectancy even more than access to health care.

One crucial fix, in short, is to influence health behaviors. This is difficult but not impossible. Just since 2005, the share of American adults who smoke has dropped by almost half. And America's teenage birthrate has plummeted by an astonishing 77 percent since 1991, partly because of comprehensive sex education and increased access to long-acting contraceptives.

One step that might reduce consumption of sugary snacks is a soda tax, modeled on the cigarette tax. Such taxes are regressive but seem effective at reducing consumption of harmful products.

More fundamentally, though, self-harming behaviors arise from a context. The genesis for this series was a crisis in behavioral health in my hometown in rural Oregon, where more than one-quarter of the children on my old No. 6 school bus are now dead from drugs, alcohol and suicide. Looking back, the central problem was the same as in many ***working-class*** communities across the country: the loss of good union jobs followed by despair and loneliness -- and the arrival of meth and opioids.

It was poverty, but a poverty of purpose as well as of the wallet. It was a hopelessness that sabotaged marriages and sapped self-esteem and self-care. In talking to doctors and nurses over the years, I've been struck by how often they mentioned that men are reluctant to get preventive care or treatment. They say that when men do come in, it's often because they're nudged by their wives -- but as the institution of marriage has crumbled in ***working-class*** America, there often aren't wives to save their husbands' lives.

Researchers tried to calculate how many people poverty kills each year in the United States, and their estimate was 183,000 -- many times the number of homicides annually.

Dr. Thomas Dobbs, the dean of the school of population health at the University of Mississippi, wrestles daily with health consequences of inequality, including syphilis that is now spreading rapidly. I asked Dr. Dobbs what he would most like to do to improve health outcomes, and I assumed he would name some medical interventions.

''Desegregate schools and fix criminal justice,'' he said. ''That's what I would do.''

The point is that America's health dysfunction is rooted in a broader national dysfunction, including deep intergenerational poverty and despair. The medical system can efficiently amputate a foot, but an improvement in self-care of diabetes sometimes requires an injection of hope and improvements in education, job training, earnings and opportunity.

This is important because in America our problem is not just that people die in their 70s rather than their 80s. Dr. Steven H. Woolf of the Virginia Commonwealth University School of Medicine has found that because of guns, suicides and accidental deaths, child mortality in the United States is rising rather than falling -- in a way that he doesn't believe has any precedent in the past 100 years.

As a result, notes John Burn-Murdoch of The Financial Times, in any class of 25 American kindergartners, one child on average will die by middle age.

Dr. Yasmin Cheema, a pediatrician in the town of Clarksdale in the Delta, told me of the obesity and diabetes she sees even in children. A 10-year-old boy recently fainted in her waiting room; it turned out that he was in shock with undiagnosed diabetes. Dr. Cheema called 911.

After telling me the story, Dr. Cheema stepped into the next room to do a physical on a 14-year-old boy. He weighed 295 pounds.

A Model in the Mississippi Delta

One model effort to reach young people and address behaviors in the Mississippi Delta is the Delta Health Alliance. It has helped build a wellness center in the town of Leland, with a gym, yoga classes and an on-site nutritionist who teaches how to cook healthy meals.

The Delta Health Alliance tries more broadly to address the ''social determinants of health'' that sometimes lead to obesity, smoking and poor health outcomes. This means supporting education beginning with pre-K, promoting mentoring, organizing job training and much more.

''We realized we could help a lot of 50- or 60-year-old diabetics, but that's not fixing the problem, the generational poverty problem that starts when kids are born,'' said Karen Matthews, president of the Delta Health Alliance.

The alliance tracks metrics closely, and its approach seems to be reducing poverty and improving health outcomes. It's as essential an investment in health as CT scanners.

More broadly, we know how to cut child poverty, because we've done it: The United States cut it by almost half in 2021, largely with the refundable child tax credit. But Congress allowed the program to lapse, and child poverty is rising again.

Some may scoff that short life spans are a result of personal irresponsibility, such as eating too many sugary snacks, exercising too little or abusing alcohol. It's true that personal choices shape our health, but so do our collective choices about expanding Medicaid, extending the child tax credit, providing adequate drug treatment and educating people about health choices. If we believe in personal responsibility for others, we should accept collective responsibility for ourselves.

It would have been unimaginable even a decade ago that Bangladesh could overtake an American state in life expectancy. That is a reflection of our choices, personal and collective, and we can do better.

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September Dawn Bottoms is an award-winning documentary photographer based in Oklahoma. Her work focuses on mental illness, family, poverty, and the intersection of the three.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/16/opinion/health-care-life-expectancy-poverty.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/16/opinion/health-care-life-expectancy-poverty.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Below: Shirlene Mays follows up with her doctor at Greenwood Leflore Hospital after having her toes amputated because of diabetes. Opposite, top: Burt Saucier, also diabetic, gets a checkup at the hospital after having all of the toes on his right foot removed

bottom, Sandra Stringfellow, who lost a leg from complications of the disease, tries to pull herself into bed. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY SEPTEMBER DAWN BOTTOMS FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (SR8

SR9) This article appeared in print on page SR8, SR9.

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[***Sunset for the Sun-Seeking Summer Vacation***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:693F-39C1-DXY4-X01F-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

September 4, 2023 Monday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; Editorial Desk; Pg. 19; GUEST ESSAY

**Length:** 1391 words

**Body**

The images emerging from the Mediterranean in late July resembled a fixture of the evening news: the desperate crowd fleeing adversity. But these fugitives walking along hot tarmac or waiting to board rescue boats in the night were not the displaced victims of a broken republic. These were pleasure seekers in flip-flops and tank tops, toting beach bags over sun-tanned shoulders, retreating from a glowing sky.

On the Greek island of Rhodes, the peak summer travel season had arrived, and with it had materialized a hapless avatar of the times, the tourist-turned-evacuee.

More than any past year, this summer felt like the moment that climate change came for the vacationer. It began with heat waves across Southern Europe, where popular attractions closed to avoid the intolerable midafternoon temperatures. The infernal heat cured the kindling for wildfires, which were soon raging in Italy, Turkey, Spain, Portugal, Cyprus, Greece and elsewhere, forcing holiday cancellations and, as in the case of Rhodes, large-scale evacuations. On the other side of the world, another fire, this one likely supercharged by hurricane winds, consumed Lahaina on Maui, killing at least 115 people.

Hail as big as tennis balls pounded towns in northern Italy. Torrential rain triggered flash floods across Central Europe. All of this wild weather has coincided with tourism's great rebound, the year when tourist numbers are expected to recover to prepandemic levels.

What should we make of this chaotic summer? The kind of headline-grabbing ordeals endured by some travelers -- not to mention the people and communities they visited -- in recent months has remained the exception rather than the rule. Nonetheless, watching the Northern Hemisphere's prime months of recreation play out against a backdrop of calamity has seeded a sentiment that is hard to shake: that the hallowed sun-seeking summer holiday might soon be incompatible with a warming world.

In order to appreciate the gravity of this prospect, it helps to trace the summer vacation's deep roots. The type of high-volume tourism that dominates the scene in Europe's Mediterranean rivieras has its origins in the 19th century, during which the experience of my country, Britain, was prototypical.

As rapid industrialization codified the working week in Britain's burgeoning factories, the more structured calendar gave rise to statutory time off. Gradually, the concept of taking holidays evolved from being the preserve of the wealthy to a worker's right. By the middle of the 20th century, this social evolution had birthed ***working-class*** beach resorts across Britain's temperate coastlines. Starting in the 1950s, as the first package tours alighted in places like Palma and the Costa Brava, the British quickly grew to covet an ingredient that their inclement islands struggled to dependably provide: sunshine.

In subsequent decades, the convention for people, especially those from cooler northern latitudes, to journey abroad in pursuit of warm weather has become a fixed point on the calendar, as well as on our mental maps of well-being.

There are few contingencies in motion for when the weather in today's most popular destinations becomes a bane rather than a blessing. Many people are speculating that European summer travel patterns are bound to migrate north as prospective vacationers deem an increasing likelihood of sustained 110-degree Fahrenheit temperatures too much to bear. Uncanny sights like the ghostly hotel towers of Varosha, a once-glamorous resort in Cyprus that was abandoned after the Turkish invasion of 1974, may become commonplace across Europe's southern coasts.

Arguably as consequential is the way that this shift promises to subvert our assumptions about how we should pursue happiness -- and the very legitimacy of chasing contentment abroad.

As a general rule, the response of tourists to upheaval is a barometer of a destination's perceived stability. A single disaster or atrocity in a well-known holiday spot particularly scars the public consciousness because we tend to fixate on those who have been caught in moments of maximum repose. Such events can devastate a region's reputation, and the revival of its inbound tourism market can often track its broader social and economic recovery. The difference here is that such catastrophes have codas. The future of the climate crisis portends the far grimmer prospect of disruption without end. As such, this summer has highlighted a facet of that future that remains difficult to countenance: the inexorable complication of leisure, the dissolution of fun.

Placed alongside the more mortal implications of catastrophic shifts in our climate, the upending of vacation plans might seem trivial. However, it reveals something about climate change's totalizing potential and the extent to which persistently violent and volatile weather might compromise our quality of life. Much of the solace we derive from a vacation resides in the anticipation. It is the light on the horizon, part of a cycle of work and reward that underpins society.

''It is a crucial element of modern life to feel that travel and holidays are necessary,'' wrote John Urry in ''The Tourist Gaze,'' his seminal work on the sociology of contemporary tourism. '''I need a holiday' is the surest reflection of a modern discourse based on the idea that people's physical and mental health will be restored if only they can 'get away' from time to time.''

Envisioning a society in which the traditional season of respite becomes a season when we instead brace for impact is a dizzying exercise. In some places, domestic tourist sectors could regenerate as people recognize that the demand for spontaneity is better served by destinations close to home. In turn, foreign vacations may become incrementally more rarefied, the preserve, once again, of the affluent classes that can afford to alter plans on short notice. But in every case, it will become harder to see our best-laid plans through to fruition, and that threatens the foundations of hope.

Consequently, we all have cause to ask: What kind of life will it be? If the vacation is a keystone of the individual pursuit of gratification and a marker of relative wealth, its circumscription should remind us that no one is fully immune from the emotional toll of extreme weather. Climate change might not flood your house. But it may very well erode the things that give you joy.

Moreover, there are broader ethical issues at stake. In an age of overtourism and environmental collapse, it's tempting to see modern tourists as an emblem of human hubris and self-satisfaction, bent on personal pleasure while the world burns. The profound dissonance of people seeking hedonism in places reeling from flood or fire has provided further grist to the mill of anti-tourist resentments that have been festering for some time. In Hawaii the devastating Maui wildfire has reanimated longstanding tensions about the costs imposed on the archipelago's inhabitants by large-scale tourism and its wanton excess, which so often upsets the cadences of local life and reroutes resources from local communities. This conversation is set to run and run.

It is difficult to forecast what repercussions the havoc of the summer of 2023 will have on next year's season. It seems fair to suppose that an existential threat to August escapes to the Mediterranean, far more than news of barely survivable conditions in rural India, will help to bring home the immediacy of the climate crisis to people who might otherwise prefer to ignore it.

But many of us will still be reluctant to confront the idea of forsaking that precious bright spot in the calendar. Vacations have long been marketed to us as a reprieve, a time to suspend daily worries and consume with abandon. In short, it is the time when we unplug from reality. But reality, like a wildfire, has a way of catching up with those who fail to heed the smoke.

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[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/03/opinion/climate-change-summer-vacation-greece-rhodes-maui.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/03/opinion/climate-change-summer-vacation-greece-rhodes-maui.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO (PHOTOGRAPH BY DAN KITWOOD/GETTY IMAGES) This article appeared in print on page A19.

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[***The Roots of Republican Dysfunction***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69FP-K381-JBG3-61VY-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

October 22, 2023 Sunday

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**Section:** Section SR; Column 0; Sunday Review Desk; Pg. 3; JAMELLE BOUIE

**Length:** 1796 words

**Byline:** By Jamelle Bouie

**Body**

The collapse of the House Republican majority into chaos is the clearest possible evidence that the party is off the rails.

Of course, the Republican Party has been off the rails for a while before now. This was true in 2010, when Tea Party extremists swept through the party's ranks, defeating more moderate Republicans -- and pretty much any other Republican with an interest in the actual work of government -- and establishing a beachhead for radical obstructionism. It was true in 2012, when many Republican voters went wild for the likes of Michele Bachmann, Herman Cain and Newt Gingrich in the party's presidential primary, before settling on the more conventionally presidential Mitt Romney. But even then, Romney reached out to Donald Trump -- famous, politically speaking, for his ''birther'' crusade against President Barack Obama -- for his blessing, yet another sign that the Republican Party was not on track.

The truth of the Republican Party's deep dysfunction was obvious in 2013, when congressional Republicans shut down the government in a quixotic drive to repeal the Affordable Care Act, and it was obvious in 2016, when Republican voters nominated Trump for president. Everything that has followed, from the rise of influencer-extremist politicians like Representative Lauren Boebert to the party's complicity in insurrectionist violence, has been a steady escalation from one transgression to another.

The Republican Party is so broken that at this point, its congressional wing cannot function. The result is that this period is now the longest the House of Representatives has been in session without a speaker. And as Republican voters gear up to nominate Trump a third time for president, the rest of the party is not far behind. The only question to ask, and answer, is why.

One popular answer is Donald Trump, who in this view, is directly responsible for the downward spiral of dysfunction and deviancy that defines today's Republican Party. It's his success as a demagogue and showman that set the stage for the worst of the behavior we've seen from elected Republicans.

The problem, as I've already noted, is that most of what we identify as Republican dysfunction was already evident in the years before Trump came on the scene as a major figure in conservative politics. Even Trump's contempt for the legitimacy of his political opponents, to the point of rejecting the outcome of a free and fair election, has clear antecedents in conservative agitation over so-called voter fraud, including efforts to raise barriers to voting for rival constituencies.

Another popular answer is that we're seeing the fruits of polarization in American political life. And it is true that within both parties, there's been a marked and meaningful move away from the center and toward each side's respective flank. But while the Democratic Party is, in many respects, more liberal than it has ever been, it's also not nearly as ideologically uniform as the Republican Party. Nor does a rigid, doctrinaire liberalism serve as a litmus test among Democratic voters in Democratic Party primaries outside of a small handful of congressional districts.

Joe Biden, for example, is the paradigmatic moderate Democrat and, currently, the president of the United States and leader of the Democratic Party, with ample support across the party establishment. And in Congress, there's no liberal equivalent to the House Freedom Caucus: no group of nihilistic, obstruction-minded left-wing lawmakers. When Democrats were in the majority, the Congressional Progressive Caucus was a reliable partner of President Biden's and a constructive force in the making of legislation. If the issue is polarization, then it seems to be driving only one of our two parties toward the abyss.

Helpfully, the extent to which the Democratic Party still operates as a normal American political party can shed light on how and why the Republican Party doesn't. Take the overall strength of Democratic moderates, who hold the levers of power within the national party. One important reason for this fact is the heterogeneity of the Democratic coalition. To piece together a majority in the Electoral College, or to gain control of the House or Senate, Democrats have to win or make inroads with a cross-section of the American public: young people, affluent suburbanites, Black, Hispanic and Asian American voters, as well as a sizable percentage of the white ***working class***. To lose ground with any one of these groups is to risk defeat, whether it's in the race for president or an off-year election for governor.

A broad coalition also means a broad set of interests and demands, some of which are in tension with one another. This has at least two major implications for the internal workings of the Democratic Party. First, it makes for a kind of brokerage politics in which the most powerful Democratic politicians are often those who can best appeal to and manage the various groups and interests that make up the Democratic coalition. And second, it gives the Democratic Party a certain amount of self-regulation. Move too far in the direction of one group or one interest, and you may lose support among the others.

If you take the internal dynamics of the Democratic Party and invert them, you get something like those within the Republican Party.

Consider the demographics of the Republican coalition. A majority of voters in both parties are white Americans. But whereas the Democratic Party electorate was 61 percent white in the 2020 presidential election, the Republican one was 86 percent, according to the Pew Research Center. Similarly, there is much less religious diversity among Republicans -- more than a third of Republicans voters in 2020 were white evangelical Protestants -- than there is among Democrats. And while we tend to think of Democrats as entirely urban and suburban, the proportion of rural voters in the Democratic Party as a whole is actually greater than the proportion of urban voters in the Republican Party. There is, in other words, less geographic diversity among Republicans as well.

Most important, whereas nearly half of Democrats identify themselves as either ''moderate'' or ''conservative'' -- compared with the half that call themselves ''liberal'' -- nearly three-quarters of Republicans identify themselves as ''conservative,'' with just a handful of self-proclaimed moderates and a smattering of liberals, according to Gallup. This wasn't always true. In 1994, around 33 percent of Republicans called themselves ''moderate'' and 58 percent said they were ''conservative.'' There were even, at 8 percent, a few Republican liberals. Now the Republican Party is almost uniformly conservative. Moderate Democrats can still win national office or hold national leadership. Moderate Republicans cannot. Outside a handful of environments, found in largely Democratic states like Maryland and Massachusetts, moderate Republican politicians are virtually extinct.

But more than the number of conservatives, it is the character of its conservatism that dominates the Republican Party. It is, thanks to a set of social and political transformations dating back to the 1960s, a highly ideological and at times reactionary conservatism, with little tolerance for disagreement or dissent. The Democratic Party is a broad coalition geared toward a set of policies -- aimed at either regulating or tempering the capitalist economy or promoting the inclusion of various groups in national life. The Republican Party exists almost entirely for the promotion of a distinct and doctrinaire ideology of hierarchy and antigovernment retrenchment.

There have always been ideological movements within American political parties. The Republican Party was formed, in part, by adherents to one of the most important ideological movements of the 19th century -- antislavery. But, as the historian Geoffrey Kabaservice has observed, ''The conversion of one of America's two major parties into an ideological vehicle'' is a ''phenomenon without precedent in American history.''

It is the absence of any other aim but the promotion of conservative ideology -- by any means necessary, up to and including the destruction of democratic institutions and the imposition of minority rule -- that makes this particular permutation of the Republican Party unique. It helps explain, in turn, the dysfunction of the past decade. If the goal is to promote conservative ideology, then what matters for Republican politicians is how well they adhere to and promote conservatism. The key issue for conservative voters and conservative media isn't whether a Republican politician can pass legislation or manage a government or bridge political divides; the key question is whether a Republican politician is sufficiently committed to the ideology, whatever that means in the moment. And if conservatism means aggrieving your enemies, then the obvious choice for the nation's highest office is the man who hates the most, regardless of what he believes.

The demographic homogeneity of the Republican Party means that there isn't much internal pushback to this ideological crusade -- nothing to temper the instincts of politicians who would rather shut down the government than accept that a majority of Congress passed a law over their objections, or who would threaten the global economy to get spending cuts they could never win at the ballot box.

Worse, because the institutions of American democracy give a significant advantage to the current Republican coalition, there's also no external force pushing Republican politicians away from their most rigid extremes. Just the opposite: There is a whole infrastructure of ideologically motivated money and media that works to push Republican voters and politicians farther to the right.

It is not simply that the Republican Party has politicians like Jim Jordan and Matt Gaetz and Marjorie Taylor Greene. It's that the Republican Party is practically engineered to produce politicians like Jim Jordan and Matt Gaetz and Marjorie Taylor Greene. And there's no brake -- no emergency off-switch -- that might slow or stop the car. The one thing that might get the Republican Party back on the rails is a major and unanticipated shift in the structure of American politics that forces it to adapt to new voters, new constituencies and new conditions.

It's hard to imagine what that might be. It can't come soon enough.

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**Graphic**

PHOTO (PHOTOGRAPH BY MARK PETERSON/REDUX, FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page SR3.

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[***Governor Who Quit Politics Amid Scandal Eyes a New Job: Mayor***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6978-KRB1-JBG3-621K-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Section:** NYREGION

**Length:** 1402 words

**Byline:** Tracey Tully

**Highlight:** Jim McGreevey, New Jersey’s 52nd governor, resigned after admitting to an extramarital affair with a male employee. Now he is preparing for a political comeback.

**Body**

Jim McGreevey, New Jersey’s 52nd governor, resigned after admitting to an extramarital affair with a male employee. Now he is preparing for a political comeback.

James E. McGreevey, a former New Jersey governor who resigned two decades ago in scandal, has built his career on reinvention. So much so that when he enters a classroom filled with newly freed felons hoping to make the most of their own second chance, they are not sure what to call him.

“Governor!” the instructor bellows.

“Jim — come on, guys — it’s just Jim!” he counters affably as he fist-bumps several men enrolled in a post-prison career training program he founded and now leads as executive director.

Mr. McGreevey, 66, has tried on other titles since he [*quit politics in 2004*](https://www.nytimes.com/2004/08/13/nyregion/a-governor-resigns-overview-mcgreevey-steps-down-after-disclosing-a-gay-affair.html) after announcing to his second wife and to the world that he was gay and had had an affair with a man who worked for him.

He published a book, “The Confession,” and starred in a [*documentary*](https://www.nytimes.com/2013/03/28/fashion/this-side-of-redemption.html) produced by Alexandra Pelosi, a daughter of the former House speaker. He earned a master’s degree in divinity. He had hoped to be ordained an Episcopal priest, but amid the fallout of his bitter divorce the church turned him down.

And now Mr. McGreevey, a Democrat who once was thought to have the White House in his sights, is making plans to do what he had [*said he would not*](https://www.thedailybeast.com/jim-mcgreevey-says-hes-given-up-politics-embraced-a-simpler-life): re-enter politics.

Over the past several months, Mr. McGreevey has begun cobbling together support for an expected run for mayor of Jersey City, the state’s second-largest city, where he has lived for eight years.

Minutes from New York and teeming with progressive newcomers, Jersey City enjoys a prominent place in regional lore, filled with immigrants, innovation and [***working-class*** *brio*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/03/25/nyregion/st-peters-march-madness-sweet-16.html). But it is also 63 miles away from the State House and its attendant power and trappings.

Mr. McGreevey, who was born in Jersey City, says he has no problem with the perceived downgrade in prestige.

“Being governor is so much about the budget, the dollar,” he reasoned during an interview at the job training center in Kearny, N.J., run by his current employer, the New Jersey Reentry Corporation. “Being mayor is about building strong communities.”

He added, “It’s also a worthy place to put my energies, to hopefully do some good.”

He expects to make a final decision before Thanksgiving.

“I’m getting closer to making that decision in the affirmative,” he said.

At least three other Jersey City Democratic leaders are also seriously considering vying for the job. The current mayor, Steven Fulop, who is running for governor, does not intend to run for re-election. But the contest is not until November 2025, setting up a two-year runway in which anything might happen.

“I could be dead by then,” said Gerald McCann, 73, a former Jersey City mayor now advising Mr. McGreevey.

Still, few would dispute that Mr. McGreevey is winning the race for buzz and institutional support among key power brokers in Hudson County.

Nine of the county’s 12 mayors have publicly endorsed his candidacy. A recent fund-raiser for a nonprofit civic organization named for his parents, who, he stressed, were raised in Jersey City, drew labor leaders and local and state officials. And on Saturday he is convening the first of what he calls “listening sessions.”

On a recent morning, he wandered the halls of the training center with the confidence of a school principal and the lively gait of a St. Patrick’s Day parade grand marshal. He was eager to discuss the state-funded program in minute detail, including the 268,402 pounds of food it has provided this year to clients, the role of the on-site chaplain and the facility’s free medical and dental services.

His phone rang during the interview, and he answered it cheerfully. It was a young detainee at a state psychiatric facility who had been assigned to him as part of the client caseload he maintains, even as executive director. He listened patiently and asked if the man had read the book he shared, “Band of Brothers.”

It is his work with current and former prisoners and the insight it has offered about their lack of educational and workplace preparedness, and the realities of the impoverished communities they return home to, that most guides his current ambition, he said.

“My sense is Jersey City is at a tipping point, and it ought to be affordable for those families that have lived in the city for three or four generations,” he said.

Fans of Mr. McGreevey’s candidacy cite his decades of government experience. Before being elected governor, he was an assemblyman, state senator and mayor of Woodbridge, a sprawling suburban township in central New Jersey.

Mr. McGreevey’s 21-year-old daughter, Jacqueline, who, with her older half sister, Morag, grew up in the shadow of their father’s spectacular crash-landing from politics, said part of her wishes he would remain out of the limelight.

“I genuinely think that he would do a lot of good for a lot of people,” she said between classes at Barnard College, “so it feels kind of selfish to not want him to pursue it.”

“My dad always says, ‘Do the next right thing,’ ” she said, “whether it means study for the next test or help the next person.”

“This seems to be kind of a natural progression of where he’s been,” she added, “and what he wants to do.”

Whatever happens, Mr. McGreevey said he does not see the job as a steppingstone.

“I’m walking down the hill,” he said. “This is it.”

Jersey City’s mayoral elections are nonpartisan, a detail that diminishes the ability of county political bosses to design the ballot to all but guarantee a win for their handpicked candidates, as occurs in many other places in New Jersey.

Mr. Fulop, who did not have the backing of the county Democratic Party when he was first [*elected mayor*](https://www.nytimes.com/2013/07/01/nyregion/a-new-mayor-to-match-jersey-citys-ambitions.html), has not commented on Mr. McGreevey’s potential candidacy. The two have a fraught history: Mr. McGreevey was fired from a job in Jersey City in 2019 after Mr. Fulop and his aides suggested the former governor had misallocated funds, a claim Mr. McGreevey said was untrue and was disproved by [*independent audits*](https://www.njreentry.org/audits).

The mayor of Union City, N.J., a powerful county leader, was first to champion Mr. McGreevey’s candidacy, generating a cascade of early institutional support.

But two possible Democratic opponents, William O’Dea, a county commissioner, and James Solomon, a city councilman, argued that this outside support, while helpful for fund-raising, could also backfire.

“It’s creating this overarching question: ‘Why are these folks who have nothing to do with our city imposing their will on our city?’ ” said Mr. O’Dea, who also held a political fund-raiser this week.

Mr. Solomon said voters were savvy enough to think for themselves.

“I haven’t met a voter in Jersey City who is concerned with the opinions of power brokers outside of Jersey City,” Mr. Solomon said. “They’re concerned about rents going through the roof and political cronies stealing their tax dollars. They’re going to vote for the candidate who can make their life better.”

Politics is not the only community Mr. McGreevey has returned to.

After years as an Episcopalian, he has rejoined the Roman Catholic Church, unable to walk away for good from the faith that shaped him as a child and younger man.

He attends Mass regularly at Christ the King, a predominantly African American congregation in Jersey City, parishioners say. He is friendly and contributes to the upkeep of the parish. His homosexuality, which the [*catechism of the Catholic church*](https://www.usccb.org/sites/default/files/flipbooks/catechism/568/index.html) does not approve of, is not an issue, they say.

“We accept him. He accepts us,” said Ann Warren, 63, the parish business administrator.

Still, in a city where more than 75 percent of residents are nonwhite, Ms. Warren said the concerted push by county leaders to “recycle their buddies” and put him at the front of the line smacks of the “hypocrisy of the Democratic Party.”

Joyce E. Watterman, the first Black woman to serve as City Council president in Jersey City, is among the three likely mayoral candidates pushed to the side as Mr. McGreevey was elevated.

“It’s like, ‘We’re all for minorities and blah, blah, blah,” said Ms. Warren, a lifelong resident of Jersey City.

“But we’re not willing to invest the funds to put them in positions that matter. It’s just the same old boy network.”

PHOTO: Ex-New Jersey Gov. James E. McGreevey with students at a career training center in Kearny, N.J. (PHOTOGRAPH BY BRYAN ANSELM FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A19.

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[***Candidate for 'Mayah' Puts Patois on the Ballot***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:63TG-6YV1-JBG3-62YX-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Body**

The mayoral candidate Annissa Essaibi George, the daughter of Polish and Tunisian immigrants, speaks with the accent of ***working-class*** Boston. And she's having some fun with it.

BOSTON -- The mayoral candidate Annissa Essaibi George was amping up her supporters, who had gathered in an Italian restaurant on the waterfront, a little punchy after a long day of getting out the vote.

As she built toward the climax of her speech, a pledge to be ''the teacher, the mother and the mayor'' the city needs, her accent unfurled like a banner. Those in the crowd were in high spirits, so they chanted it together a second time, then a third.

''I will be the teachah!'' they shouted, to raucous celebration. ''The mothah!'' (Cheers.) ''And the mayah!'' (sustained cheers) ''to get it done!''

In that catch phrase, which she also featured in two television advertisements, Ms. Essaibi George makes several things clear: that though she identifies as Arab American, she was born and bred in the heart of Irish American Boston. That amid an influx of affluent professionals, she would stand up for Boston's ***working class*** -- not just police officers and firefighters, but electricians and construction workers. That her neighborhood, Dorchester, is stamped on her DNA.

Boston is a city that cherishes its accent -- one that ignores R's in some places, inserts them in others, and prolongs its A sounds as if it were opening its mouth for a dentist.

In the second half of the 20th century, linguists say, New Yorkers began to look down on their own R-less accent, but Bostonians, like Philadelphians, continued to revel in theirs. They were not embarrassed by it; it conveyed toughness and good humor and authenticity. Candidates with pronounced accents have won the last 10 mayoral elections.

But this campaign comes at a moment of change, as growing populations -- young professionals, Latinos, Asians -- redraw Boston's electoral map. Ms. Essaibi George's opponent, Michelle Wu, who moved to the area to attend Harvard, speaks to the concerns of many of those new Bostonians. Slowly but steadily, like polar ice caps, the core of ***working-class*** Boston is diminishing.

When Ms. Essaibi George speaks, dropping references to her parish (St. Margaret's), her favorite teacher (Sister Helen) and her football grudges (the trade of Jimmy Garoppolo), she effortlessly evokes that Boston.

''I will say we've had a little bit of fun with the accent,'' she said in an interview. If you watch the first television ad to feature the phrase, she said, ''you can see that I'm doing all I can to not crack up laughing.''

Asked whether it conveys a political advantage, she gives a verbal shrug.

''I don't think about it at all,'' she said. ''It is how I think. It's how I talk.''

The two candidates, both Democrats and at-large city councilors, differ most notably on issues of policing and development: Ms. Wu, who placed first in the preliminary election, has pushed for deeper cuts to the police budget, while Ms. Essaibi George argues for adding hundreds more officers to the force. Ms. Wu supports rent stabilization and the dissolution of the city's main planning agency, which she says favors politically connected developers, while Ms. Essaibi George, who is married to a developer, warns that such measures could bring building ''to almost a grinding halt,'' cutting into the city budget and ***working-class*** jobs.

But it is Ms. Essaibi George's accent-flexing that has sparked the most spirited discussions. A local filmmaker who recently celebrated a birthday received a card saying, ''You're my SISTAH, you're a PRODUCAH, and now you're OLDAH.''

Many of Ms. Wu's supporters roll their eyes at this, saying Ms. Essaibi George has dialed up her Dorchesterese for the occasion. Anyway, they say, the solidarity conveyed by the Boston accent -- really a white, ***working-class*** Boston accent -- is one that excludes much of the city. Recent census data found that only 43 percent of Boston's population was born in Massachusetts.

''It's a message of belonging,'' said Mimi Turchinetz, a community activist who supports Ms. Wu. ''That unless you're from the neighborhood, you don't have deep roots and can't represent this city. It's a statement of belonging, versus the other. That's the quiet suggestion.''

Ms. Wu, the child of Taiwanese immigrants, was raised in a suburb of Chicago; her speech does not carry a strong regional flavor. If she is elected in November, she would be the first mayor since 1925 who had not been born in Boston.

Last week, when she was asked by Boston Public Radio whether Ms. Wu's lack of Boston roots should be a factor in the race, Ms. Essaibi George said it was ''relevant to me'' and ''relevant to a lot of voters.'' This prompted a backlash on social media, including from Ms. Wu herself.

''Reminder,'' Ms. Wu wrote on Twitter. ''The Mayor of Boston needs to lead for ALL of us. I'm ready to fight for every resident -- whether you've been here since birth or chose to make Boston your home along the way.''

Ms. Essaibi George spent much of the next day trying to explain her comments, dismissing the perpetual contrast of old Boston and new Boston as ''such a silly, silly debate.''

''This is not about being born and raised here,'' she said. ''So many Bostonians are not born and raised in the city. Both my parents immigrated to this country, never mind the city. And for me, it is what makes this city special.''

Accents have long been weaponized in Massachusetts politics, usually identifying their owner as the more authentic champion of the ***working class***. James Michael Curley, who served four terms as Boston's mayor, beginning in 1914, once derided his opponent as having a ''Harvard accent with a South Boston face.''

Senator Ed Markey leveraged his accent last year, when during a debate with then-Representative Joseph P. Kennedy III, he turned to Mr. Kennedy and said, ''Tell your father right now that you don't want money to go into a Super PAC that runs negative ads.'' The jab was clear: Mr. Markey, a truck driver's son, was drawing a contrast with the scion of a political dynasty.

Almost instantaneously, ''Tell ya fatha'' became a meme, for sale on T-shirts on Mr. Markey's campaign websites. It was so popular that Robert DeLeo, then the speaker of the Massachusetts House, posed with a ''Tell ya fatha'' T-shirt without realizing what it meant, and then privately apologized to Mr. Kennedy, Politico reported.

It is an accent that can cut both ways, said Marjorie Feinstein-Whittaker, a speech therapist who has spent 20 years helping Massachusetts residents modify their accents.

Often, clients seek out her firm, the Whittaker Group, because they fear that in professional settings they're seen as ''***working-class***, or not so smart.'' Sometimes they're just tired of being asked to say ''park the car in Harvard Yard'' all the time, which makes them feel ''like a circus act.''

But there is also something positive about the accent -- something intangible, an emotional attachment. ''It's hard for me to answer because I'm not from here, but I think it's, 'I've got your back, you've got my back, we've got this bond no one can break,''' Ms. Feinstein-Whittaker said. ''It's like a family thing. It's solidarity.''

Ms. Essaibi George's history makes her both an insider and an outsider to this tradition. Her father, Ezzeddine, grew up in a Tunisian village and fell in love with her mother, a Polish immigrant, when they were studying in Paris. He followed her back to the Savin Hill section of Dorchester, which was then overwhelmingly white and Irish Catholic.

As an Arab and a Muslim, he never felt fully accepted, Ms. Essaibi George said, and scoffed at the idea his daughter could win office, telling her ''an Arab girl, with an Arab name, will win nothing in this country.'' That she has managed it -- winning an at-large City Council seat three times -- represents ''my inner 15-year-old self'' trying to prove him wrong, she said.

''I'm very proud of the neighborhood I grew up in,'' she said, even though ''I was sometimes seen as a little bit of a different kid, because I didn't come from a traditional white Irish Catholic family.''

This combination of attributes -- a booster of traditional Boston who also represents change -- helped her place second in last month's crowded preliminary.

''We need someone who has been in our shoes,'' said Michael Buckman, 38, a janitor who fears the rising cost of living will force him out of South Boston, where his family has lived for nine generations since immigrating from Ireland.

''It stems all the way back into the roots of Boston,'' he said. ''It was a working city. It's gone the direction of skyscrapers and hospitals and universities. I understand cities evolve. If anything, Boston has evolved a little too much.''

As for Ms. Essaibi George's accent, it is an advantage, said Douglas Vinitsky, 45, a sheet-metal worker who was waiting to meet her at a campaign stop.

Though he ''wasn't raised uppity,'' he said, his mother tried for years to train him to pronounce his Rs, warning that he would be seen as uneducated. Mr. Vinitsky disagreed so strongly that he leaned deeper into his accent just to make a point. And it has never cost him.

''Nobody else in the world cared how I spoke,'' he said. ''It didn't even matter in Boston.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2021/10/09/us/annissa-essaibi-george.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/10/09/us/annissa-essaibi-george.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Annissa Essaibi George, in Hyde Park last month, is playing up her Boston roots in her mayoral run. (A1)

Annissa Essaibi George has downplayed her accent as being political. ''It's how I talk,'' she said..

Michelle Wu is trying to become the first mayor to not be Boston-born since 1925. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY M. SCOTT BRAUER FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

Senator Ed Markey's ''Tell ya fatha'' debate zinger to Repre- sentative Joseph P. Kennedy III became a meme of sorts. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY THE MARKEY COMMITTEE

DAVID DEGNER FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A17)

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[***People Places Things***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69PG-XD81-DXY4-X031-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** By Michael Snyder and Richard Pedaline

**Body**

Steeped in cultural heritage, the capital of Jalisco is drawing a new wave of artists.

T's monthly travel series, Flocking To, highlights places you might already have on your wish list, sharing tips from frequent visitors and locals alike. Sign up here to find us in your inbox once a month, and to receive our weekly T List newsletter. Have a question? You can always reach us at [*tlist@nytimes.com*](mailto:tlist@nytimes.com)

For much of the 20th century, the image of Mexico popularized abroad through film, music, art and literature was, more accurately, a portrayal of Jalisco state and especially its capital, Guadalajara. Mariachi and tequila both originated here as did some of Mexico's most famous singers and actors. The writer Juan Rulfo, whose 1955 novel, ''Pedro Páramo,'' still stands as the central monument of modern Mexican literature, grew up in Jalisco and vividly depicted its arid, sun-blasted landscapes in his writing, while the architect Luis Barragán, who moved from Guadalajara to Mexico City in the 1930s, carried with him an appreciation for his home state's cloisters, haciendas and humble country buildings, which he translated in his own work as austere, inscrutable volumes of stucco. ''Jalisco,'' as a popular saying goes, ''is Mexico.''

The third largest metropolitan area in Mexico, with some five million people, Guadalajara moves at a slower pace than the nation's capital. An ideal weekend here might well be spent in the timeworn cantinas in the busy Centro Histórico and design shops like Occidente, located on the ground floor of the Foro Arquitectura (Architecture Forum) in the tree-lined Colonia Americana neighborhood. Perfect taquerias and raucous seafood joints seem to crop up on every corner -- everyone has their personal favorite -- and even a comparatively high-concept restaurant like Xokol, run by the chefs Xrysw Ruelas and Oscar Segundo, serves its mostly corn-based dishes with a refreshing dose of playfulness. Countless family workshops, where tradespeople use simple machinery to manipulate tin plate, brick and stone, are found in the city's central neighborhoods, while master artisans, like the ceramist Angel Santos, maintain and advance the traditions of craft villages like Tonalá and Tlaquepaque, now absorbed into Guadalajara's ever-expanding periphery. For the local artists, architects and designers who have increasingly chosen to stay here, as well as their counterparts from elsewhere in Mexico and abroad who have begun to settle in the city alongside them, Guadalajara is an unusually inviting and collaborative place to make things.

The Insiders

Alma Saladin, who was born in Paris and moved to Mexico in 2017, co-owns the gallery Guadalajara90210 with her partners, Marco Rountree and Alberto López Corcuera, offering cultural programs dedicated to contemporary and site-specific art in both Mexico City and Guadalajara.

Xrysw Ruelas is a co-founder and chef, with her partner Oscar Segundo, of Guadalajara's Xokol restaurant.

Isaac Hernández, a Guadalajara native, was a principal dancer at the English National Ballet, based in London, for seven years, until returning to the San Francisco Ballet in 2022.

Renata Franco is a co-founder, along with her sister Julia, of the clothing label Julia y Renata and the Guadalajara design shop Albergue Transitorio.

Sleep

''The Demetria was really the first hotel to focus on Guadalajara's modern architectural heritage when it opened in 2011. It's so harmonious with the houses on either side, one by Pedro Castellanos, an important contemporary of Luis Barragán, and the other an early Barragán (it now houses the gallery Travesía Cuatro). The Demetria fomented so much of what's happened since in the neighborhood -- the galleries, the artist studios, the restaurants -- and Julia and I have our shop there, so it's really special to us.'' Avenida de la Paz 2219, Lafayette; rooms from about $210 a night -- Renata Franco

''Whenever I come back to Guadalajara, I stay at the Casa Habita. It's one of those hotels that doesn't feel like a hotel. The whole atmosphere of the place -- the lobby, the restaurant -- reminds me of being at a friend's house. Even if I'm not staying there, I'll go there just to have lunch. It's become part of my routine.'' Lerdo de Tejada 2308, Lafayette; rooms from about $130 a night -- Isaac Hernández

''Casa Mucha is a beautiful space. You come in off the street and, on the ground floor, there's a cafe called Rin Tin Tin and a little craft and design store. The roof has this seating area and sculpture from an artist in Mexico City whose partner is from Guadalajara. And it has these very nice touches throughout. The founder has great taste -- it's all very somber and elegant but also really warm.'' Juan Manuel 1168, Santa Teresita; rooms from about $115 a night -- Alma Saladin

Eat and Drink

''Lately, I've been going a lot to Siete y Medio de Paco for seafood. It's a bit farther from the center, but everything -- especially the scallops, the shrimp and the chicharrón de pescado, made by frying pieces of fish -- is always so fresh and delicious. I Latina was the first place in Guadalajara I know of to talk about and distribute natural wines. The restaurant has been around for 25 years and, thanks to the owners, it's been at the forefront of the city's culinary scene.'' Siete y Medio de Paco, Calle Industria 1099, San Juan Bosco; I Latina, Avenida Inglaterra 3128, Vallarta Poniente -- R.F.

''My whole family has been going to Menuderia Las Condenadas in Zapopan since I was a kid. We're 11 brothers and sisters and the owners have watched us all grow up, have watched my whole career, and they take so much pride in all of us. And the best thing is that the menudo -- a classic tripe soup often served for breakfast -- is the same now as it's always been.'' Javier Mina 371, Zapopan -- I.H.

''One of the best places for something traditional is Birriería David in the back of the Mercado Alcalde in the Centro Histórico. The meat, which is goat rather than beef, is cooked in a spice rub and finished in an oven, so it comes out really golden and crispy and a bit less fatty than other birria. I have family in [the neighboring state of] Michoacán, and I remember when I was a kid the market there served it that way.'' Calle Joaquín Angulo 188E, Centro Barranquitas -- Xrysw Ruelas

''There's a spot near our gallery for carne en su jugo [beef in its own juices], which is a really emblematic dish from Jalisco, and of course there are versions of it served everywhere and everyone has their favorite, but this one we love. It's called Las Originales Carnes en Su Jugo, and when you order the dish, it comes with guacamole and these delicious, super creamy beans, which really makes it.'' Calle José María Vigil 1551, Villaseñor -- A.S.

Shop

''José Noé Suro is the person who's done the most to facilitate all this movement around the city's art scene, and his ceramics studio, Cerámica Suro -- it's somewhere between a factory and an artisanal workshop -- is a space where artists come from all over the world to produce work. You can make an appointment for a tour.'' Calle 5 1006, Colón Industrial -- R.F.

''Tlaquepaque, which is a craft town that's technically separate from the city but has been absorbed into its outskirts, is one of my favorite places. The main street is lined with craft shops, but I especially love the studio of the artist Rodo Padilla and the way he represents these emblematic characters from Mexican life. They're very playful. The first time I visited the workshop, I bought a statue of a vendor on a bicycle selling birds. It's almost a meter high, and I brought it with me all the way back to London.'' -- I.H.

''The Mercado San Juan de Dios is incredible. It's the architecture, of course, but also you can find everything there. There's a place there that sells really good tejuino [a sweet cold beverage made from lightly fermented masa] that's been there almost as long as the market itself, and then you can buy a molcajete [a traditional stone mortar and pestle] or leather boots and huaraches. It's like a mall but from the barrio.'' -- X.R.

''I love the books at Impronta, which is this tiny local editorial house that still prints with letterpress machines. It has a lovely patio with a little cafe, and upstairs is a fantastic project space that always has nice exhibitions.'' Calle Penitenciaría 414, Colonia Americana -- A.S.

Take Home

''Chamula Hecho a Mano has some of the nicest crafts in the city. The owners are careful and conscientious about what they select and very respectful of the artisans -- they go to their studios, build relationships, sometimes design pieces in collaboration with them. They have a diverse selection of things, like clay bananas made by the local artisan Iván López and wonderful earthenware vases in a style called barro canelo made by Pablo Pajarito in Tonalá.'' Manuel M. Dieguez 13, Ladrón de Guevara -- R.F.

''Throughout his life, my father wore a pair of boots from Los Potrillos in the center of Guadalajara, and when we were kids we would go with him into the city to visit the shop. We had family friends who had a ranch outside the city -- equestrian culture is a huge thing in Jalisco -- so we would wear our boots whenever we went out into the country. As a kid, I used to wear a sheepskin jacket from there, too. My mom recently sent it to me, and now my son wears it. These things are made to last.'' C. José María Morelos 51, Zona Centro -- I.H.

''Mezonte is a tiny, low-key tasting room that has the best selection [of agave spirits] in the city, but it's also a larger organization that focuses on responsible sourcing and that's closely involved with the dissemination of knowledge about, and conservation of, Mexican distillates. One of my favorites is the raicilla made in Cabo Corrientes in western Jalisco by a producer called Hildegardo Joya, or 'Japo.''' Calle Argentina 299, Colonia Americana -- X.R.

Explore

''The essential thing is the Hospicio Cabañas Museum. First of all, there are the [José Clemente] Orozco murals -- the way they interact with the building, it's just so amazing. But I also love that the museum has a contemporary program connected to what's happening now and strong cultural programming in the ***working-class*** neighborhoods nearby. Even just walking around inside, you can get lost and suddenly come out onto a perfect patio with a fountain. It's cool and quiet and so Guadalajara.'' Calle Cabañas 8, Plaza Tapatía, Centro -- A.S.

''You'll find parks like Los Colomos Forest in most major cities in the world. When I was young, I'd go there to run or ride horses. When you step inside, the city just disappears.'' -- I.H.

''The Belén Cemetery, near the northern limit of the Centro Histórico, is such a beautiful place. It was first developed in the 19th century, and today it's practically a museum, with all the amazing tombs inside. You can go during the day, but they also do these night tours now that are great and kind of creepy.'' Calle Belén 684, El Retiro -- X.R.

Practical Matters

''In February, during pre-MACO [the weeklong lead-up to Mexico City's annual art fair Zona MACO], you get to visit the studios of artists like Jose Dávila, Eduardo Sarabia, Jorge Méndez Blake. It's such a great opportunity to meet the people who bring the city so much of its creative energy.'' -- R.F.

''The best way to visit the city is to pay attention to a few specific architects -- Alejandro Zohn or Fernando González Gortázar, for example -- and follow their work around town. MoMo Guadalajara has a digital map on its website to guide you.'' -- A.S.

These interviews have been edited and condensed.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/17/t-magazine/locals-guide-guadalajara-mexico.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/17/t-magazine/locals-guide-guadalajara-mexico.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Los Colomos Forest is a large park in the middle of Guadalajara, Mexico.

One of the guest rooms at Casa Mucha, left

and the breakfast area at Casa Habita.

Clockwise from top: a quesadilla, pellizcada and menudo at Menuderia Las Condenadas.

Cerámica Suro, José Noé Suro's studio, left

and Impronta, a local publishing house.

Chamula Hecho a Mano, a shop that sells crafts from local artists and collaborates on designs.

The Hospicio Cabañas Museum's chapel, left

and Belén Cemetery, which offers night tours. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY MARIANO FERNANDEZ) This article appeared in print on page D3.

**Load-Date:** November 23, 2023

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[***Americans Are Too Turned Off by Washington to Even Complain***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69BG-47B1-DXY4-X0MN-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

October 7, 2023 Saturday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; National Desk; Pg. 1

**Length:** 1491 words

**Byline:** By Jack Healy, J. David Goodman, Jenna Russell and Alan Blinder

**Body**

Whitney Smith's phone buzzed with a text from her mother, alerting her to the latest can-you-believe-it mess in Washington: ''Far right ousted the House speaker. Total chaos now.''

Ms. Smith, 35, a bookkeeper and registered independent in suburban Phoenix, wanted no part of it. She tries to stay engaged in civic life by voting, volunteering in local campaigns and going to city meetings. But over the past week, the pandemonium of a narrowly averted government shutdown and leadership coup in the Republican-controlled House confirmed many Americans' most cynical feelings about the federal government.

''It was just like, Oh God, what now?'' she said.

Griping about politics is a time-honored American pastime but lately the country's political mood has plunged to some of the worst levels on record.

After weathering the tumult of the Trump presidency, a pandemic, the Capitol insurrection, inflation, multiple presidential impeachments and far-right Republicans' pervasive lies about fraud in the 2020 election, voters say they feel tired and angry.

In dozens of recent interviews across the country, voters young and old expressed a broad pessimism about the next presidential election that transcends party lines, and a teetering faith in political institutions.

The White House and Congress have pumped out billions of dollars to fix and improve the nation's roads, ports, pipelines and internet. They have approved hundreds of billions to combat climate change and lower the cost of prescription drugs. President Biden has canceled billions more in student debt. Yet those accomplishments have not fully registered with voters.

A small group of hard-right Republicans drove the country to the brink of a government shutdown, then plunged Congress into chaos when they instigated the vote that, with Democratic support, removed Mr. McCarthy. Democrats are betting that voters will blame Republicans for the trouble. Many voters interviewed this week said they viewed the whole episode as evidence of broad dysfunction in Washington, and blamed political leaders for being consumed by workplace drama at the expense of the people they are meant to serve.

''They seem so disconnected from us,'' said Kevin Bass, 57, a bank executive who lives in New Home, a rural West Texas town. He serves on the local school board and has two children in public school, and another in college. He describes himself as conservative who voted for former President Donald J. Trump both times. ''I don't really look at either party as benefiting our country,'' he said.

Voters said that Washington infighting and the Republicans' flirtation with debt default and government shutdowns recklessly put people's paychecks, health care and benefits at risk at a moment when they are preoccupied with how to pay rising health care and grocery bills, or to cope with a fast-warming climate unleashing natural disasters in nearly every corner of the nation.

''Disgust isn't a strong enough word,'' said Bianca Vara, a Democrat and grandmother of five in the Atlanta area who runs a stall at a flea market that crackles with discussions of politics.

She said she wanted leaders in Washington to address gun violence, or maybe just meaningfully crack down on the robocalls she gets. Instead, she watched with dismay as the Republican-controlled House was convulsed with an internecine melee.

''It's worse than in elementary school,'' she said, ''Like a playground, like dodge ball: 'You're out! You're not the speaker anymore! Hit him in the head with a red ball!'''

Several people said they purposely tune out political news, focusing instead on details like the price of cream cheese ($6.99), or matters wholly unconnected to politics -- the Chicago Bears are 1 and 4, and Taylor Swift is showing up at Kansas City Chiefs games.

When Ms. Smith's mother texted the news of Kevin McCarthy's ouster as House speaker to the family text message chain, nobody responded. Eventually, Ms. Smith replied with a photo of new shelves she had just put up at home.

''Who's McCarthy? I don't even know,'' said Rosemary Watson, 38, a registered independent in Mesa, Ariz., a battleground state that has narrowly elected Democrats over Trump-style Republicans in the past two elections. ''I've purposely made that choice for my own health and well-being.''

Ms. Watson, a member of the Cherokee Nation, voted for Mr. Trump in 2020 and said she did not feel politically moved by actions President Biden has taken to conserve land sacred to Native Americans or to provide billions of dollars in new tribal funding. She said she would support Robert F. Kennedy Jr. in the 2024 presidential race as a jolt to the two-party system.

Cynthia Taylor, 58, a Republican paralegal in the Houston area whose husband works for a rifle manufacturer, was aghast at the ouster of Mr. McCarthy and the latest near-shutdown, calling the brinkmanship a symptom of growing lawlessness in American society.

''We seem to be starting to go down the line of, if I don't agree with you, I'm going to kick you out,'' she said. ''Everybody is out for themselves. Everybody is out for their 15 minutes of fame.''

A survey that the Pew Research Center conducted in July found a country united by a discontent with their political leaders that crosses race, age and partisan divides. Sixty-five percent of Americans polled said they felt exhausted when they thought about politics.

Only 16 percent of American adults said they trusted the federal government, close to the lowest levels in seven decades of polling. Nearly 30 percent of people said they disliked both the Democratic and Republican parties, a record high. Yet in recent years, Americans have turned out to vote in record numbers -- mostly to re-elect incumbents.

''I never thought I'd live in times like this,'' said Cindy Swasey, a 66-year-old widow in Dover, N.H. Ms. Swasey, who voted twice for President Trump but thinks of herself as an independent, said she used to like Representative Matt Gaetz and the infusion of newer, younger energy he had brought to Congress -- before he played a central role in the turmoil this week.

She has recently decided to skip watching future presidential debates.

***Working-class*** and middle-class Americans have seen their wages rise lately, but many say the gains pale in comparison with the rising cost of living. Thousands of union workers, from the automotive industry to health care to Hollywood, have voted with their feet by striking for better contracts.

''Right now, it's just been about getting back to work -- figuring out how to put food on my plate and keep a roof over my head and put gas in my car,'' said McKinley Bundick, a writer's assistant for the CBS program ''SEAL Team'' who was out of work for five months while the Writers Guild of America was on strike.

Several Democratic voters said their revulsion with the state of American politics was rooted in Mr. Trump's brand of angry grievance and the election lies that stoked the Jan. 6 rioters. At the same time, several said they were dreading the prospect of another contest between Mr. Trump and Mr. Biden, and would rather fast-forward through the next presidential cycle and find someone -- anyone -- new.

''This is the best you can give us from both parties? Are you kidding me?'' said Joseph Albanese, a 49-year-old technology product specialist in Chicago who voted for Mr. Biden in 2020, but is considering skipping next year's election altogether.

For people living on an entirely different coast from the Capitol -- especially younger voters -- Washington's dysfunction can seem like sensational infighting in a distant world.

''It's overwhelming, it's a lot going on,'' said Dionna Beamon, 28, who lives in the Watts neighborhood of South Los Angeles. ''So really, ignorance is bliss.''

Ms. Beamon, a hair stylist, said she and her friends were more concerned about issues like mental health. Her mother died of a heart attack less than two years ago and she has grappled with how to address her grief.

''I feel like a lot of people are depressed now,'' she said. ''That's a huge topic for my age group. The world hasn't been the same after Covid, and when it started, we were in our early 20s. ''

Vivian Santos-Smith, 21, a senior at Howard University, said her biggest concern was the $10,000 of student debt she would have to start repaying after graduation. President Biden canceled $9 billion in student loan debt this week, but his wider efforts to cancel some $400 billion more were scuttled by the Supreme Court.

She wants to be a political scientist, and one of her first challenges is trying to make sense of this moment.

''It seems as if 'House of Cards' is reality now,'' she said. ''The outlook is just bleak.''

Corina Knoll, Jacey Fortin, Robert Chiarito and Darren Sands contributed reporting.Corina Knoll, Jacey Fortin, Robert Chiarito and Darren Sands contributed reporting.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/06/us/kevin-mccarthy-congress-matt-gaetz-speaker-biden-trump-voters.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/06/us/kevin-mccarthy-congress-matt-gaetz-speaker-biden-trump-voters.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: WHITNEY SMITH, an independent near Phoenix, on the news of Kevin McCarthy's ouster as House speaker. (PHOTOGRAPH BY ADRIANA ZEHBRAUSKAS FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A13) This article appeared in print on page A1, A13.

**Load-Date:** October 7, 2023

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[***Ideas Abound in Edinburgh This Year***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68Y5-GXT1-DXY4-X01X-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

August 12, 2023 Saturday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section C; Column 0; The Arts/Cultural Desk; Pg. 6; CRITIC'S NOTEBOOK

**Length:** 1183 words

**Byline:** By Houman Barekat

**Body**

In plays from Scotland, Korea and Switzerland, theater companies explored questions of belonging, with varying degrees of success.

Questions of nationhood, identity and belonging loom large in three politically themed productions at this year's Edinburgh International Festival. The tagline for this year's edition is ''community over chaos,'' and there was plenty of both in ''Thrown,'' a National Theater of Scotland production running at the Traverse Theater through Aug. 27.

Written by Nat McCleary and directed by Johnny McKnight, it's a sentimental comedy about five women from Glasgow who travel to the Scottish countryside to compete in a backhold wrestling tournament. In this folk sport, indigenous to Scotland, competitors are initially locked into a clamp-like hug, before trying to wrestle each other to the ground. It dates back more than a thousand years, and the escapade is a kind of pilgrimage for the characters as they seek to connect with their national heritage. Along the way they playfully dissect what it means to be Scottish, reeling off some serviceable -- if not terribly original -- gags about haggis, kilts and ''Braveheart.''

Personality clashes emerge. Jo (Adiza Shardow), who is mixed race, and Chantelle (Chloe-Ann Taylor), who is white, are both ***working class*** and have been best pals since their school days, whereas Imogen (Efé Agwele), who is Black, was expensively educated and is new on the scene. When Imogen encourages Jo to take a greater interest in racial politics, this puts a strain on Jo and Chantelle's friendship. Chantelle resents Imogen for boiling everything down to race and vents her frustration at being seen as privileged, simply because she is white. Imogen, in turn, points out that her affluent upbringing has not protected her from racism. They are both right, of course, and their circular squabbling brings home the absurdity of pitting different types of oppression against each other.

Lesley Hart is boisterously engaging as the group's intense coach, Pam, but the star of the show is Maureen Carr, who plays Helen, the most unlikely of the five wrestlers. Diminutive in stature and older than the rest of the gang, she is a fish out of water who Carr plays with winning geniality. Helen provides moral support to Pam when she reveals her struggles with her gender identity and delivers the play's defining monologue: a positive message of unity through celebrating difference.

Pam explains that the play's title denotes the feeling helplessness in the split second when you realize you're about to lose a wrestling match. The sport is a metaphor for personal struggle, and the team, of course, is a metaphor for the Scottish nation. It's heartwarming stuff, but heavy-handedly allegorical.

''Dusk,'' a show that the Brazilian theater maker Christiane Jatahy developed with the Swiss company Comédie de Genève, is more intellectually ambitious, but similarly flawed. Its protagonist, a young undocumented migrant called Graça (Julia Bernat), takes a job with a French-speaking theater troupe that is working on a stage adaptation of the Lars Von Trier movie ''Dogville.''

Graça claims to have fled Brazil as a political refugee, and the troupe's members believe they are doing a good turn by hiring her, but relations sour when troubling stories emerge about her history. The women in the group become nasty as they suspect Graça has designs on their partners, and one male colleague, a naturalized citizen, takes against her because she reminds him of his own past experience as a hated outsider. The dynamic tips into exploitation and abuse, both psychological and sexual.

Jatahy is known for work that blends the conventions of theater and cinema. Here, the onstage action is recorded by a camcorder synced up to a large screen displaying close-up footage in real time. This is occasionally interspersed with prerecorded footage that differs jarringly from what's happening on the stage. The intention is to discombobulate the audience, and it does. The trouble, however, is that the big screen ultimately overshadows the actors' in-the-flesh presence, as the eye is continually drawn upward. One might as well be at the movies.

Running at the Royal Lyceum Theater through Aug. 27, ''Dusk'' is a provocative and pointedly bleak allegory of liberal hypocrisy. The central concept is strong, but the play is let down by overkill, especially in not one, but two, graphic depictions of sexual violence. When, after the second, the fictional troupe's director (played by Matthieu Sampeur) earnestly agonizes over the ethics of storytelling, we detect a none-too-subtle attempt to pre-empt criticisms that ''Dusk'' trades too heavily on shock value. (Reader, it does.)

The final 30 minutes of this 90-minute production are spent laboring the message of the first hour, culminating in a catastrophically unnecessary audience-facing lecture from Graça on xenophobia, gendered violence and the rise of the far right. The applause at the end of the show was damningly restrained.

A refreshing antidote to that production's audiovisual clutter came in an exquisite production of Euripides' ''Trojan Women,'' by the National Changgeuk Company of Korea. (The final performance of its three-show run is Aug. 11.) Set in the immediate aftermath of the decade-long Trojan War, it portrays the women of Troy as they await their imminent subjugation by the Greeks, who, having killed the Trojan menfolk, intend to take the women as wives or slaves.

The director, Ong Keng Sen, and the playwright, Bae Sam-sik, have done a fine job of reimagining this tale, which is mostly told through the medium of Pansori, a Korean genre of musical storytelling in which singing is accompanied by drumming. The propulsive pounding of the drum lends the songs a certain martial quality, which combines with the mournful tones of a zither and the singers' plaintive laments to produce a powerful blend of sorrow and defiance. Kim Kum-mi delivers a vocal performance of remarkable intensity as the Trojan queen Hecuba, and Yi So-yeon is arresting as the fey clairvoyant Cassandra.

The splendid set, by Cho Myung-hee is all the more imposing for its elegant simplicity. The Trojan women emerge, clad in white, from a strange, otherworldly tunnel flanked by two golden staircases; at various points, the structure is brought to life with elaborate lighting effects to evoke fire and sea.

Euripides's play dates from 415 B.C., but its enduring resonance is all too obvious as we look around the world today and reflect, for example, on the anniversary of the genocide by ISIS of the Yazidi people of Syria and Iraq -- and the subsequent sexual enslavement of hundreds of Yazidi women -- which began nine years ago this month; or the mounting evidence of sexual violence by Russian soldiers in Ukraine.

Hecuba's howl of anguish -- ''Destiny is drunk, the gods are blind!'' -- is a lament for the ages, a visceral and succinct protest against the abject cruelty of war.

Edinburgh International FestivalThrough Aug. 28 at various venues in Edinburgh; eif.co.uk.

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Top, Maureen Carr, standing, in ''Thrown,'' written by Nat McCleary and directed by Johnny McKnight. Left, ''Dusk,'' directed by Christiane Jatahy. Bottom, the National Changgeuk Company of Korea's production of ''Trojan Women.'' (PHOTOGRAPHS BY JULIE HOWDEN

MAGALI DOUGADOS

JESS SHURTE) This article appeared in print on page C6.

**Load-Date:** August 15, 2023

**End of Document**



[***Day 17: The Mysterious History of Mistletoe***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:673S-D9R1-DXY4-X47G-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

December 17, 2022 Saturday 19:12 EST

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**Section:** STYLE

**Length:** 464 words

**Byline:** Susan Shain

**Highlight:** How a hemiparasitic shrub became a symbol of romantic high jinks and holiday cheer.

**Body**

How a hemiparasitic shrub became a symbol of romantic high jinks and holiday cheer.

Mistletoe fans speculate that the reason we kiss under the plant — a [*hemiparasitic shrub*](https://www.smithsonianmag.com/science-nature/poop-tree-parasite-mistletoe-180967621/) that has [*been used to treat cancer*](https://www.healthline.com/nutrition/mistletoe-and-cancer) — can be traced back [*millenniums*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/12/24/science/mistletoe-trees-evolution.html): maybe to Celtic druids, maybe to a Norse myth. But according to Judith Flanders, a senior research fellow at the University of Buckingham and the author of “[*Christmas: A Biography*](https://us.macmillan.com/books/9781250190796/christmas),” the tradition’s origins are actually a mystery.

“We don’t know when it started, we don’t know why it started and we don’t know where it started,” she said.

What we do know? Britons have long decorated for Christmas with evergreens — and, since at least the 17th century, specifically with mistletoe. Ms. Flanders also said that, in parts of ***working-class*** Britain in the 18th and early 19th centuries, some people used greenery to make decorative “kissing boughs.”

As for why they were called that? And whether mistletoe was involved? Again, a mystery.

Then, around 1820, we have it: one of the earliest written accounts of kissing under mistletoe. It comes from a [*series of short stories*](https://www.gutenberg.org/files/2048/2048-h/2048-h.htm), many set in England, by the American author Washington Irving. (The same series also introduced readers to Rip Van Winkle, Ichabod Crane and the Headless Horseman.)

“The mistletoe is still hung up in farmhouses and kitchens at Christmas,” Mr. Irving writes, “and the young men have the privilege of kissing the girls under it, plucking each time a berry from the bush. When the berries are all plucked the privilege ceases.”

By the mid-1800s, images of kissing under mistletoe had begun appearing in British and American periodicals.

“A lot of what became Christmas customs became customs because they appeared in magazines,” Ms. Flanders said. “Particularly the illustrations, which were often copied elsewhere or cut up and used as wall decorations.” (She cited Christmas trees and Santa’s red suit as other examples.)

Mistletoe’s past may be murky, but its future isn’t terribly clear either. Given our growing awareness of the importance of sexual consent, has kissing under the mistletoe run its course?

Not necessarily, said Pamela Zaballa, the chief executive of the [*NO MORE Foundation*](https://nomore.org/), a nonprofit working to end domestic and sexual violence. “It’s a tradition that just needs to be updated with some rules and boundaries,” she wrote in an email.

That includes avoiding hanging mistletoe in work settings. It also means asking someone for consent before kissing them — privately, to avoid peer pressure or embarrassment. “If they seem hesitant at all, or say something like ‘I don’t know,’ consider that to be a ‘no’ and respect their wishes,” Ms. Zaballa added.

But if you get an enthusiastic ‘yes’? Happy smooching!

PHOTO: (PHOTOGRAPH BY LeeAndra Cianci FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** March 14, 2023

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[***Ideas Abound in Edinburgh This Year***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68XJ-1KR1-JBG3-64HD-00000-00&context=1519360)

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MAGALI DOUGADOS

JESS SHURTE) This article appeared in print on page C6.

**Load-Date:** August 12, 2023

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[***Monterey Park transformed the Chinese American experience.***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67CP-8JG1-JBG3-62Y9-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

January 23, 2023 Monday 10:43 EST

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**Section:** US

**Length:** 558 words

**Byline:** David Pierson

**Highlight:** Known as the first suburban Chinatown, the city would spearhead massive demographic changes across Southern California.

**Body**

Known as the first suburban Chinatown, the city would spearhead massive demographic changes across Southern California.

There are few places in the United States that hold greater significance to the Chinese American community than Monterey Park, Calif.

Known as the first suburban Chinatown, the city owes its changes to the late [*Chinese American real estate developer Fred Hsieh*](https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-1999-aug-12-me-65010-story.html), who promoted the community about seven miles east of downtown Los Angeles as the “Chinese Beverly Hills.”

His vision would ignite a demographic transformation starting in the 1970s as Monterey Park and the neighboring city of Alhambra welcomed more and more middle-class ethnic Chinese residents from both home and abroad. In 1983, the city made history by naming its first Chinese American female mayor, Lily Lee Chen.

Ms. Chen opposed xenophobia and led a fight against an English language-only movement in the city, which was driven by residents who were upset about the cultural changes sweeping their community. The tension would last decades, and bids to impose [*“modern Latin lettering”*](https://www.latimes.com/local/lanow/la-me-ln-monterey-park-table-signs-20131205-story.html) on city signage were the source of contentious disputes as recently as 2013.

The resistance had little effect. By the 1990s, Monterey Park had all but replaced Los Angeles’s Chinatown as the metropolitan area’s prime destination for authentic Chinese food. The biggest Asian supermarkets began sprouting up, stocked with the freshest produce and dominated by ethnic Chinese entrepreneurs from Vietnam. Schools in the area also grappled with massive changes to their student bodies as Chinese families demanded greater emphasis on academics, leading to the [*demise of activities such as football programs*](https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-2004-jul-13-me-football13-story.html).

Delegations from China and Taiwan made a point of visiting Monterey Park on trips to Los Angeles. City Council members who had no background in international relations [*received crash courses*](https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-2001-jul-05-me-18933-story.html) in managing the two sides, learning to avoid mentioning the Taiwan Strait and to seat Taiwanese and Chinese delegates equidistant to the mayor at official banquets to assure that neither camp felt disrespected.

Monterey Park’s development mirrored the changes taking place thousands of miles away in Asia. While many of the first ethnic Chinese residents in the city came from Hong Kong and Taiwan, it would [*increasingly take in arrivals from mainland China*](https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-2003-aug-13-me-mainland13-story.html) starting around 2000 as the world’s most populous country experienced historic economic growth.

Trade between the United States and China compelled more wealthy Chinese immigrants to plant roots in the city, but it also made it a destination for undocumented immigrants, who were funneled into jobs in the suburb’s many restaurants, nail salons and massage parlors.

Eventually, Monterey Park would adopt some of the traits of a ***working-class*** urban Chinatown. Employment agencies offering minimum-wage jobs increasingly lined one of its main thoroughfares, Garvey Avenue. The city would also become home to a growing number of illegal boarding houses for undocumented immigrants. By then, many middle and upper middle-class ethnic Chinese had skipped Monterey Park and moved farther east in the San Gabriel Valley to fill homes and mansions in communities such as Arcadia and Walnut.

PHOTO: Monterey Park, Calif., became known as the first suburban Chinatown. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Mark Abramson for The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

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[***Transforming Britain From Brutality to Gentleness; nonfiction***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:655V-D0M1-JBG3-624D-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** BOOKS; review

**Length:** 1581 words

**Byline:** Benjamin Schwarz

**Highlight:** Simon Heffer’s “High Minds” traces the impact of reformers on industrial Britain, and the beginnings of the welfare state.

**Body**

HIGH MINDS

The Victorians and the Birth of Modern Britain

By Simon Heffer

Writing during World War II, George Orwell remarked upon the contrast between the “gentleness” that characterized contemporary English civilization and the “brutality” that had distinguished English life a hundred years earlier. Although Orwell goes unmentioned in “High Minds,” the transformation he apprehended forms the focal point of this baggy but astute political and intellectual history of Britain, mostly England, from the 1830s to 1870.

The journalist and historian [*Simon Heffer*](http://www.georginacapel.com/our-authors/simon-heffer/) begins his chronicle in 1838, the first year of what was almost certainly the most ferocious economic depression in British history (a fact he neither explicitly acknowledges nor sufficiently explores). He describes a society characterized by “widespread inhumanity, primitiveness and barbarism” and afflicted, owing to the shocks of industrialization and urbanization, “by terrible, and destabilizing, social problems.” By 1870, he says, “although poverty, disease, ignorance, squalor and injustice were far from eliminated, they were beaten back more in those 40 or so years than at any previous time in the history of Britain.” His is a story of a civilizing transformation, in which Britain moved ever closer to a humane and decent society.

The transformation that Heffer relates can be disputed; even if accepted, it can be variously interpreted and explained. For instance, some historians disposed to materialist explanations would argue that whatever social and civilizational progress Britain achieved in those years was largely a result of the smoothing out of the inevitable disruptions industrialization created, to changes in economic and political power and therefore in social attitudes, and to the growing and dispersed prosperity that a maturing industrialized economy engendered.

Heffer, in contrast, identifies ideas and sentiment as the driving force of this transformation. Here he is inspired by [*G.*](https://www.britannica.com/biography/G-M-Young) [*M. Young’s*](https://www.britannica.com/biography/G-M-Young) elegant, allusive, impressionistic “Portrait of an Age: Victorian Britain” (which remains the most penetrating book ever written about the Victorians). Intellectuals, politicians and largely upper and upper-middle-class activists, he argues, moved by “a sense of earnest, disinterested moral purpose,” sought “to improve the condition of the whole of society.” This high-minded effort was made manifest in “the measures enlightened government took,” measures that unfolded in a series of landmark parliamentary acts and administrative innovations in the 40-odd years Heffer scrutinizes. These created and enhanced the regulation and oversight of working conditions in industry and mining, while improving child welfare, schools, housing, sanitation and public health. They also extended the franchise to all adult males and enlarged the legal protections and independence of women. Such policies and the frame of mind that generated them, Heffer asserts in celebration, “laid the first foundations of a welfare state.”

Although the responses to industrialization propelled the transformation Heffer recounts, he wisely ignores the hoary debates surrounding that process. His focus isn’t the reality of industrialization, but the ways his high-minded reformers perceived it. In any case, a scholarly consensus has long formed around the issues that concern him. Industrialization both accompanied and created an enormous and unparalleled rise in England’s population and prompted a vast shift from the country to the city, producing an enormous pool of wage workers. In the north, where the new textile industries ballooned, industrialization extruded huge new urban agglomerations in which sanitation and housing conditions produced a demographic calamity. Life expectancy in the 1830s and 1840s in industrialized urban centers plummeted to levels not experienced since the Black Death; average life expectancy for laborers in Liverpool was 15, compared to 55 for the gentry in Bath.

These circumstances provoked interlocking anxieties both political and humanitarian that plagued the high minds Heffer examines. The years between the French Revolution and the Chartist demonstrations of 1848 were perhaps the most protracted period of social turmoil in British history, prompting a pervasive fear of revolution among the upper classes. The ever-expanding new working classes in the foul northern industrial cities seemed abandoned by the nation and its ruling elites, “growing up as best they might,” as Young wrote, “unpoliced, ungoverned and unschooled.” Surveying the squalor and dynamism of Manchester in 1835, Alexis de Tocqueville presciently offered the diagnosis and resolution of the deleterious effects of industrial capitalism: “At every turn human liberty shows its capricious creative force. There is no trace of the slow continuous action of government.” With astonishing rapidity the outlook of Britain’s governing classes would come to align with this view, as they committed themselves to applying, as Prime Minister [*Lord John Russell*](https://www.gov.uk/government/history/past-prime-ministers/lord-john-russell-1st-earl-russell) wrote in 1841, “system, method, science, regularity, and discipline” to the machinery of the state to assess and ameliorate the social problems created by industrial capitalism. This amounted to a revolution in government (albeit, owing to inadequate taxation, a most partial one) and a new philosophy of the state (albeit a most unsystematic one).

In other words, virtually overnight the state had, in pursuit of social improvement and protection, radically expanded its domestic remit. The paternalistic role that the state had arrogated to itself was particularly clear in the plethora of commissions and inspectorates that informed and enforced legislation. These probed with Benthamite exactitude the condition of England — its appalling slums, rampant sewage, inadequate schools, unsafe mines, adulterated food and unclean water — with a zeal in keeping with the contemporary evangelical urge to relentless self-examination of one’s moral state. No revolutionary could indict the British with charges they had not already made against themselves. Indeed, Frederick Engels drew his excoriating [*account of living and working conditions*](https://www.bl.uk/collection-items/the-condition-of-the-working-class-in-england-in-1844-by-friedrich-engels) in Manchester from the reports of Parliamentary commissions investigating those conditions.

Apart from detailing the conditions that motivated this sudden turn toward high-mindedness, Heffer’s history offers little explanation for it. His account would have been enriched by incorporating the Cambridge historian [*Boyd Hilton’s scholarship*](https://global.oup.com/academic/product/the-age-of-atonement-9780198202950?cc=us&amp;lang=en&amp;), which demonstrates that the idea of the state as an instrument of social welfare cut across party and religious lines to unite paternalist High Tories, social interventionist Whigs, Benthamite utilitarians and premillenarian evangelicals. I wish that Heffer had explored how the British state’s decades-long project to defeat Napoleon may have contributed to the notion that it could play a similarly creative role in social policy. I also wish he’d drawn a connection between the high-mindedness he describes and the state’s new role in protecting animal welfare in this period.

Others will object that while Heffer says his book is in part a “social history,” it doesn’t comport with the current sense of that term. In his examination of the interplay of high politics, policy and the opinions of social critics, the poor and the working classes are merely acted upon. But one needn’t be a thoroughgoing Marxist, adhering to the doctrinaire formula that the economic base determines the political and intellectual superstructure, to believe that the ideas and policies of the ruling classes built the framework in which the poor and working classes acted.

On firmer ground are those who might discern that Heffer’s paean to the elite betrays an interpretive lens distorted by a paternalistic conservatism. Clearly, the high-minded tradition that Heffer praises sought to improve and enlighten the emerging ***working class***, not to fundamentally redistribute economic and political power. Even those reforming paternalists most committed as a matter of moral principle to the welfare of the poor recognized that the policies they pursued safeguarded the middle and upper classes. Perhaps from some radical perspectives, all paternalism is merely hypocrisy.

Furthermore, the patrician reformers Heffer praises generally aspired to create and safeguard the conditions in which the ***working class*** could sustain the social value most prized by both the British middle and working classes: “respectability” — an amalgam of industry, thrift, sobriety and a structured family life. Plainly, as countless critics have charged, a ***working class*** that shared these values with the bourgeoisie was hardly the material with which revolutions are made. Perhaps, again, this makes the high-minded guilty of hypocrisy, which, after all, has been the fault most often leveled against the Victorians. But maybe hypocrisy, as Orwell noted, “is a check upon behavior whose value from a social point of view has been underrated.”

Benjamin Schwarz is the former literary and national editor of The Atlantic. HIGH MINDS The Victorians and the Birth of Modern Britain By Simon Heffer Illustrated. 896 pp. Pegasus. $39.95.

PHOTO: Cotton manufacturing in Britain, 1845. (PHOTOGRAPH FROM ANN RONAN PICTURES/PRINT COLLECTOR/GETTY IMAGES)

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1. [*A History of the British Empire at Its Peak*](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/03/30/books/review/david-cannadine-victorious-century.html)
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[***The Fiery Brilliance of Obama's Lost Book Manuscript***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:66K3-KV71-JBG3-626M-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** Section SR; Column 0; Sunday Review Desk; Pg. 4; GUEST ESSAY

**Length:** 3038 words

**Byline:** By Timothy Shenk

**Body**

With Barack Obama's presidency slipping into the not-so-recent past, it's hard to remember the thrill -- or dread -- he once inspired. Even before entering politics, Mr. Obama had a way of telegraphing that he was headed for big things. Back in the early 1990s, journalists interviewing him for the flurry of profiles that appeared following his election as the first Black president of The Harvard Law Review discovered a young man brimming with confidence. ''I really hope to be part of a transformation of this country,'' he told Allison Pugh of The Associated Press, who came away struck by his ''oddly self-conscious sense of destiny.''

Mr. Obama left Harvard with a blueprint for remaking American democracy. Written with Robert Fisher, a friend and former economics professor, the 250-page manuscript had the working title of ''Transformative Politics.''

Life after graduation proved busier than either Mr. Obama or Mr. Fisher anticipated, and they never found time to whip their draft into publishable shape. As Mr. Obama became one of the most scrutinized figures on the planet, many of the manuscript's pages gathered dust in Mr. Fisher's basement. News of the abandoned book came to light only in 2017 after the publication of ''Rising Star,'' the historian David J. Garrow's mammoth biography of Mr. Obama. Buried inside more than 1,000 pages of densely packed text, Mr. Garrow's discovery attracted little attention. When I reached out to Mr. Garrow in the summer of 2019 for help getting a copy of the text, he told me I was the first person to ask.

That's a shame, because reading ''Transformative Politics'' today is a bracing experience.

Speaking with a candor he would soon be unable to afford, Mr. Obama directed his fire across the entire political spectrum. He denounced a broken status quo in which cynical Republicans outmaneuvered feckless Democrats in a racialized culture war, leaving most Americans trapped in a system that gave them no real control over their lives. Although his sympathies were clearly with the left, Mr. Obama chided liberals for making do with a ''rudderless pragmatism,'' and he flayed activists -- with the civil rights establishment as his chief example -- for asking the judiciary to hand out victories they couldn't win at the polls. Progressives talked a good game about democracy, but they didn't really seem to believe in it.

Mr. Obama did. With the right strategy, he argued, Democrats could engineer a political realignment that would begin a new chapter in the country's history.

The story of Mr. Obama's long attempt to turn this vision into a reality says a lot about the former president. But it says even more about why, more than 30 years after Barack Obama set out to transform politics, American democracy has reached a dangerous impasse.

And it might show us how to get out.

To understand what Mr. Obama was trying to accomplish with ''Transformative Politics,'' and why it matters today, you have to start with the problem he was trying to solve. The worldview Mr. Obama brought to Harvard was shaped by his years as a community organizer in Chicago. Driving by shuttered steel mills on his way to ramshackle public housing projects, Mr. Obama came to see deindustrialization and urban decline as two sides of the same broken promise. Chicago was the place where the soaring liberal ambitions of the 1960s -- President Lyndon Johnson's Great Society, Martin Luther King Jr.'s dream -- had crashed into reality, leading to a crisis whose toll was heaviest on poor Blacks. ''Every path to change was well-trodden,'' he wrote in ''Dreams From My Father,'' ''every strategy exhausted.''

Except one. The modern version had its origins in the left wing of the civil rights movement, where it was most forcefully defended by Bayard Rustin. A leading strategist in the struggle for racial equality, he was an openly gay, Black former Communist who had done time in prison as a conscientious objector during World War II -- about as marginalized a figure as you could imagine in midcentury America.

But in the aftermath of Lyndon Johnson's landslide 1964 re-election, Mr. Rustin decided the country was ready for a radical push. According to him, abolishing formal segregation was just the first stage of the battle for civil rights. Securing true equality now demanded a campaign to overhaul the American economy and lift up workers of all races. Change at this scale required overwhelming public backing, and Mr. Rustin saw the elements of a new majority in President Johnson's victory -- an alliance of Blacks, liberals and blue-collar whites that he called the ''March on Washington coalition.''

Mr. Rustin discussed coalition politics with the same passion he brought to crusading against Jim Crow. ''We cannot talk about the democratic road to freedom,'' he said, ''unless we are talking about building a majority movement.'' Republicans and Democrats had been divided along economic lines since the New Deal, when ***working-class*** voters stampeded into the Democratic column. Now Mr. Rustin saw the opportunity to turn the Democratic Party into a vehicle for both racial and economic justice, if activists turned the March on Washington coalition into a durable majority.

Barack Obama was barely out of diapers when Mr. Rustin laid out this sweeping program. As he grew into adulthood, Mr. Obama moved from a teenage bout with nihilism to an undergraduate flirtation with radicalism (''some species of GQ Marxist,'' a classmate said) into a community organizer focused on bringing jobs to the South Side of Chicago. Through it all, he watched as backlash to the cultural upheavals of the '60s and '70s blew Mr. Rustin's coalition to smithereens.

Around the world, left-wing parties lost ground with the ***working class***. The exodus had a distinctly racial cast in the United States, where blue-collar whites fled the Democratic Party in droves. Even as African American politicians started winning elections in substantial numbers for the first time since Reconstruction, Republican victories at the national level placed strict limits on what local officials could achieve.

Mr. Obama saw those limits firsthand. In a 1988 essay written shortly before he left for Harvard, Mr. Obama argued that despite the ''important symbolic effect'' of Black electoral victories, real change had remained out of reach. No single politician could reverse the global economic trends that had devastated urban America, especially when conservatives had a lock on the White House. It would take an enormous redistribution of resources to wrench the nation's inner cities out of their downward spiral, and that would come about only with support from an electoral juggernaut.

Neither community organizing nor small-bore politics could address the problems facing Chicago, Mr. Obama decided. But he was putting together a strategy of his own.

''I had things to learn in law school, things that would help me bring about real change,'' Mr. Obama later wrote. ''I would learn power's currency in all its intricacy and detail.''

The fruits of that education were on display in ''Transformative Politics.'' Written during Mr. Obama's final semester, the manuscript updated Bayard Rustin for the age of Ronald Reagan. Mr. Obama and Mr. Fisher's plan hinged on recruiting blue-collar whites back into a reborn version of the March on Washington coalition. According to Mr. Obama and Mr. Fisher, these votes could be won over with a platform that appealed to both the values and the material interests of working people. That meant shifting away from race-based initiatives toward universal economic policies whose benefits would, in practice, tilt toward African Americans -- in short, ''use class as a proxy for race.''

Mr. Obama and Mr. Fisher didn't pretend that racism had been expunged from American life. ''Precisely because America is a racist society,'' they wrote, ''we cannot realistically expect white America to make special concessions towards blacks over the long haul.'' Demanding that white Americans grapple with four centuries of racial oppression might be a morally respectable position, but it was terrible politics. ''Those blacks who most fervently insist on the pervasiveness of white racism have adopted a strategy that depends on white guilt for its effectiveness,'' they wrote, ridiculing the idea that whites would ''one day wake up, realize the error of their ways, and provide blacks with wholesale reparations in order to expiate white demons.''

Economics were a safer bet. Blue-collar workers of all races, Mr. Obama and Mr. Fisher wrote, ''understood in concrete ways the fact that America's individualist mythology covers up a game that is fixed against them.'' But this pragmatic streak also could also be a trap for reformers hoping to bridge the racial divide. ''If it has been ***working-class*** whites who have been most vociferous in their opposition to affirmative action,'' Mr. Obama and Mr. Fisher wrote, ''this at least in part arises out of an accurate assessment [that] they are the most likely to lose in any redistributionist game.''

Mr. Obama rejected the idea that appealing to Reagan Democrats required giving in to white grievance. Chiding centrists at the Democratic Leadership Council -- headed at the time by Gov. Bill Clinton of Arkansas -- he warned against retreating in the battle for civil rights. Moderates scrambling for the middle ground were just as misguided, he argued, as antiracists implicitly pinning their hopes on a collective racial epiphany. Neither understood that bringing the conversation back to economics was the best way to beat the right. Instead of trimming their ambitions to court affluent suburbanites, Democrats had to embrace ''long-term, structural change, change that might break the zero-sum equation that pits powerless blacks [against] only slightly less powerless whites.''

You might think it's strange to hear Mr. Obama sounding like he'd just come from a meeting of the Democratic Socialists of America. But even though his days as a GQ Marxist were in the past, he brought an appreciation for class politics with deep roots on the left into the next phase of his career.

All the pieces of Mr. Obama's plan fit together: an electoral strategy designed to make Democrats the party of working people; a policy agenda oriented around comprehensive economic reform; and a faith that American democracy could deliver real change. By mixing political calculation with moral vision, Democrats could resurrect the March on Washington coalition and -- finally -- transform politics.

Holding the different elements of this program together was easier on the page than in real life. By the time of Mr. Obama's star-making turn at the 2004 Democratic National Convention, his policy ambitions had narrowed considerably. But he continued to follow key elements of the game plan outlined in ''Transformative Politics.'' When Mr. Obama scolded pundits for slicing America into red states and blue states, it wasn't a dopey celebration of national harmony. It was a strategic attempt to drain the venom out of the culture wars, allowing Democrats to win back ***working-class*** voters who had been polarized into the G.O.P. And it elected him president, twice.

That makes what came next even more important. After the 2012 campaign, analysts (misleadingly) attributed Mr. Obama's victory to a majority powered by young, diverse and highly educated Americans. With Donald Trump on the ascent, moral and political considerations appeared to point away from Bayard Rustin's March on Washington coalition and toward what came to be known as the Obama coalition -- an alliance that doesn't bear much resemblance to the majority that a younger Mr. Obama envisioned but has become the backbone of the Democratic Party.

Today we are living in the world the Obama coalition has made. Yes, Democrats have won the popular vote in each of the past four presidential elections. But thanks to continued losses among blue-collar voters -- including Latinos and a smaller but significant number of African Americans -- the Obama coalition has remained a pipsqueak by historical standards. Under Franklin Roosevelt, the average Democratic margin of victory was 14.9 percentage points. Since 2008, it's been 4.4 percentage points.

The party's record in the midterms has been even shakier. Democrats held unified control of Congress for all of Mr. Roosevelt's presidency. In the Obama era, divided government has been the norm. And no, that's not just because of gerrymandering. House Republicans won the national popular vote three times in the past 12 years -- 2010, 2014 and 2016 -- and there's a good chance they'll do it again this November.

What does all this mean for Democrats? Although politicians and journalists like to say we're confronting unprecedented threats to democracy, the party is facing the same basic problem that has bedeviled Democrats since the breakdown of the New Deal coalition in the 1960s. An electorate divided by culture isn't going to deliver the votes that Democrats need to build a lasting majority.

The crisis of democracy, then, is really a problem of the Democratic coalition. So long as elections keep being decided by wafer-thin margins, the odds of a divergence between the popular vote and the Electoral College will stay high, voters in small rural states will continue to hold the balance of power in the Senate, and Republican election deniers will get new grist for conspiracy theorizing. Even if Democrats manage to take office, they won't have the numbers to push through reforms that might break this electoral stalemate.

In a party where the spectrum of debate runs from Joe Manchin to Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, there's no shortage of suggestions for what to do next. As the left calls for a comprehensive reworking of American society, moderates have made it clear they never again want to hear the words ''Green New Deal,'' let alone ''defund the police.'' Meanwhile, pundits and strategists advocating ''popularism'' have captured attention -- and infuriated Twitter -- by urging Democrats to ignore their activist base so that they can run on issues that poll well, downplay controversial positions and keep their policy ambitions modest.

What's missing from all this is a vision for transcending the divide between the party's rival sects, a plan for both winning elections and securing lasting change -- in short, a program for transforming politics. The shrewder popularists are right to emphasize the dangers of Democrats bleeding support with the ***working class***. But electoral victories will go to waste unless they lead to structural changes that break American politics out of its current doom loop. And even though campaigns to establish a pro-democracy popular front might keep a Trumpified G.O.P. out of power in the near term, a coalition elected to protect the status quo is unlikely to do much more than buy time until the political cycle eventually puts Republicans back in office.

Mr. Obama has navigated carefully around these debates, preferring to cast himself as a peacemaker among feuding Democratic tribes. After spending most of his career warning about the dangers of splitting the parties along cultural lines, he has reinvented himself as one of Blue America's favorite influencers, a curator of best-of lists and a junior media mogul. Bayard Rustin's March on Washington coalition might be slipping out of Democrats' grasp, but Barack and Michelle Obama's production company is bringing a Rustin biopic to Netflix in 2023.

Yet Mr. Rustin's vision -- the same vision that once upon a time drew a young Barack Obama into politics -- remains the best starting point for coming up with a truly democratic solution to the crisis of democracy. Only 27 percent of registered voters identify as liberal. But 62 percent of Americans want to raise taxes on millionaires. An even greater number -- 71 percent -- approve of labor unions. And 83 percent support raising the federal minimum wage.

Rebuilding the March on Washington coalition requires an all-out war against polarization. That larger project begins with a simple message: Democrats exist because the country belongs to all of us, not just the 1 percent. With this guiding principle in mind, everything else becomes easier -- picking fights that focus the media spotlight on a game that's rigged in favor of the rich; calling the bluff of right-wing populists who can't stomach a capital-gains-tax hike; corralling activists in support of the needs of working people; and, ultimately, putting power back in the hands of ordinary Americans.

Reversing electoral trends half a century in the making is the work of decades, not a single election. But recent history is filled with examples of candidates who built winning coalitions by tamping down polarization (like Mr. Obama) or ramping it up (like Mr. Trump). And if you put together enough successful campaigns, then a realignment starts to come into sight.

All of which brings us back to the place where, in 1991, Barack Obama started. It's chastening to reflect that the fate of American democracy turns on whether we can pass a test that the most talented politician of his generation failed. But that's no excuse for giving up today. Because the road to freedom that Bayard Rustin dreamed of still goes through a majority movement -- a coalition rooted in the ***working class***, bound together by shared economic interests and committed to drawing out the best in the American political tradition.

Now seems like a good time to start walking.

Timothy Shenk (@Tim\_Shenk) is a historian and the author, most recently, of the forthcoming ''Realigners: Partisan Hacks, Political Visionaries, and the Struggle to Rule American Democracy.'' He is also a co-editor of Dissent magazine.

Graphics by Gus Wezerek.

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**Graphic**

PHOTOS: From left, Barack Obama as a student at Occidental College in Los Angeles, 1980

on the campus of Harvard, where he was elected the first Black president of the Harvard Law Review, 1990

collecting signatures for a nominating petition in his first run for office, to become an Illinois state senator, 1995

celebrating in Chicago with his wife and daughters after winning the race for the U.S. Senate, 2004

addressing the Democratic National Convention in Charlotte, N.C., where he was nominated for a second term as president, 2012. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY TOM GRAUMAN/CORBIS, VIA GETTY IMAGES

JOE WRINN/HARVARD UNIVERSITY/CORBIS, VIA GETTY IMAGES

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[***How Do Americans Feel About Politics? ‘Disgust Isn’t a Strong Enough Word’***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69BB-1YF1-DXY4-X06C-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** US

**Length:** 1508 words

**Byline:** Jack Healy, J. David Goodman, Jenna Russell and Alan Blinder

**Highlight:** Voters’ broad discontent with disarray in Washington transcends political parties, race, age and geography.

**Body**

Whitney Smith’s phone buzzed with a text from her mother, alerting her to the latest can-you-believe-it mess in Washington: “Far right ousted the House speaker. Total chaos now.”

Ms. Smith, 35, a bookkeeper and registered independent in suburban Phoenix, wanted no part of it. She tries to stay engaged in civic life by voting, volunteering in local campaigns and going to city meetings. But over the past week, the pandemonium of a narrowly averted government shutdown and leadership coup in the Republican-controlled House confirmed many Americans’ most cynical feelings about the federal government.

“It was just like, Oh God, what now?” she said.

Griping about politics is a time-honored American pastime but lately the country’s political mood has plunged to some of the worst levels on record.

After weathering the tumult of the Trump presidency, a pandemic, the Capitol insurrection, inflation, multiple presidential impeachments and far-right Republicans’ pervasive lies about fraud in the 2020 election, voters say they feel tired and angry.

In dozens of recent interviews across the country, voters young and old expressed a broad pessimism about the next presidential election that transcends party lines, and a teetering faith in political institutions.

The White House and Congress have pumped out billions of dollars to fix and improve the nation’s roads, ports, pipelines and internet. They have approved hundreds of billions to combat climate change and lower the cost of prescription drugs. President Biden has canceled billions more in student debt. [*Yet those accomplishments have not fully registered with voters.*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/04/21/us/politics/biden-pandemic-relief-democrats.html)

A small group of hard-right Republicans drove the country to the brink of a government shutdown, then plunged Congress into chaos when they instigated the vote that, with Democratic support, removed Mr. McCarthy. Democrats are betting that voters will blame Republicans for the trouble. Many voters interviewed this week said they viewed the whole episode as evidence of broad dysfunction in Washington, and blamed political leaders for being consumed by workplace drama at the expense of the people they are meant to serve.

“They seem so disconnected from us,” said Kevin Bass, 57, a bank executive who lives in New Home, a rural West Texas town. He serves on the local school board and has two children in public school, and another in college. He describes himself as conservative who voted for former President Donald J. Trump both times. “I don’t really look at either party as benefiting our country,” he said.

Voters said that Washington infighting and the Republicans’ flirtation with debt default and government shutdowns recklessly put people’s paychecks, health care and benefits at risk at a moment when they are preoccupied with how to pay rising health care and grocery bills, or to cope with a fast-warming climate unleashing natural disasters in nearly every corner of the nation.

“Disgust isn’t a strong enough word,” said Bianca Vara, a Democrat and grandmother of five in the Atlanta area who runs a stall at a flea market that crackles with discussions of politics.

She said she wanted leaders in Washington to address gun violence, or maybe just meaningfully crack down on the robocalls she gets. Instead, she watched with dismay as the Republican-controlled House was convulsed with an internecine melee.

“It’s worse than in elementary school,” she said, “Like a playground, like dodge ball: ‘You’re out! You’re not the speaker anymore! Hit him in the head with a red ball!’”

Several people said they purposely tune out political news, focusing instead on details like the price of cream cheese ($6.99), or matters wholly unconnected to politics — the Chicago Bears are 1 and 4, and [*Taylor Swift is showing up at Kansas City Chiefs games.*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/26/arts/taylor-swift-travis-kelce-dating.html)

When Ms. Smith’s mother texted the news of Kevin McCarthy’s ouster as House speaker to the family text message chain, nobody responded. Eventually, Ms. Smith replied with a photo of new shelves she had just put up at home.

“Who’s McCarthy? I don’t even know,” said Rosemary Watson, 38, a registered independent in Mesa, Ariz., a battleground state that has narrowly elected Democrats over Trump-style Republicans in the past two elections. “I’ve purposely made that choice for my own health and well-being.”

Ms. Watson, a member of the Cherokee Nation, voted for Mr. Trump in 2020 and said she did not feel politically moved by actions President Biden has taken to conserve land sacred to Native Americans or to provide billions of dollars in new tribal funding. She said she would support Robert F. Kennedy Jr. in the 2024 presidential race as a jolt to the two-party system.

Cynthia Taylor, 58, a Republican paralegal in the Houston area whose husband works for a rifle manufacturer, was aghast at the ouster of Mr. McCarthy and the latest near-shutdown, calling the brinkmanship a symptom of growing lawlessness in American society.

“We seem to be starting to go down the line of, if I don’t agree with you, I’m going to kick you out,” she said. “Everybody is out for themselves. Everybody is out for their 15 minutes of fame.”

[*A survey that the Pew Research Center*](https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/2023/09/19/americans-dismal-views-of-the-nations-politics/) conducted in July found a country united by a discontent with their political leaders that crosses race, age and partisan divides. Sixty-five percent of Americans polled said they felt exhausted when they thought about politics.

Only 16 percent of American adults said they trusted the federal government, close to the lowest levels in seven decades of polling. Nearly 30 percent of people said they disliked both the Democratic and Republican parties, a record high. Yet in recent years, Americans have turned out to vote in record numbers — [*mostly to re-elect incumbents.*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/11/11/us/politics/midterm-incumbent-results.html)

“I never thought I’d live in times like this,” said Cindy Swasey, a 66-year-old widow in Dover, N.H. Ms. Swasey, who voted twice for President Trump but thinks of herself as an independent, said she used to like Representative Matt Gaetz and the infusion of newer, younger energy he had brought to Congress — before he played a central role in the turmoil this week.

She has recently decided to skip watching future presidential debates.

***Working-class*** and middle-class Americans have seen their wages rise lately, but many say the gains pale in comparison with the rising cost of living. Thousands of union workers, from the automotive industry to health care to Hollywood, have voted with their feet by striking for better contracts.

“Right now, it’s just been about getting back to work — figuring out how to put food on my plate and keep a roof over my head and put gas in my car,” said McKinley Bundick, a writer’s assistant for the CBS program “SEAL Team” who was out of work for five months while the Writers Guild of America was on strike.

Several Democratic voters said their revulsion with the state of American politics was rooted in Mr. Trump’s brand of angry grievance and the election lies that stoked the Jan. 6 rioters. At the same time, several said they were dreading the prospect of another contest between Mr. Trump and Mr. Biden, and would rather fast-forward through the next presidential cycle and find someone — anyone — new.

“This is the best you can give us from both parties? Are you kidding me?” said Joseph Albanese, a 49-year-old technology product specialist in Chicago who voted for Mr. Biden in 2020, but is considering skipping next year’s election altogether.

For people living on an entirely different coast from the Capitol — especially younger voters — Washington’s dysfunction can seem like sensational infighting in a distant world.

“It’s overwhelming, it’s a lot going on,” said Dionna Beamon, 28, who lives in the Watts neighborhood of South Los Angeles. “So really, ignorance is bliss.”

Ms. Beamon, a hair stylist, said she and her friends were more concerned about issues like mental health. Her mother died of a heart attack less than two years ago and she has grappled with how to address her grief.

“I feel like a lot of people are depressed now,” she said. “That’s a huge topic for my age group. The world hasn’t been the same after Covid, and when it started, we were in our early 20s. ”

Vivian Santos-Smith, 21, a senior at Howard University, said her biggest concern was the $10,000 of student debt she would have to start repaying after graduation. President Biden canceled $9 billion in student loan debt this week, but his wider efforts to cancel some $400 billion more were scuttled by the Supreme Court.

She wants to be a political scientist, and one of her first challenges is trying to make sense of this moment.

“It seems as if ‘House of Cards’ is reality now,” she said. “The outlook is just bleak.”

Corina Knoll, Jacey Fortin, Robert Chiarito and Darren Sands contributed reporting.

Corina Knoll, Jacey Fortin, Robert Chiarito and Darren Sands contributed reporting.

PHOTO: WHITNEY SMITH, an independent near Phoenix, on the news of Kevin McCarthy’s ouster as House speaker. (PHOTOGRAPH BY ADRIANA ZEHBRAUSKAS FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A13) This article appeared in print on page A1, A13.

**Load-Date:** October 7, 2023

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[***The Only Question to Ask About These House Republicans; Jamelle Bouie***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69F8-4381-DXY4-X017-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

October 20, 2023 Friday 10:49 EST

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 1802 words

**Byline:** Jamelle Bouie

**Highlight:** How the party of limited government became the party of no government at all.

**Body**

The collapse of the House Republican majority into chaos is the clearest possible evidence that the party is off the rails.

Of course, the Republican Party has been off the rails for a while before now. This was true in 2010, when Tea Party extremists swept through the party’s ranks, defeating more moderate Republicans — and pretty much any other Republican with an interest in the actual work of government — and establishing a beachhead for radical obstructionism. It was true in 2012, when many Republican voters went wild for the likes of Michele Bachmann, Herman Cain and Newt Gingrich in the party’s presidential primary, before settling on the more conventionally presidential Mitt Romney. But even then, Romney reached out to Donald Trump — famous, politically speaking, for his “birther” crusade against President Barack Obama — for his blessing, yet another sign that the Republican Party was not on track.

The truth of the Republican Party’s deep dysfunction was obvious in 2013, when congressional Republicans shut down the government in a quixotic drive to repeal the Affordable Care Act, and it was obvious in 2016, when Republican voters nominated Trump for president. Everything that has followed, from the rise of influencer-extremist politicians like Representative Lauren Boebert to the party’s complicity in insurrectionist violence, has been a steady escalation from one transgression to another.

The Republican Party is so broken that at this point, its congressional wing cannot function. The result is that this period is now the longest the House of Representatives has been in session without a speaker. And as Republican voters gear up to nominate Trump a third time for president, the rest of the party is not far behind. The only question to ask, and answer, is why.

One popular answer is Donald Trump, who in this view, is directly responsible for the downward spiral of dysfunction and deviancy that defines today’s Republican Party. It’s his success as a demagogue and showman that set the stage for the worst of the behavior we’ve seen from elected Republicans.

The problem, as I’ve already noted, is that most of what we identify as Republican dysfunction was already evident in the years before Trump came on the scene as a major figure in conservative politics. Even Trump’s contempt for the legitimacy of his political opponents, to the point of rejecting the outcome of a free and fair election, has clear antecedents in conservative agitation over so-called voter fraud, including efforts to raise barriers to voting for rival constituencies.

Another popular answer is that we’re seeing the fruits of polarization in American political life. And it is true that within both parties, there’s been a marked and meaningful move away from the center and toward each side’s respective flank. But while the Democratic Party is, in many respects, more liberal than it has ever been, it’s also not nearly as ideologically uniform as the Republican Party. Nor does a rigid, doctrinaire liberalism serve as a litmus test among Democratic voters in Democratic Party primaries outside of a small handful of congressional districts.

Joe Biden, for example, is the paradigmatic moderate Democrat and, currently, the president of the United States and leader of the Democratic Party, with ample support across the party establishment. And in Congress, there’s no liberal equivalent to the House Freedom Caucus: no group of nihilistic, obstruction-minded left-wing lawmakers. When Democrats were in the majority, the Congressional Progressive Caucus was a reliable partner of President Biden’s and a constructive force in the making of legislation. If the issue is polarization, then it seems to be driving only one of our two parties toward the abyss.

Helpfully, the extent to which the Democratic Party still operates as a normal American political party can shed light on how and why the Republican Party doesn’t. Take the overall strength of Democratic moderates, who hold the levers of power within the national party. One important reason for this fact is the heterogeneity of the Democratic coalition. To piece together a majority in the Electoral College, or to gain control of the House or Senate, Democrats have to win or make inroads with a cross-section of the American public: young people, affluent suburbanites, Black, Hispanic and Asian American voters, as well as a sizable percentage of the white ***working class***. To lose ground with any one of these groups is to risk defeat, whether it’s in the race for president or an off-year election for governor.

A broad coalition also means a broad set of interests and demands, some of which are in tension with one another. This has at least two major implications for the internal workings of the Democratic Party. First, it makes for a kind of brokerage politics in which the most powerful Democratic politicians are often those who can best appeal to and manage the various groups and interests that make up the Democratic coalition. And second, it gives the Democratic Party a certain amount of self-regulation. Move too far in the direction of one group or one interest, and you may lose support among the others.

If you take the internal dynamics of the Democratic Party and invert them, you get something like those within the Republican Party.

Consider the demographics of the Republican coalition. A majority of voters in both parties are white Americans. But whereas the Democratic Party electorate was 61 percent white in the 2020 presidential election, the Republican one was 86 percent, [*according to the Pew Research Center*](https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/2023/07/12/demographic-profiles-of-republican-and-democratic-voters/). Similarly, there is much less religious diversity among Republicans — more than a third of Republican voters in 2020 were white evangelical Protestants — than there is among Democrats. And while we tend to think of Democrats as entirely urban and suburban, the proportion of rural voters in the Democratic Party as a whole is actually greater than the proportion of urban voters in the Republican Party. There is, in other words, less geographic diversity among Republicans as well.

Most important, [*whereas nearly half of Democrats*](https://news.gallup.com/poll/388988/political-ideology-steady-conservatives-moderates-tie.aspx) identify themselves as either “moderate” or “conservative” — compared with the half who call themselves “liberal” — nearly three-quarters of Republicans identify themselves as “conservative,” with just a handful of self-proclaimed moderates and a smattering of liberals, [*according to Gallup*](https://news.gallup.com/poll/388988/political-ideology-steady-conservatives-moderates-tie.aspx). This wasn’t always true. In 1994 around 33 percent of Republicans called themselves “moderate,” and 58 percent said they were “conservative.” There were even, at 8 percent, a few Republican liberals. Now the Republican Party is almost uniformly conservative. Moderate Democrats can still win national office or hold national leadership. Moderate Republicans cannot. Outside of a handful of environments, found in largely Democratic states like Maryland and Massachusetts, moderate Republican politicians are virtually extinct.

But more than the number of conservatives, it is the character of its conservatism that dominates the Republican Party. It is, thanks to a set of social and political transformations dating back to the 1960s, a highly ideological and at times reactionary conservatism, with little tolerance for disagreement or dissent. The Democratic Party is a broad coalition geared toward a set of policies — aimed at either regulating or tempering the capitalist economy or promoting the inclusion of various groups in national life. The Republican Party exists almost entirely for the promotion of a distinct and doctrinaire ideology of hierarchy and antigovernment retrenchment.

There have always been ideological movements within American political parties. The Republican Party was formed, in part, by adherents to one of the most important ideological movements of the 19th century — antislavery. But, as the historian Geoffrey Kabaservice has observed, “The conversion of one of America’s two major parties into an ideological vehicle” is a “phenomenon without precedent in American history.”

It is the absence of any other aim but the promotion of conservative ideology — by any means necessary, up to and including the destruction of democratic institutions and the imposition of minority rule — that makes this particular permutation of the Republican Party unique. It helps explain, in turn, the dysfunction of the past decade. If the goal is to promote conservative ideology, then what matters for Republican politicians is how well they adhere to and promote conservatism. The key issue for conservative voters and conservative media isn’t whether a Republican politician can pass legislation or manage a government or bridge political divides; the key question is whether a Republican politician is sufficiently committed to the ideology, whatever that means in the moment. And if conservatism means aggrieving your enemies, then the obvious choice for the nation’s highest office is the man who hates the most, regardless of what he believes.

The demographic homogeneity of the Republican Party means that there isn’t much internal pushback to this ideological crusade — nothing to temper the instincts of politicians who would rather shut down the government than accept that a majority of Congress passed a law over their objections, or who would threaten the global economy to get spending cuts they could never win at the ballot box.

Worse, because the institutions of American democracy give a significant advantage to the current Republican coalition, there’s also no external force pushing Republican politicians away from their most rigid extremes. Just the opposite: There is a whole infrastructure of ideologically motivated money and media that works to push Republican voters and politicians farther to the right.

It is not simply that the Republican Party has politicians like Jim Jordan and Matt Gaetz and Marjorie Taylor Greene. It’s that the Republican Party is practically engineered to produce politicians like Jim Jordan and Matt Gaetz and Marjorie Taylor Greene. And there’s no brake — no emergency off switch — that might slow or stop the car. The one thing that might get the Republican Party back on the rails is a major and unanticipated shift in the structure of American politics that forces it to adapt to new voters, new constituencies and new conditions.

It’s hard to imagine what that might be. It can’t come soon enough.

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PHOTO (PHOTOGRAPH BY MARK PETERSON/REDUX, FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page SR3.

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[***Wrestling With Identity at the Edinburgh Festival; Critic’s Notebook***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68XB-XYM1-JBG3-63H7-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

August 11, 2023 Friday 05:07 EST

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**Section:** THEATER

**Length:** 1230 words

**Byline:** Houman Barekat

**Highlight:** In plays from Scotland, Korea and Switzerland, theater companies explored questions of belonging, with varying degrees of success.

**Body**

In plays from Scotland, Korea and Switzerland, theater companies explored questions of belonging, with varying degrees of success.

Questions of nationhood, identity and belonging loom large in three politically themed productions at this year’s Edinburgh International Festival. [*The tagline for this year’s edition is “community over chaos*](https://www.eif.co.uk/profile/community-over-chaos),” and there was plenty of both in “Thrown,” a National Theater of Scotland production [*running at the Traverse Theater through Aug. 27*](https://www.eif.co.uk/events/thrown).

Written by Nat McCleary and directed by Johnny McKnight, it’s a sentimental comedy about five women from Glasgow who travel to the Scottish countryside to compete in a backhold wrestling tournament. In this folk sport, indigenous to Scotland, competitors are initially locked into a clamp-like hug, before trying to wrestle each other to the ground. It dates back more than a thousand years, and the escapade is a kind of pilgrimage for the characters as they seek to connect with their national heritage. Along the way they playfully dissect what it means to be Scottish, reeling off some serviceable — if not terribly original — gags about haggis, kilts and “Braveheart.”

Personality clashes emerge. Jo (Adiza Shardow), who is mixed race, and Chantelle (Chloe-Ann Taylor), who is white, are both ***working class*** and have been best pals since their school days, whereas Imogen (Efé Agwele), who is Black, was expensively educated and is new on the scene. When Imogen encourages Jo to take a greater interest in racial politics, this puts a strain on Jo and Chantelle’s friendship. Chantelle resents Imogen for boiling everything down to race and vents her frustration at being seen as privileged, simply because she is white. Imogen, in turn, points out that her affluent upbringing has not protected her from racism. They are both right, of course, and their circular squabbling brings home the absurdity of pitting different types of oppression against each other.

Lesley Hart is boisterously engaging as the group’s intense coach, Pam, but the star of the show is Maureen Carr, who plays Helen, the most unlikely of the five wrestlers. Diminutive in stature and older than the rest of the gang, she is a fish out of water who Carr plays with winning geniality. Helen provides moral support to Pam when she reveals her struggles with her gender identity and delivers the play’s defining monologue: a positive message of unity through celebrating difference.

Pam explains that the play’s title denotes the feeling helplessness in the split second when you realize you’re about to lose a wrestling match. The sport is a metaphor for personal struggle, and the team, of course, is a metaphor for the Scottish nation. It’s heartwarming stuff, but heavy-handedly allegorical.

“Dusk,” a show that the Brazilian theater maker Christiane Jatahy developed with the Swiss company Comédie de Genève, is more intellectually ambitious, but similarly flawed. Its protagonist, a young undocumented migrant called Graça (Julia Bernat), takes a job with a French-speaking theater troupe that is working on a stage adaptation of the Lars Von Trier movie “[*Dogville*](https://www.nytimes.com/2004/03/21/movies/dogville-it-fakes-a-village.html).”

Graça claims to have fled Brazil as a political refugee, and the troupe’s members believe they are doing a good turn by hiring her, but relations sour when troubling stories emerge about her history. The women in the group become nasty as they suspect Graça has designs on their partners, and one male colleague, a naturalized citizen, takes against her because she reminds him of his own past experience as a hated outsider. The dynamic tips into exploitation and abuse, both psychological and sexual.

Jatahy is known for work that blends the conventions of theater and cinema. Here, the onstage action is recorded by a camcorder synced up to a large screen displaying close-up footage in real time. This is occasionally interspersed with prerecorded footage that differs jarringly from what’s happening on the stage. The intention is to discombobulate the audience, and it does. The trouble, however, is that the big screen ultimately overshadows the actors’ in-the-flesh presence, as the eye is continually drawn upward. One might as well be at the movies.

Running [*at the Royal Lyceum Theater through Aug. 27*](https://www.eif.co.uk/events/dusk), “Dusk” is a provocative and pointedly bleak allegory of liberal hypocrisy. The central concept is strong, but the play is let down by overkill, especially in not one, but two, graphic depictions of sexual violence. When, after the second, the fictional troupe’s director (played by Matthieu Sampeur) earnestly agonizes over the ethics of storytelling, we detect a none-too-subtle attempt to pre-empt criticisms that “Dusk” trades too heavily on shock value. (Reader, it does.)

The final 30 minutes of this 90-minute production are spent laboring the message of the first hour, culminating in a catastrophically unnecessary audience-facing lecture from Graça on xenophobia, gendered violence and the rise of the far right. The applause at the end of the show was damningly restrained.

A refreshing antidote to that production’s audiovisual clutter came in an exquisite production of Euripides’ “Trojan Women,” by the National Changgeuk Company of Korea. (The [*final performance of its three-show run is Aug. 11*](https://www.eif.co.uk/events/trojan-women).) Set in the immediate aftermath of the decade-long Trojan War, it portrays the women of Troy as they await their imminent subjugation by the Greeks, who, having killed the Trojan menfolk, intend to take the women as wives or slaves.

The director, Ong Keng Sen, and the playwright, Bae Sam-sik, have done a fine job of reimagining this tale, which is mostly told [*through the medium of Pansori*](https://ich.unesco.org/en/RL/pansori-epic-chant-00070), a Korean genre of musical storytelling in which singing is accompanied by drumming. The propulsive pounding of the drum lends the songs a certain martial quality, which combines with the mournful tones of a zither and the singers’ plaintive laments to produce a powerful blend of sorrow and defiance. Kim Kum-mi delivers a vocal performance of remarkable intensity as the Trojan queen Hecuba, and Yi So-yeon is arresting as the fey clairvoyant Cassandra.

The splendid set, by Cho Myung-hee is all the more imposing for its elegant simplicity. The Trojan women emerge, clad in white, from a strange, otherworldly tunnel flanked by two golden staircases; at various points, the structure is brought to life with elaborate lighting effects to evoke fire and sea.

Euripides’s play dates from 415 B.C., but its enduring resonance is all too obvious as we look around the world today and reflect, for example, on the anniversary of the [*genocide by ISIS of the Yazidi people of Syria and Iraq*](https://www.nytimes.com/2016/06/17/world/middleeast/isis-genocide-yazidi-un.html) — and the subsequent [*sexual enslavement of hundreds of Yazidi women*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/03/12/world/middleeast/yazidi-isis-slaves-children.html) — which [*began nine years ago this month*](https://www.nytimes.com/2014/08/11/world/middleeast/scrambling-down-an-iraqi-mountain-yazidi-families-search-for-missing.html); or the mounting evidence of [*sexual violence by Russian soldiers in Ukraine*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/06/29/world/europe/ukraine-russia-rape.html).

Hecuba’s howl of anguish — “Destiny is drunk, the gods are blind!” — is a lament for the ages, a visceral and succinct protest against the abject cruelty of war.

Edinburgh International Festival

Through Aug. 28 at various venues in Edinburgh; [*eif.co.uk*](https://www.eif.co.uk/).

PHOTOS: Top, Maureen Carr, standing, in “Thrown,” written by Nat McCleary and directed by Johnny McKnight. Left, “Dusk,” directed by Christiane Jatahy. Bottom, the National Changgeuk Company of Korea’s production of “Trojan Women.” (PHOTOGRAPHS BY JULIE HOWDEN; MAGALI DOUGADOS; JESS SHURTE) This article appeared in print on page C6.

**Load-Date:** August 14, 2023

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[***'We Are Sleepwalking to Climate Catastrophe'***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:652V-G4T1-DXY4-X0HY-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

March 25, 2022 Friday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; Editorial Desk; Pg. 20; LETTERS

**Length:** 961 words

**Body**

To the Editor:

Re ''Warning of a 'Catastrophe' With the Use of Fossil Fuels'' (news article, March 22):

Since the climate crisis is a global problem, the U.N. secretary general, António Guterres, is uniquely positioned to understand the big picture. From his perspective ''we are sleepwalking to climate catastrophe.''

Despite dire warnings from scientists, we continue our addiction to these life-destroying fuels. Nations are reneging on promises to reduce emissions. Russia's war on Ukraine exposes the grave geopolitical consequences of dependence on fossil fuels that are largely controlled by authoritarian governments.

Fossil fuel interests and their political allies are pushing for ''all of the above'' energy strategies rather than using this crisis to double down on a rapid transition to clean energy.

Mr. Guterres's call to phase out coal, end fossil fuel subsidies and halt further exploration are good first steps, but economists agree that the best way to speed the transition is to make the polluting industry pay an increasing fee on their carbon pollution.

The obvious way to achieve energy independence is through renewable energy, since no nation owns the sun or the wind. The technology is available; only political will is needed.

Caroline Kerr TaylorMontecito, Calif.

To the Editor:

The decades-old climate story has evolved. It was called ''global warming'' at first, followed by ''climate change.'' More recently, ''the climate crisis'' described our situation. But the U.N. secretary general, António Guterres, is spot on with the term ''climate catastrophe''!

With so many people, talk of our disrupted climate is met with a sigh or a shrug. Another large group of people are climate deniers whose misinformation is often broadcast loudly. Climate activists who wisely speak of renewables and sustainability are often viewed as odd.

We need a multilevel transformation. Many people desperately need an attitude adjustment, and the environment is screaming for a dramatic shift away from fossil fuels. We need to realign agricultural practices and plant millions of native trees.

With the glow of Glasgow starting to wane, we need to listen to the U.N. leader's startling message.

Sally CourtrightFairfax, Va.The writer is a retired science teacher.

Religion, Social Class and Achievement in College

To the Editor:

I write to highlight the importance of ''For ***Working-Class*** Boys, Religion May Be the Key to College Success,'' by Ilana M. Horwitz (Opinion guest essay, March 16).

Among my crowd of San Francisco progressives, religion is considered seriously down-market, with religious belief belittled. Perhaps this essay will help elites understand that for non-college-educated people of all races, churches often provide the kind of hopefulness, future orientation, impulse control and social safety net that college-educated elites get from their career potential, their therapists and their bank accounts.

Social class is expressed through cultural differences; elites' failure to understand this enables the far right to sculpt the resulting class anger into economic populism.

Joan C. WilliamsSan FranciscoThe writer, a professor at the University of California Hastings College of the Law, is the author of ''White ***Working Class***: Overcoming Class Cluelessness in America.''

To the Editor:

While Ilana M. Horwitz points to religion as a key factor contributing to higher rates of college completion for ***working-class*** males, the research she cites suggests a broader takeaway. It's that young people, especially those who lack access to the social ties and support systems available to their more affluent counterparts, need to feel a sense of belonging to thrive.

Indeed, my work with young people over the past 35 years has demonstrated just how vital it is to student success to create school environments where everyone feels supported, cared for and connected to one another.

Religion may well be a valuable source of fostering connection, but I've seen time and time again that there is much that schools can do to build and maintain the kind of supportive communities that help young people realize that earning a college degree, along with other life aspirations, is within their reach.

Richard StopolNew YorkThe writer is president emeritus and senior adviser, NYC Outward Bound Schools.

Shame on the N.F.L.

To the Editor:

Re ''For $230 Million, Browns Get Watson and Their Image Pays a Price,'' by Kurt Streeter (Sports of The Times column, March 21):

It speaks volumes about the N.F.L.'s values that at least four teams were desperate to sign Deshaun Watson, a man accused by 22 women of sexual assault or other sexual misconduct and the Browns rewarded him with the largest guaranteed contract in N.F.L. history, but no team has been willing to consider signing Colin Kaepernick, a quarterback who led his team to the Super Bowl, for the apparently egregious crime of peacefully protesting the undeniable inequities in the criminal justice system.

Shame on the Browns and the N.F.L.

Matthew E. FishbeinBrooklynThe writer is a former chief assistant U.S. attorney in the Southern District of New York and the Eastern District of New York.

'I Am 77 and Appropriately Wrinkled. I Am Supposed to Look Old.'

To the Editor:

Re ''Q: Will Botox injections in my 20s or 30s mean smoother skin and fewer wrinkles down the line?'' (Ask Well, Science Times, March 22):

Let me get this right: Some young women are willing to spend thousands of dollars to maybe prevent skin wrinkles when they're older, while muting their facial expressions now. Does anyone else think this is crazy?

I am 77 and appropriately wrinkled. I am supposed to look old.

Barbara GoldPhiladelphiaThe writer is a pediatrician.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2022/03/24/opinion/letters/climate-catastrophe.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/03/24/opinion/letters/climate-catastrophe.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: António Guterres, the U.N. secretary general, at the organization's headquarters in New York City this month. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Andrew Kelly/Reuters FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** March 25, 2022

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[***Jim Jordan Doesn’t Know What Courage Is; David French***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69F4-2VC1-JBG3-60XC-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

October 19, 2023 Thursday 18:01 EST

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**Section:** OPINION; columnists

**Length:** 1664 words

**Byline:** David French

**Highlight:** And neither do the rest of the MAGA Republicans.

**Body**

It’s hard to overstate the extent to which our nation’s absurd Jim Jordan moment encapsulates the deep dysfunction of the political right in the United States.

There’s of course all the chaos and incompetence of the Trumpist Republican Party, on display for the world to see. An extremist faction of the House deposed their own party’s speaker of the House without a successor, and now — in the midst of multiplying international crises — the House is rudderless. In fact, it’s worse than rudderless. As I write this newsletter it’s in a state of utter confusion.

But there’s also a deeper reality at play here, one that goes well beyond simple incompetence. The Republican base admires Jordan because it thinks he is tough. It perceives him as a man of courage and strength. He is not. Instead, he is a symbol of the way in which Trumpist Republicans have corrupted the concept of courage itself.

To understand what courage is supposed to be, I turn to a definition from C.S. Lewis: “Courage is not simply one of the virtues but the form of every virtue at the testing point, which means, at the point of highest reality.” It’s a beautiful formulation, one that encompasses both the moral and physical realms and declares that courage is inseparable from virtue.

Lewis’s definition presents us with the sobering realization that we don’t truly know if we possess a virtue unless and until it is tested. We can believe we’re honest, but we won’t know we’re truly honest unless we have the courage to tell the truth when the truth will cost us something we value. We can believe we’re brave, but we don’t know if we are until we show it when we face a genuine physical risk.

When I meet a virtuous person, I also know that I’m meeting a person of real courage. A lifetime of virtue is impossible absent courage. Conversely, when I see a person consumed with vice, I also know that I’m likely in the presence of a coward, a person whose commitments to virtue could not survive the tests of life.

Now contrast the Lewis vision of courage with the courage or toughness lionized on the MAGA right. From the beginning of the Trump era, the entire concept of courage was divorced from virtue and completely fused with two terrible vices: groveling subservience and overt aggression.

The subservience, of course, is to the demands of Donald Trump, the right-wing media or the angry Republican base. The command is clear: Do what we say. Hate who we hate. But how can anyone think that such obedience equals courage? Because in this upside-down world, aggression is equated with toughness and bullying is exalted as bravery.

Few politicians personify this distortion of courage into cowardice better than Jim Jordan, and it is a sign of the decline of the Republican Party that he was even considered for the speaker’s chair, much less a few votes away from becoming the most powerful Republican elected official in the nation, second in line to the presidency.

Is there anything that qualifies him for the position other than his subservience and aggression? His legislative record is extraordinarily thin. As Aaron Blake [*meticulously documented*](https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2023/10/16/jim-jordan-speaker-legislation-effectiveness/) in The Washington Post, during Jordan’s 16 years in Congress, he hasn’t passed a single bill of his own. According to the Center for Effective Lawmaking, he’s consistently one of the least effective members of the entire Republican Party.

What is Jim Jordan good at, exactly? He’s a Donald Trump apologist, a performative pugilist and a Fox News fixture. The liberal watchdog group Media Matters for America [*collected data*](https://www.mediamatters.org/fox-news/jim-jordan-house-speaker-sean-hannity-has-been-waiting#main-content) showing that as of this month, Jordan had been on Fox 565 times since August 2017, including 268 appearances in weekday prime time. In a party that now prizes performance over policy, each of these Fox appearances builds his résumé far more than legislation ever could.

But for sheer subservient aggression, nothing matches his enthusiastic participation in Trump’s effort to steal the 2020 election. The final [*report*](https://www.jan-6.com/_files/ugd/acac13_ffa28ed6c2694272a265860e447122c7.pdf?gclid=Cj0KCQjwhL6pBhDjARIsAGx8D5-OwCBRX5m1ia-lGHLgdGFUpXjKciCy_2y9F6XQj5CB_LaicoMbyvUaAjF1EALw_wcB) of the House Select Committee to Investigate the January 6th Attack on the United States Capitol calls him a “significant player” in Trump’s scheme.

As the committee records, “On Jan. 2, 2021, Representative Jordan led a conference call in which he, President Trump and other members of Congress discussed strategies for delaying the Jan. 6 joint session.” On Jan. 5, “Jordan texted Mark Meadows, passing along advice that Vice President Pence should ‘call out all the electoral votes that he believes are unconstitutional as no electoral votes at all.’” He spoke to Trump at least twice on Jan. 6 itself and [*voted against*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2021/01/07/us/elections/electoral-college-biden-objectors.html) certifying the election results, even after the Trump mob stormed the Capitol. In 2022 he [*defied a select committee subpoena*](https://www.cleveland.com/open/2022/06/ohios-jim-jordan-defied-the-jan-6-committees-subpoenas-but-will-his-name-ever-surface-in-its-hearings.html).

Never forget that this reckless aggression was all in service of some of the most absurd conspiracy theories and legal arguments in modern American political history. All the Republicans who voted against certifying the presidential election were the very definition of cowards. When the virtue of integrity reached its testing point, they collapsed. But bizarrely enough, they often collapsed with a swagger, casting themselves as tough even as they capitulated to the demands of a corrupt president and a frenzied mob.

That MAGA aggression has spilled over to the speaker fight itself. [*As The Times reported on Saturday*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/14/us/house-speaker-republicans-jordan.html?smid=threads-nytimes), “lawmakers and activists” close to Jordan “have taken to social media and the airwaves to blast the Republicans they believe are blocking his path to victory and encourage voters to browbeat them into supporting Mr. Jordan.”

The pressure campaign includes Sean Hannity, a Fox prime-time host and wannabe Republican kingmaker. Representatives from his show [*sent messages*](https://www.yahoo.com/entertainment/sean-hannity-defends-email-pressuring-114719882.html?guccounter=1&amp;guce_referrer=aHR0cHM6Ly93d3cuZ29vZ2xlLmNvbS8&amp;guce_referrer_sig=AQAAALyXEo6nP_0NJNNeWRIyKdoVYBU-GlSu54PZK3WRi0ap4-AJQ4ONCmEbb5vatj5gLri39rJ-TznQhIsRgxdouXDzPfn85HWXCDjGbMCIj0JXqHexsKxGP4Sy4A4u9MiB5LOgEo_iRaB2eN6GYT58wAN5hW7MZPFPh3vFR53-pkQd) to Republican holdouts transparently designed to pressure them into voting for Jordan. Politico’s Olivia Beavers reported that the pressure campaign even reached the wife of Representative Don Bacon of Nebraska. She received [*personal text messages*](https://thehill.com/homenews/house/4263812-bacons-wife-anonymous-texts-calls-speaker-vote/amp/) threatening Bacon’s career, including a message that said: “Your husband will not hold any political office ever again. What a disappointment and failure he is.”

On Wednesday afternoon, the pressure campaign began to reach its inevitable conclusion: death threats. Steve Womack of Arkansas [*told The Washington Post*](https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2023/10/18/jim-jordan-maga-intimidation-threats/) that his staff has been “cussed out” and “threatened.” Mariannette Miller-Meeks of Iowa [*issued a statement*](https://x.com/RepMMM/status/1714771568952226006?s=20) claiming that she’d received “credible death threats and a barrage of threatening calls” after she voted against Jordan.

Roughly 30 minutes after Miller-Meeks’s statement, Jordan [*finally condemned*](https://twitter.com/jim_jordan/status/1714779942523699416?s=46&amp;t=Mxyy7KGJ2dzH3-zfFWxD9g) threats against his colleagues. By then, however, it was too late to repair the damage. Eight years into the MAGA era, Republicans should know exactly what happens when they launch a public pressure campaign. Threats follow MAGA pressure like night follows day.

I’ve written a series of newsletters on the culture of MAGA America, including how it combines [*rage and joy*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/07/06/opinion/maga-america-trump.html) to build community, how it [*exploits civic ignorance*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/31/opinion/ramaswamy-political-ignorance.html) to denigrate its opponents, how its [*corruption is contagious*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/07/opinion/columnists/paxton-gop-corrupt.html) and how it fosters and feeds a [*dark caricature of* ***working-class*** *values*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/05/opinion/trump-white-working-class-maga.html) that warps its populist base. Even so, few elements of right-wing political culture are more toxic than the way it turns vice into virtue and derides the very idea of character in politics.

But all is not lost. Just as key conservative jurists joined with their liberal counterparts to reject Trump’s absurd election challenges, key Republican leaders refused to bend the knee to the mob on Jan. 6. And it was conservative lawyers who blew the whistle on Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton’s corruption. A [*remnant of courageous Republicans*](https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2023/10/18/jim-jordan-maga-intimidation-threats/) stood against Jim Jordan’s campaign for speaker of the House and twice rejected his bid.

They did more than reject Jordan. They directly rejected the MAGA bullies Jordan unleashed. [*As Aaron Blake reported*](https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2023/10/18/jim-jordan-maga-intimidation-threats/), several Republican members of Congress have directly condemned the tactics of the MAGA right. Representatives Steve Womack of Arkansas, Kay Granger of Texas, Jen Kiggans of Virginia, Carlos Giménez of Florida and Miller-Meeks have all denounced the pressure campaign. And John Rutherford of Florida blamed Jordan directly for the threats and acts of intimidation. [*He told The Washington Post’s Jaqueline Alemany*](https://x.com/JaxAlemany/status/1714696543779819636?s=20) that Jordan’s “absolutely responsible for it” and that “nobody likes to have their arm twisted.”

Their courage wasn’t wasted. On Thursday morning, The Times reported that Jordan [*wouldn’t immediately seek a third floor vote*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/19/us/politics/house-speaker-jim-jordan.html). Instead, he would “endorse a plan to empower Representative Patrick T. McHenry of North Carolina” to act as a temporary speaker until Jan. 3. At the same time, however, Jordan wasn’t exactly standing down. Under his plan, he’d continue to act as “[*speaker designee*](https://twitter.com/lacaldwelldc/status/1715019664202293606?s=61&amp;t=tqQLd1_3tU7DklNcqocGjw),” which would permit him to continue whipping votes for his speaker bid, a preposterous idea that would undermine the temporary speaker every day that Jordan worked to sit in his chair.

Maybe Jordan realized it was preposterous, too. By the afternoon, he was back to offering himself for a third House vote on the speakership.

I’m grateful for the stand of a few stalwart Republicans. But their small number is one reason I remain profoundly concerned. We’ve watched pressure campaigns work on the right for eight long years, until the people who continue to resist dwindled to an ever-smaller minority — a minority strong enough to help block the worst excesses of the MAGA G.O.P. but far too weak to cleanse the Republican Party of its profound moral rot.

The battle over the next speaker is yet another proxy fight for the soul of the American right, and the fact that a man like Jim Jordan has come so close to such extraordinary power is proof that the rot runs deep. Only a very small minority of elected Republicans have passed the test. Signs of courage remain, but as long as men like Jim Jordan and Donald Trump run the G.O.P., the bullies still reign.

PHOTO: (PHOTOGRAPH BY George Douglas FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** October 19, 2023

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[***U.A.W. Strike Places Labor At Crossroads***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:696M-NDB1-DXY4-X02Y-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

September 19, 2023 Tuesday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; National Desk; Pg. 1; NEWS ANALYSIS

**Length:** 1421 words

**Byline:** By Noam Scheiber

**Body**

Experts on unions and the industry said the U.A.W. strike could accelerate a wave of worker actions, or stifle labor's recent momentum

Since the start of the pandemic, labor unions have enjoyed something of a renaissance. They have made inroads into previously nonunion companies like Starbucks and Amazon, and won unusually strong contracts for hundreds of thousands of workers. Last year, public approval for unions reached its highest level since the Lyndon Johnson presidency.

What unions haven't had during that stretch is a true gut-check moment on a national scale. Strikes by railroad workers and UPS employees, which had the potential to rattle the U.S. economy, were averted at the last minute. The fallout from the continuing writers' and actors' strikes has been heavily concentrated in Southern California.

The strike by the United Automobile Workers, whose members walked off the job at three plants on Friday, is shaping up to be such a test. A contract with substantial wage increases and other concessions from the three automakers could announce organized labor as an economic force to be reckoned with and accelerate a recent wave of organizing.

But there are also real pitfalls. A prolonged strike could undermine the three established U.S. automakers -- General Motors, Ford and Stellantis, which owns Chrysler, Jeep and Ram -- and send the politically crucial Midwest into recession. If the union is seen as overreaching, or if it settles for a weak deal after a costly stoppage, public support could sour.

''Right now, unions are cool,'' said Michael Lotito, a lawyer at Littler Mendelson, a firm representing management.

''But unions have a risk of not being very cool if you have five-month strike in L.A and an X-month strike in how many other states,'' he added.

If the stakes seem high for the U.A.W., that's partly because the union's new president, Shawn Fain, has gone out of his way to elevate them. During frequent video meetings with members before the strike, Mr. Fain has portrayed the negotiations as a broader struggle pitting ordinary workers against corporate titans.

''I know that we're on the right side in this battle,'' he said in a recent video appearance. ''It's a battle of the ***working class*** against the rich, the haves versus the have-nots, the billionaire class against everybody else.''

Mr. Fain's framing of the contract campaign in class terms appears to be resonating with his members, thousands of whom have watched the online sessions.

Shunte Sanders-Beasley, a U.A.W. member in Michigan who started working at a Chrysler plant in Indiana in 1999, said she saw the fight similarly.

''If you follow history, autoworkers tend to set the tone,'' said Ms. Sanders-Beasley, who has served as vice president of her local and backed Mr. Fain's campaign for the union's presidency last year. ''If we can win back some of the concessions we took, I'm hoping that it'll be a trickle-down effect.''

A successful autoworker strike in 1937, which led G.M. to recognize the U.A.W. for the first time, helped set in motion a wave of union organizing across a variety of industries like steel, oil, textiles and newspapers over the next few years.

Labor activists agreed that the current strike could also reverberate across other industries, where workers appear to be paying close attention to the labor actions of the past year. ''In organizing meetings, they say, 'If they can do it, we can do it,''' said Jaz Brisack, an organizer with Workers United who had played a key role in the Starbucks campaign.

But the flip side is that the strike could inflict collateral damage that creates frustration and hardship among tens of thousands of nonunion workers and their communities.

''The small and medium-sized manufacturers across the country that make up the automotive sector's integrated supply chain will feel the brunt of this work stoppage, whether they are a union shop or not,'' Jay Timmons, the chief executive of the National Association of Manufacturers, said in a statement Friday.

Higher wages and gains for rank-and-file workers can be good for the economy. But some argue that Mr. Fain's and other labor leaders' aggressive demands could discourage businesses from investing in the United States or render them uncompetitive with foreign rivals.

''Mr. Fain has to think about this, too -- the long-term financial viability of these three companies,'' said John Drake, vice president of transportation, infrastructure and supply chain policy at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.

Even those who welcome the union's aggressive stance say it is fraught with risk. Gene Bruskin, a longtime union official who helped workers at a Smithfield meat-processing plant in North Carolina achieve, in 2008, one of the biggest organizing victories in decades, said a long strike could disillusion workers if the union came up short on key demands.

''If the U.A.W. fails to make any significant gains, particularly on the two-tier stuff, their future could be seriously harmed,'' said Mr. Bruskin, referring to a system in which newer workers are paid far less than veteran workers who perform similar jobs.

Mr. Bruskin also worried that the union could effectively win the battle and lose the war if the auto companies respond by shifting more production to Mexico, where they already have a significant presence.

The tens of billions of dollars in federal subsidies for domestic production of electric vehicles that President Biden has helped secure should limit that shift and help keep manufacturing jobs at home. Many automakers are already locating new plants in the United States to take advantage of the funds.

Still, Willy Shih, an expert on manufacturing at Harvard Business School, said the automakers could adjust their operations in ways that undercut the U.A.W. while continuing to produce cars domestically. Automation is one option, he said, as is locating new plants in lightly unionized Southern states.

The Detroit automakers have created joint ventures with foreign battery makers outside the reach of the U.A.W.'s national contracts and have sought to locate some of those plants in states like Tennessee and Kentucky. The union is seeking to bring workers at those plants up to the same pay and labor standards that direct employees of the Big Three enjoy, but it has not succeeded so far.

Given those threats, the union may feel justified in taking a more ambitious posture toward the automakers. The primary check on shifting work to other states will be the U.A.W.'s ability to organize new plants, especially in the South, where it has struggled to gain traction for years. Experts argued that the union would likely increase its chances of attracting members there if it could point to large concrete gains.

''The answer is winning a strong contact here and using it to organize huge groups of autoworkers who are currently nonunion,'' said Barry Eidlin, a sociologist at McGill University in Montreal who studies labor.

And there are other ways in which being too cautious may be a bigger risk to the union than being too aggressive. Organizers point out that workers are often demoralized when union leaders talk tough and then quickly settle for a subpar deal.

Critics of the previous U.A.W. administration accused it of doing just that before Mr. Fain took over this year. ''We'd be trying to make sense of how certain things passed in the first place,'' Shana Shaw, another longtime U.A.W. member who backed Mr. Fain, said of the concessionary contracts autoworkers were asked to accept over the years.

Even Mr. Fain's habit of framing the fight in broad class terms may prove to be a strategic advantage. A recent Gallup poll found that 75 percent of the public backed the autoworkers in the showdown, compared with 19 percent who were more sympathetic to the companies.

The widespread public support suggests that the autoworkers may be operating in a different context from workers in another strike that famously contributed to a loss of power for labor: air traffic controllers' unsuccessful fight against the Reagan administration in the early 1980s, after which private-sector employers appeared to become more comfortable firing and replacing striking employees.

Dr. Eidlin said that while the air traffic controllers failed to court allies in the labor movement, ''the fact that Fain and the U.A.W. are messaging more broadly, really trying to build that broad coalition, speaks to the possibility of a different outcome.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/19/business/economy/strike-autoworkers-labor.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/19/business/economy/strike-autoworkers-labor.html)

**Graphic**

This article appeared in print on page A1, A17.

**Load-Date:** September 19, 2023

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[***Latinos Have Transformed Sleepy Hollow, but Not Their Town Board***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:696M-P541-JBG3-6001-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

September 19, 2023 Tuesday 09:20 EST

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**Section:** NYREGION

**Length:** 1384 words

**Byline:** Grace Ashford

**Highlight:** Voters in the Town of Mount Pleasant, about 30 miles north of New York City, are urging it to change its voting system under a new state law.

**Body**

Voters in the Town of Mount Pleasant, about 30 miles north of New York City, are urging it to change its voting system under a new state law.

It’s not hard to find signs of the Latino influence in this ***working-class*** village along the Hudson River: Mexican taquerias and Ecuadorean delis dot the promenade along Beekman Avenue, and neighbors greet one another in Spanish, while colorful flags dance in the wind.

More than half the Village of Sleepy Hollow is of Hispanic origin, according to the most recent census. But those demographics are rarely reflected on Election Day.

The village, about 30 miles north of New York City, is part of the Town of Mount Pleasant, which uses an at-large voting system that allows residents to cast ballots for all open positions.

The Mount Pleasant town board has no Latino members, and no one could recall the last time it had one. That disconnect has led to a formal claim filed with the town, on behalf of five residents who say that they and other Latino voters are being disenfranchised.

The challenge is the first test of New York’s John R. Lewis Voting Rights Act, which offers some of the most comprehensive protections for communities of color in the nation. It creates new strictures on voter intimidation. And the law, which went into effect last year, makes it easier to claim voter suppression or dilution: Complainants can address voting issues without going to court, as has been the case, so far, in Mount Pleasant.

In their claim, the residents urge the town to voluntarily change its at-large system, to avoid a lawsuit. “Our goal is to bring about the fair electoral process in the town of Mt. Pleasant that the N.Y.V.R.A. requires,” it reads.

In many of the state’s larger municipalities, voters are separated into geographic districts; each one is typically represented by one member on a city council or town board. But Mount Pleasant, like many smaller towns, does not use districts or wards, so voters cast ballots for all open seats.

Although Mount Pleasant is nearly 20 percent Hispanic, some argue that preferred candidates of Latinos have little chance to win an election, because in an at-large voting system the non-Hispanic majority will always be able to outvote them.

David Imamura, a Democratic county legislator and a lawyer who represents the Latino voters, said that he believed the disenfranchisement claim had merit, and if was to succeed, it could have broader implications in New York.

“You’re talking about dozens of municipalities where people of color are unable to elect candidates of their choice, right?” he said. “This law will allow them to get their seat at the table.”

Last month, the Town of Mount Pleasant approved a resolution announcing its intention to investigate claims of disenfranchisement. If an analysis determines that there is a violation, the town could replace its current at-large voting system with wards, or even ranked-choice voting.

The town attorney, Darius Chafizadeh, said it was too early to tell what the outcome might be. “Could there be a dispute later on? Sure,” he said, of a future lawsuit. “Could there be a way to compromise and create wards? Sure. All options are on the table as far as the town is concerned.”

At one time, this area was known for the cars it made: Chevys, Pontiacs and Buicks, shipped all over the country. After the General Motors plant shuttered, the village, then known as North Tarrytown, [*made headlines*](https://www.nytimes.com/1996/10/20/nyregion/debate-on-a-name-change-for-prestige-and-profit.html) for changing its name to Sleepy Hollow, honoring the hamlet featured in onetime-resident Washington Irving’s supernatural tale.

By the turn of the century, the area had become something of a mecca for Central and South Americans, particularly those from Ecuador, drawn in part by manufacturing jobs and a growing community. Real estate agencies brought in bilingual agents, and [*put out signs*](https://www.nytimes.com/2004/10/03/realestate/dejeme-ayudarlo-the-ad-says.html?smid=nytcore-ios-share&amp;referringSource=articleShare) saying “Déjeme ayudarlo” — let me help you.

“I actually happened to see my neighbors that lived in Ecuador, be neighbors here in the village,” said Silvana Tapia, whose family moved to Sleepy Hollow in 1993 because her parents had heard that it had a good school system.

But even as Ms. Tapia has watched her community grow, she said she has noticed how few of the elected leaders looked or sounded like them.

Representation could have a profound effect on the community, she said, from simple things like language access to loftier goals like providing role models for future generations.

“By raising the challenge, we are taking a proactive role in shaping our community’s future,” said Ms. Tapia, one of the five claimants.

There have hardly been a raft of Latino candidates for the town board. Ms. Tapia says this is evidence of how difficult it is for Latinos to see themselves in power. Mr. Chafizadeh, the town attorney, suggests it demonstrates a lack of interest, rather than disenfranchisement.

To win the case, the Latino claimants need to demonstrate that their community has a specific political preference that has been overridden by the white majority.

County data shows that the Village of Sleepy Hollow voted Democratic in the 2021 local elections, while the broader Town of Mount Pleasant elected Republicans. Indeed, all four council members on the town board, and the town supervisor are Republicans, though registered Democrats outnumber Republicans by a wide margin in Mount Pleasant.

Mr. Chafizadeh suggested that the disenfranchisement allegation might have partisan motivations, noting that Mr. Imamura works for Abrams Fensterman, a law firm that has close ties to powerful Democrats across the state.

He also pointed out how little overlap there is on practical matters between the Town of Mount Pleasant and Village of Sleepy Hollow, which has its own government and has elected Latinos in the past.

The mayor of Sleepy Hollow, Martin Rutyna, agreed, saying that for the most part the village had a “great relationship” with the Town of Mount Pleasant. “They don’t really push things on us. We don’t push it on them,” he said.

Even so, he said, the challenge presented a good opportunity for the village, and in particular its Hispanic residents, to have their voices heard.

“There’s a lot of things happening lately that, you know, maybe we have a different opinion,” Mr. Rutyna said, citing Mount Pleasant’s recent [*state of emergency declaration*](https://www.mtpleasantny.com/sites/g/files/vyhlif4741/f/uploads/town_of_mt._pleasant_state_of_emergency__8.pdf) that effectively closed its doors to migrants seeking refuge. “I think our village might have had a different opinion,” he said.

If Mount Pleasant were to change its voting system, it would be possible to draw a majority Hispanic district, according to an analysis from Andy Beveridge and Susan Weber-Stoger of the data mapping company Social Explorer. But that district could still struggle to elect Latino candidates, according to that analysis, as just 30 percent of the drawn district’s Hispanic population would be citizens of voting age.

A pattern like that could complicate a claim under the Federal Voting Rights Act, but architects of New York’s law say that the claim could still bring other remedies like ranked-choice or cumulative voting.

“All that’s necessary, is that you show that there’s racially polarized voting — that you have a minority community that has particular preferences, and the majority that has different preferences,” said Michael Pernick, a redistricting counsel at the N.A.A.C.P. Legal Defense Fund. “And the minority communities’ preferences are outvoted by the majority, denying them representation.”

For her part, Ms. Tapia is heartened by the town’s response thus far, and what she sees as an opportunity to change the relationship that her community has with their representatives.

“I think it will show to everyone that inclusivity, diversity — they took that under consideration, and you can trust them,” Ms. Tapia said.

“You can trust the people working in your town.”

PHOTOS: Sleepy Hollow, right, in Westchester County, is part of Mount Pleasant, which uses an at-large voting system. The Mount Pleasant Town Board has no Latino members. In a formal claim against the town, five residents say Latino voters are being disenfranchised. (MB1); Silvana Tapia, a voter represented in the claim against Mount Pleasant, N.Y; Darius Chafizadeh, the Mount Pleasant town attorney (PHOTOGRAPHS BY GREGG VIGLIOTTI FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (MB5) This article appeared in print on page MB1, MB5.

**Load-Date:** September 25, 2023

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[***A Lost Manuscript Shows the Fire Barack Obama Couldn’t Reveal on the Campaign Trail; Guest Essay***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:66JN-4M91-DXY4-X24V-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

October 7, 2022 Friday 15:17 EST

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 3131 words

**Byline:** Timothy Shenk

**Highlight:** At Harvard Law, he wrote a blistering manifesto he never published. Its searing advice could help Democrats escape their current political quagmire.

**Body**

With Barack Obama’s presidency slipping into the not-so-recent past, it’s hard to remember the thrill — or dread — he once inspired. Even before entering politics, Mr. Obama had a way of telegraphing that he was headed for big things. Back in the early 1990s, journalists interviewing him for the flurry of profiles that appeared following his election as the first Black president of The Harvard Law Review discovered a young man brimming with confidence. “I really hope to be part of a transformation of this country,” he told Allison Pugh of The Associated Press, who came away struck by his “oddly self-conscious sense of destiny.”

Mr. Obama left Harvard with a blueprint for remaking American democracy. Written with Robert Fisher, a friend and former economics professor, the 250-page manuscript had the working title of “Transformative Politics.”

Life after graduation proved busier than either Mr. Obama or Mr. Fisher anticipated, and they never found time to whip their draft into publishable shape. As Mr. Obama became one of the most scrutinized figures on the planet, many of the manuscript’s pages gathered dust in Mr. Fisher’s basement. News of the abandoned book came to light only in 2017 after the publication of “Rising Star,” the historian David J. Garrow’s mammoth biography of Mr. Obama. Buried inside more than 1,000 pages of densely packed text, Mr. Garrow’s discovery attracted little attention. When I reached out to Mr. Garrow in the summer of 2019 for help getting a copy of the text, he told me I was the first person to ask.

That’s a shame, because reading “Transformative Politics” today is a bracing experience.

Speaking with a candor he would soon be unable to afford, Mr. Obama directed his fire across the entire political spectrum. He denounced a broken status quo in which cynical Republicans outmaneuvered feckless Democrats in a racialized culture war, leaving most Americans trapped in a system that gave them no real control over their lives. Although his sympathies were clearly with the left, Mr. Obama chided liberals for making do with a “rudderless pragmatism,” and he flayed activists — with the civil rights establishment as his chief example — for asking the judiciary to hand out victories they couldn’t win at the polls. Progressives talked a good game about democracy, but they didn’t really seem to believe in it.

Mr. Obama did. With the right strategy, he argued, Democrats could engineer a political realignment that would begin a new chapter in the country’s history.

The story of Mr. Obama’s long attempt to turn this vision into a reality says a lot about the former president. But it says even more about why, more than 30 years after Barack Obama set out to transform politics, American democracy has reached a dangerous impasse.

And it might show us how to get out.

To understand what Mr. Obama was trying to accomplish with “Transformative Politics,” and why it matters today, you have to start with the problem he was trying to solve. The worldview Mr. Obama brought to Harvard was shaped by his years as a community organizer in Chicago. Driving by shuttered steel mills on his way to ramshackle public housing projects, Mr. Obama came to see deindustrialization and urban decline as two sides of the same broken promise. Chicago was the place where the soaring liberal ambitions of the 1960s — President Lyndon Johnson’s Great Society, Martin Luther King Jr.’s dream — had crashed into reality, leading to a crisis whose toll was heaviest on [*poor Blacks*](https://press.uchicago.edu/ucp/books/book/chicago/T/bo13375722.html). “Every path to change was well-trodden,” he wrote in “Dreams From My Father,” “every strategy exhausted.”

Except one. The modern version had its origins in the left wing of the civil rights movement, where it was most forcefully defended by Bayard Rustin. A leading strategist in the struggle for racial equality, he was an openly gay, Black former Communist who had done time in prison as a conscientious objector during World War II — about as marginalized a figure as you could imagine in midcentury America.

But in the aftermath of Lyndon Johnson’s landslide 1964 re-election, Mr. Rustin decided the country was ready for a radical push. According to him, abolishing formal segregation was just the first stage of the battle for civil rights. Securing true equality now demanded a campaign to overhaul the American economy and lift up workers of all races. Change at this scale required overwhelming public backing, and Mr. Rustin saw the elements of a new majority in President Johnson’s victory — an alliance of Blacks, liberals and blue-collar whites [*that he called*](https://www.crmvet.org/docs/rustin65.pdf) the “March on Washington coalition.”

Mr. Rustin discussed coalition politics with the same passion he brought to crusading against Jim Crow. “We cannot talk about the democratic road to freedom,” he said, “unless we are talking about building a majority movement.” Republicans and Democrats had been divided along economic lines since the New Deal, when ***working-class*** voters stampeded into the Democratic column. Now Mr. Rustin saw the opportunity to turn the Democratic Party into a vehicle for both racial and economic justice, if activists turned the March on Washington coalition into a durable majority.

Barack Obama was barely out of diapers when Mr. Rustin laid out this sweeping program. As he grew into adulthood, Mr. Obama moved from a teenage bout with nihilism to an undergraduate flirtation with radicalism (“some species of GQ Marxist,” a classmate said) into a community organizer focused on bringing jobs to the South Side of Chicago. Through it all, he watched as backlash to the cultural upheavals of the ’60s and ’70s blew Mr. Rustin’s coalition to smithereens.

Around the world, left-wing parties lost ground with the ***working class***. The exodus had a distinctly racial cast in the United States, where blue-collar whites fled the Democratic Party in droves. Even as African American politicians started winning elections in substantial numbers for the first time since Reconstruction, Republican victories at the national level placed strict limits on what local officials could achieve.

Mr. Obama saw those limits firsthand. In a [*1988 essay*](https://www.lib.niu.edu/1988/ii880840.html) written shortly before he left for Harvard, Mr. Obama argued that despite the “important symbolic effect” of Black electoral victories, real change had remained out of reach. No single politician could reverse the global economic trends that had devastated urban America, especially when conservatives had a lock on the White House. It would take an enormous redistribution of resources to wrench the nation’s inner cities out of their downward spiral, and that would come about only with support from an electoral juggernaut.

Neither community organizing nor small-bore politics could address the problems facing Chicago, Mr. Obama decided. But he was putting together a strategy of his own.

“I had things to learn in law school, things that would help me bring about real change,” Mr. Obama later wrote. “I would learn power’s currency in all its intricacy and detail.”

The fruits of that education were on display in “Transformative Politics.” Written during Mr. Obama’s final semester, the manuscript updated Bayard Rustin for the age of Ronald Reagan. Mr. Obama and Mr. Fisher’s plan hinged on recruiting blue-collar whites back into a reborn version of the March on Washington coalition. According to Mr. Obama and Mr. Fisher, these votes could be won over with a platform that appealed to both the values and the material interests of working people. That meant shifting away from race-based initiatives toward universal economic policies whose benefits would, in practice, tilt toward African Americans — in short, “use class as a proxy for race.”

Mr. Obama and Mr. Fisher didn’t pretend that racism had been expunged from American life. “Precisely because America is a racist society,” they wrote, “we cannot realistically expect white America to make special concessions towards blacks over the long haul.” Demanding that white Americans grapple with four centuries of racial oppression might be a morally respectable position, but it was terrible politics. “Those blacks who most fervently insist on the pervasiveness of white racism have adopted a strategy that depends on white guilt for its effectiveness,” they wrote, ridiculing the idea that whites would “one day wake up, realize the error of their ways, and provide blacks with wholesale reparations in order to expiate white demons.”

Economics were a safer bet. Blue-collar workers of all races, Mr. Obama and Mr. Fisher wrote, “understood in concrete ways the fact that America’s individualist mythology covers up a game that is fixed against them.” But this pragmatic streak also could be a trap for reformers hoping to bridge the racial divide. “If it has been ***working-class*** whites who have been most vociferous in their opposition to affirmative action,” Mr. Obama and Mr. Fisher wrote, “this at least in part arises out of an accurate assessment [that] they are the most likely to lose in any redistributionist game.”

Mr. Obama rejected the idea that appealing to Reagan Democrats required giving in to white grievance. Chiding centrists at the Democratic Leadership Council — headed at the time by Gov. Bill Clinton of Arkansas — he warned against retreating in the battle for civil rights. Moderates scrambling for the middle ground were just as misguided, he argued, as antiracists implicitly pinning their hopes on a collective racial epiphany. Neither understood that bringing the conversation back to economics was the best way to beat the right. Instead of trimming their ambitions to court affluent suburbanites, Democrats had to embrace “long-term, structural change, change that might break the zero-sum equation that pits powerless blacks [against] only slightly less powerless whites.”

You might think it’s strange to hear Mr. Obama sounding like he’d just come from a meeting of the Democratic Socialists of America. But even though his days as a GQ Marxist were in the past, he brought an appreciation for class politics with deep roots on the left into the next phase of his career.

All the pieces of Mr. Obama’s plan fit together: an electoral strategy designed to make Democrats the party of working people; a policy agenda oriented around comprehensive economic reform; and a faith that American democracy could deliver real change. By mixing political calculation with moral vision, Democrats could resurrect the March on Washington coalition and — finally — transform politics.

Holding the different elements of this program together was easier on the page than in real life. By the time of Mr. Obama’s star-making turn at the 2004 Democratic National Convention, his policy ambitions had narrowed considerably. But he continued to follow key elements of the game plan outlined in “Transformative Politics.” When Mr. Obama scolded pundits for slicing America into red states and blue states, it wasn’t a dopey celebration of national harmony. It was a strategic attempt to drain the venom out of the culture wars, allowing Democrats to win back ***working-class*** voters who had been polarized into the G.O.P. And it elected him president, twice.

That makes what came next even more important. After the 2012 campaign, analysts ([*misleadingly*](https://www.nytimes.com/2016/12/23/upshot/how-the-obama-coalition-crumbled-leaving-an-opening-for-trump.html)) attributed Mr. Obama’s victory to a majority powered by young, diverse and highly educated Americans. With Donald Trump on the ascent, moral and political considerations appeared to point away from Bayard Rustin’s March on Washington coalition and toward what came to be known as the Obama coalition — an alliance that doesn’t bear much resemblance to the majority that a younger Mr. Obama envisioned but has become the backbone of the Democratic Party.

Today we are living in the world the Obama coalition has made. Yes, Democrats have won the popular vote in each of the past four presidential elections. But thanks to [*continued losses*](https://catalist.us/wh-national/) among blue-collar voters — including Latinos and a smaller but significant number of African Americans — the Obama coalition has remained a pipsqueak by historical standards. Under Franklin Roosevelt, the average Democratic margin of victory was 14.9 percentage points. Since 2008, it’s been 4.4 percentage points.

The party’s record in the midterms has been even shakier. Democrats held unified control of Congress for all of Mr. Roosevelt’s presidency. In the Obama era, divided government has been the norm. And no, that’s not just because of gerrymandering. House Republicans won the national popular vote three times in the past 12 years — 2010, 2014 and 2016 — and there’s a good chance they’ll do it again this November.

What does all this mean for Democrats? Although politicians and journalists like to say we’re confronting unprecedented threats to democracy, the party is facing the same basic problem that has bedeviled Democrats since the breakdown of the New Deal coalition in the 1960s. An electorate divided by culture isn’t going to deliver the votes that Democrats need to build a lasting majority.

The crisis of democracy, then, is really a problem of the Democratic coalition. So long as elections keep being decided by wafer-thin margins, the odds of a divergence between the popular vote and the Electoral College will stay high, voters in small rural states will continue to hold the balance of power in the Senate, and Republican election deniers will get new grist for conspiracy theorizing. Even if Democrats manage to take office, they won’t have the numbers to push through reforms that might break this electoral stalemate.

In a party where the spectrum of debate runs from Joe Manchin to Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, there’s no shortage of suggestions for what to do next. As the left calls for a comprehensive reworking of American society, moderates have made it clear they never again want to hear the words “Green New Deal,” let alone “defund the police.” Meanwhile, pundits and strategists advocating “popularism” [*have captured attention*](https://nymag.com/intelligencer/2021/10/smearing-popularism-does-not-help-black-voters.html) — and infuriated Twitter — by urging Democrats to ignore their activist base so that they can run on issues that poll well, downplay controversial positions and keep their policy ambitions modest.

What’s missing from all this is a vision for transcending the divide between the party’s rival sects, a plan for both winning elections and securing lasting change — in short, a program for transforming politics. The shrewder popularists are right to emphasize the dangers of Democrats bleeding support with the ***working class***. But electoral victories will go to waste unless they lead to structural changes that break American politics out of its current doom loop. And even though campaigns to establish a pro-democracy popular front might keep a Trumpified G.O.P. out of power in the near term, a coalition elected to protect the status quo is unlikely to do much more than buy time until the political cycle eventually puts Republicans back in office.

Mr. Obama has navigated carefully around these debates, preferring to cast himself as a peacemaker among feuding Democratic tribes. After spending most of his career warning about the dangers of splitting the parties along cultural lines, he has reinvented himself as one of Blue America’s favorite influencers, a curator of best-of lists and a junior media mogul. Bayard Rustin’s March on Washington coalition might be slipping out of Democrats’ grasp, but Barack and Michelle Obama’s production company is bringing a Rustin biopic to Netflix in 2023.

Yet Mr. Rustin’s vision — the same vision that once upon a time drew a young Barack Obama into politics — remains the best starting point for coming up with a truly democratic solution to the crisis of democracy. Only [*27 percent*](https://morningconsult.com/2022/08/18/america-ideology-less-liberal-but-not-necessarily-more-conservative/) of registered voters identify as liberal. But [*62 percent*](https://news.gallup.com/opinion/polling-matters/396737/average-american-remains-higher-taxes-rich.aspx) of Americans want to raise taxes on millionaires. An even greater number — [*71 percent*](https://news.gallup.com/poll/398303/approval-labor-unions-highest-point-1965.aspx) — approve of labor unions. And [*83 percent*](https://theharrispoll.com/briefs/americans-support-minimum-wage-increase/) support raising the federal minimum wage.

Rebuilding the March on Washington coalition requires an all-out war against polarization. That larger project begins with a simple message: Democrats exist because the country belongs to all of us, not just the 1 percent. With this guiding principle in mind, everything else becomes easier — picking fights that focus the media spotlight on a game that’s rigged in favor of the rich; calling the bluff of right-wing populists who can’t stomach a capital-gains-tax hike; corralling activists in support of the needs of working people; and, ultimately, putting power back in the hands of ordinary Americans.

Reversing electoral trends half a century in the making is the work of decades, not a single election. But recent history is filled with examples of candidates who built winning coalitions by tamping down polarization (like Mr. Obama) or ramping it up (like Mr. Trump). And if you put together enough successful campaigns, then a realignment starts to come into sight.

All of which brings us back to the place where, in 1991, Barack Obama started. It’s chastening to reflect that the fate of American democracy turns on whether we can pass a test that the most talented politician of his generation failed. But that’s no excuse for giving up today. Because the road to freedom that Bayard Rustin dreamed of still goes through a majority movement — a coalition rooted in the ***working class***, bound together by shared economic interests and committed to drawing out the best in the American political tradition.

Now seems like a good time to start walking.

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Graphics by Gus Wezerek.

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PHOTOS: From left, Barack Obama as a student at Occidental College in Los Angeles, 1980; on the campus of Harvard, where he was elected the first Black president of the Harvard Law Review, 1990; collecting signatures for a nominating petition in his first run for office, to become an Illinois state senator, 1995; celebrating in Chicago with his wife and daughters after winning the race for the U.S. Senate, 2004; addressing the Democratic National Convention in Charlotte, N.C., where he was nominated for a second term as president, 2012. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY TOM GRAUMAN/CORBIS, VIA GETTY IMAGES; JOE WRINN/HARVARD UNIVERSITY/CORBIS, VIA GETTY IMAGES; MARC POKEMPNER; SCOTT OLSON/GETTY IMAGES; DAMON WINTER/THE NEW YORK TIMES) (SR4-SR5)

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**End of Document**



[***Miami, the Art World Upstart***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69T8-HWP1-DXY4-X1XS-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Body**

Thirty years ago, the city was barely a blip on the art world's radar. Now, partly because of Art Basel, it has become a global hot spot. But can it manage its growing pains?

Their move overseas from London was all set. ''We were both 23 years old, right out of art school,'' recalled the experimental filmmaker Dara Friedman of that moment in the summer of 1992, with her then-boyfriend, now husband, the sculptor Mark Handforth.

''Where could we go that was inexpensive where we could start being artists?'' The unlikely answer was a city the art world had deemed a cultural backwater: Miami.

That dismissal of Miami as a merely tropical getaway has shifted. This week sees virtually all eyes within the contemporary art milieu turn to South Florida for the 21st annual Art Basel Miami Beach fair, an event that draws well-heeled art collectors, dealers and curators from around the globe. The Basel fair, open to the public Friday to Sunday and featuring 277 galleries hosting booths inside the Miami Beach Convention Center, is only part of the attraction.

As Basel unfolds, satellite fairs, pop-up exhibitions and splashy art-themed corporate branding exercises will appear throughout greater Miami. All of this artsy activity falls under the Chamber of Commerce-blessed moniker of Miami Art Week, though virtually everyone attending any chunk of it simply refers to it as Art Basel.

Basel's spotlight has also helped catalyze a year-round art scene for the city by putting its homegrown talent on an international stage and convincing locals and out-of-towners to pay attention.

Miami has established itself as part of the constellation of cities worldwide known for their arts and culture. Paris, London and New York -- also home to major art fairs -- had a head start getting into this elite club, with their storied museums and centuries-long commitment to arts. Other cities that started hosting art fairs more recently, including Hong Kong and Seoul, are newer arrivals to the party.

But no one has made an entrance quite as striking as Miami's. In the perception of many, the city has recently eclipsed Chicago as the third American art city after Los Angeles and New York. Accompanying this transformation have been charges of art-fueled gentrification, as previously low-income neighborhoods fill with new museums and galleries, and fears that post-Basel growth is unsustainable.

Concurrently, the cost of living has soared -- a recent Miami Herald-led study found the average monthly rent on a one-bedroom apartment had increased by 80 percent since 2019. Only Boston, San Francisco and the New York City area had higher rents.

A look at separate generations of successful Miami artists whose careers came of age before, during and since the 2002 debut of Art Basel illustrates the impact of the fair and the challenges ahead.

Dara Friedman and Mark Handforth

Daily expenses were foremost on Ms. Friedman's mind as she planned her and Mr. Handforth's 1992 move ''from art school into the world.'' Raised in West Palm Beach, Fla., and Germany, Ms. Friedman was eager to return to the United States. A scouting visit that spring sold her on Miami's affordability.

''Fast cash from the A.T.M. in New York City was $100 and fast cash from the A.T.M. in Miami was $20,'' she explained. Miami's film and fashion industries offered gig work, and she said she had already lined up an apartment in an Art Deco building on Miami Beach for $350 a month. Best of all, the Slade School of Fine Art, Mr. Handforth's alma mater, had just awarded him a 4,000 pound travel grant (about $11,000 today). ''I remember thinking, 'We can do this!'''

The Slade's grant administrators were less convinced, Ms. Friedman said. ''When they found out Mark was going to use the travel grant to go to Miami, they revoked it. They said 'Miami is not a serious art place.' We were supposed to go to Paris or Berlin. But Miami? Not so fast.''

Three decades later, now ensconced in a greenery-shrouded home in Miami's Coconut Grove neighborhood, Ms. Friedman and Mr. Handforth have had the last laugh. The city figures large in both Ms. Friedman's short films, with their loving focus on otherworldly moments within misleadingly ordinary lives, and in Mr. Handforth's playfully tweaked street objects and fluorescent light tubes. And both artists have enviable CVs packed with museum shows, public art commissions and private collection placements.

Mr. Handforth credits Miami as key to that success. It was the city's notorious hurricanes that first shifted his own thinking about art, he said.

''It was not just having a lamppost down in the street. It was this idea that within a very short period of time, everything that seems so solid could suddenly become so flexible.''

And it was the cheap rent of the '90s that gave the couple freedom from full-time day jobs to put their art-making ideas into practice, he added. By the time Basel's circus rolled into town, they were already positioned to take full advantage of its opportunities for further exposure.

Hernan Bas

The local hoopla surrounding Basel was still in the future in 1996, when Hernan Bas graduated from the New World School of the Arts, a magnet high school in Miami, and left for Cooper Union in New York.

''Miami had such a small, kind of nonexistent art scene,'' Mr. Bas recalled of that period, ''you just felt like you needed to go somewhere else to make anything happen.''

He lasted only a single semester, though, expelled for ''not going to classes,'' he admitted with a sheepish laugh. ''We were painting nude figures and 90 percent of the kids in the class had never done that before. I'd been doing that back at New World since the 10th grade. There were other factors, like my just being young. But generally speaking, I think I'd had my fill of art school.''

His two roommates, fellow art students also from Miami, were outwardly sympathetic, Mr. Bas said. ''But they told me later that when I got kicked out of Cooper they said to each other, 'Oh, he's going back to Miami, and that's a death sentence. He's never going to get anywhere now.'''

Not quite. Mr. Bas is now arguably Miami's most sought-after painter, with his homoerotically charged portraits of waifs and dandies attracting critical praise and steady sales -- if you can manage to buy one from his galleries. Demand remains so strong, and supply so tight, that Mr. Bas's work regularly commands mid-six figure prices at auction; last November, one particularly large painting sold for 11.2 million Hong Kong dollars (the equivalent of about $1.4 million) at Christie's in Hong Kong.

His new show, ''The Conceptualists,'' 35 portraits riffing off his signature evocation of lithe beauty, is timed to open for Basel at Miami Beach's Bass Museum.

Fredric Snitzer, Mr. Bas's gallerist in Miami, cites the artist's innate talent -- he began showing his work several years before Basel arrived. But it was the fair, Mr. Snitzer said, that catapulted Bas from a local to a global sensation. ''I thought Hernan was the poster child for Art Basel.''

Miami's pre-eminent art collectors had already begun to buy Mr. Bas's work in 2001 and early 2002, Mr. Snitzer said, but Basel ''was the rocket. Because if a handful of people got led to the work before, now thousands of people paraded through the fair and said 'Who's this guy? It's all sold? Put me on the waiting list immediately.' So there began the whole bigger game.''

Mr. Bas's rise also marked a generational break. Mr. Snitzer had made his name in the early '90s by exhibiting a group of Cuban-exile artists freshly arrived in Miami, concentrating on reflecting the trauma of daily life in Castro's Cuba and the poignant loss associated with escaping from it.

But in late 1998, when Mr. Bas and several kindred young artists -- Naomi Fisher, Bert Rodriguez and Shannon Spadaro -- pitched Mr. Snitzer on a group show, their outlook was something altogether new.

''They were Miami kids, they were born and raised here,'' Mr. Snitzer explained. ''If they were Cuban American, like Hernan, they weren't born in Cuba.''

Their art reflected that change.

''It was simply responding to Miami'' -- a new Miami of daytime film sets and neon-bathed nightlife. The result was November 1998's ''Fashion Issue: four simple steps towards younger looking skin,'' a show, Mr. Snitzer explained, ''about growing up in the shadow of a fashion community and the impact they were feeling from South Beach with all of its photo shoots and models.''

The young artists' collective spirit took a beating after Basel's ensuing gold-rush mentality. Mr. Bas began spending much of his time in Detroit.

''I had to get away from Miami and the whole scene,'' he said. ''There was a sort of semi-competitiveness that turned me off.'' He recalled the steady stream of collectors and art advisers who tried to sidestep his dealers to buy a painting directly.

''It had gotten so crazy during the early fair years that people were coming to the studio and knocking on the door without an invitation,'' he said. '''No, you can't just come in! Go away!'''

Bas is now back in Miami year round. He's made his peace with the fevered state of his market, but he's also grateful for it.

''Miami is just ridiculously one of the most expensive cities,'' he said. ''I still live here. I don't dislike it. But my God, if I didn't have the money to afford it. ...'' He trailed off silently.

Jared McGriff

It's not only Miami artists who have been closely tracking Art Basel's local impact. Jared McGriff was watching from the San Francisco Bay Area, where he worked in finance and then tech for almost two decades, carving out time to quietly paint on the side.

His Instagram handle, @watercolorbrother, perfectly captures the engrossing fugue state his paintings can inspire -- ethereal scenes of Black life suck the viewer in, only to reveal deeper layers and troubling narratives. Yet his brushwork remained largely hidden from public view, until 2017 when he finally ''pulled the plug'' on his old life and moved to Miami.

''I knew I needed to move to a place where other people were making work all around me,'' the self-taught artist said. Visits to Art Basel led him to the satellite Prizm fair, focusing on work by artists from Africa and the African diaspora, which, Mr. McGriff said, ''unlocked this understanding of the breadth of the Black art-making community here.'' Miami, with its network of arts organizations, felt not only supportive, but -- at least compared to the Bay Area -- financially manageable.

Local response came fairly quickly upon his arrival. A 2019 solo show at Spinello Projects sparked a flood of purchases by influential collectors, which then led to marquee exhibitions at the Rubell Museum Miami and the NSU Art Museum. This year's Art Week sees him included alongside a who's who of contemporary art stars in the show ''Gimme Shelter'' at the Historic Hampton House, a segregation-era Green Book hotel remade into a cultural center. With Spinello and another Basel exhibitor, Vielmetter Los Angeles, also featuring his work, he seems poised to continue his ascent.

''The pace at which it all occurred was surprising,'' Mr. McGriff said. Though based on his own experience, he added wryly, ''it takes 20 years to be an overnight success.''

Artists and Other Endangered Species

At the Emerson Dorsch gallery, which began as a living-room exhibition space inside its founder's walk-up apartment, and now occupies a customized warehouse in the Little Haiti neighborhood, business is booming. The gallery's director, Ibett Yanez del Castillo, said the pandemic's surge of moneyed new Florida residents had brought ''new eyes and new collections, it's definitely given us a fresh sense of energy.''

Yet her phone calls from young artists are no longer from New Yorkers curious about relocating south. Instead, they are from the gallery's own stable of local talents who are anguished over whether they'll be able to remain in Miami.

''There's been this push for welcoming a new tax bracket,'' she said of Miami's city officials, ''and that's definitely making it difficult for the ***working class***.''

There have been calls from several corners of the local art world for a new focus on housing. The nonprofit Oolite Arts added a housing stipend to its core studio residency program, hoping to set an example, while the art collector and real estate developer Craig Robins (who was a key force in bringing Basel to Miami), said in an interview that affordable rentals weren't enough.

''The great thing political leaders can and should do is put financing behind ownership projects,'' he insisted. So far though, like the plans to address the sea level rise that threatens to submerge much of the coastal area in a matter of decades, there's little agreement on -- or funding for -- a comprehensive program.

''I feel like we're on the cusp,'' Ms. Friedman, the artist, said. ''Miami's notoriously immature, but its art scene is no longer the new kid on the block. So what's it going to do now as it hits middle age? Well, it's Miami, so it's going to go to the gym, get a face lift and buy a fancy car. And then maybe find a moment to reflect. Maybe.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/05/arts/design/miami-new-art-capital-effects.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/05/arts/design/miami-new-art-capital-effects.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Above, the Miami artist Jared McGriff on the roof of Spinello Projects, a local gallery that represents him. He moved to the city from the Bay Area

left, Hernan Bas helping to install his show ''The Conceptualists'' at the Bass Museum in Miami Beach

and the artists Mark Handforth and Dara Friedman. (F3)

Above left, the outside of the Bass Museum in Miami Beach, which is hosting the Hernan Bas show ''The Conceptualists''

and right, ''For Us All To Breathe in Peace (Rest In Paradise Raymond),'' 2023, by Mr. McGriff at his studio. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY SCOTT MCINTYRE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page F3, F8.

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**End of Document**



[***A Novelist Bridges the Class Divide in Contemporary Nigeria; Fiction***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67GG-8C41-DXY4-X0M2-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Body**

In Ayòbámi Adébáyò’s “A Spell of Good Things,” the lives of a ***working-class*** boy and a wealthy young doctor converge to expose the precarity of the social order.

A SPELL OF GOOD THINGS, by Ayòbámi Adébáyò

During the pandemic, my walking path in Berkeley, Calif., trailed past the Seabreeze encampment where a number of the city’s homeless population were living. Various municipal initiatives sprang up to try to protect this and other encampments from Covid-19, but these came on the heels of longstanding tensions between the housed and unhoused in the Bay Area — tensions that had, for the city, largely taken the shape of concerns about trash and safety. Accompanying these concerns I sensed an undercurrent of distaste: The encampments were unsightly, ugly, embarrassing. Locals wanted to help these members of their community, but more than that they really wanted them gone. Just over a year later, they were.

Set in contemporary Nigeria, Ayòbámi Adébáyò’s second novel, “A Spell of Good Things,” is a pointed warning about the dangers of choosing to look away from the deep economic fissures that run through a community. Whatever we might do to distance ourselves from the destitute — taking refuge in tidy suburbs, expunging the poor from our scenic trails — in any society lives can and do intersect. These intersections expose the flimsiness of the illusions the privileged cling to, that they can both preside over and hide from the impoverished, and that there is no cost to doing so.

Adébáyò established her storytelling prowess in her 2017 debut, “[*Stay With Me*](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/07/24/books/review-ayobami-adebayo-stay-with-me.html),” a gripping tale of a marriage undone by a series of secrets and betrayals. In this compelling follow-up, Adébáyò’s hand is just as deft, but her canvas is more expansive. Following the lives of two families from opposite sides of the tracks in an unnamed city in southwestern Nigeria, the story weaves between the contrasting worlds of two young people who first cross paths loosely, incidentally, but whose choices — and lack thereof — knot their destinies together over time. By the end, the intricacy of the novel’s structure comes to feel both unexpected and inevitable, building toward a final devastating convergence.

An early, bracing scene introduces us to 16-year-old Eniolá as he endures the first of many humiliations in the story: A vendor, one of his father’s creditors, spits at him in the marketplace.

The assault is quick, but the scene unfurls over several pages, the accumulation of detail allowing us to inhabit the depth of Eniolá’s physical and emotional injury. Where a raw, dynamic storytelling energized Adébáyò’s prose in “Stay With Me,” here the graceful, stately quality of the sentences evokes restraint, avoiding sentimentality: “No,” the boy thinks. “He wouldn’t ask any of the men around him to confirm if his face still had any streaks. He wouldn’t.”

From here Eniolá’s situation continues to deteriorate. He is the eldest child of a schoolteacher father, with high hopes of achieving similar levels of professional, middle-class success, when sudden misfortune in the form of teacher layoffs ushers the family’s slow descent into poverty. His mother now scours dunghills for plastic bottles and tin she can sell to provide her family with one meal a day, if that. His father, meanwhile, is more or less incapacitated by the emotional toll of long-term unemployment, spending most of his time in bed, staring at the wall.

Eniolá understands that the kind of life he aspires to can be achieved only through a university education, not through the tailoring apprenticeship he is barely maintaining or the government schools where teachers rarely show up. His only hope is to graduate from the second-rate private school his parents cannot afford, where children are beaten when their school fees are late. While the novel outlines the impossible choices families must confront daily — eat, pay rent or pay school fees? — it is the social and psychological hardships that we feel most viscerally: Every term, Eniolá’s “lips grew heavier and heavier whenever he wanted to discuss his school fees with his parents.” Parents agonize over giving their children something better, only to be haunted by the shame that comes with admitting defeat, or with giving up. Eniolá’s father “often seemed slightly surprised and disappointed to have woken up,” Adébáyò writes.

In contrast, Wúràolá, a 28-year-old hospital resident in the same city, is overworked and subject to the pressures of an underfunded health service; but because she is affluent and well educated, she exists in an altogether different reality. Despite her promising medical career, the women in her family can think of little worse than her remaining unmarried at 30, and worry that Wúràolá’s boyfriend, Kúnlé, a TV newscaster and the son of a well-to-do surgeon with political aspirations, is wasting her time. The reader instead worries about his controlling and intrusive behavior. If poverty closes doors again and again, financial security does not always offer protection.

Both families have experienced the precarity of the middle class. The misfortunes Wúràolá’s mother, Yèyé, experienced growing up have taught her that the world is a harder place to survive than Wúràolá, born into wealth, realizes. Yèyé “had never been able to shake the sense that life was war, a series of battles with the occasional spell of good things.” And so, with the privilege afforded to her by marrying Wúràolá’s wealthy father, Yèyé lives her life preparing for a rainy day. And Eniolá’s family, robbed of their middle-class income in an instant, lurches from one crisis to the next, stuck in an endless present. Eniolá can work toward building his own professional future, but Yèyé knows what he does not: that “real wealth was intergenerational, and the way Nigeria was set up, your parentage would often matter more than your qualifications.”

The plot is accelerated by the upcoming elections for governor, in which Kúnlé’s father is challenging the unscrupulous incumbent — a high-stakes political race that draws the novel’s main players to its center. The device of the sleazy politician is not unfamiliar; trust in our leaders does not seem especially high anywhere at the moment. But Adébáyò’s timely novel — Nigerians will vote in a general election at the end of February — indicts a political class that shows little concern for tackling their constituents’ dire realities, and even makes effective use of those difficulties for their own ends. As this book shows, the resulting political factionalism plays out most tragically in the streets, injuring those far removed from power and fueling a culture where political violence against ordinary people has become normalized.

In one sense, this story line offers little ambiguity; its villains are predictably corrupt, the cruelty of their methods operatic. But Adébáyò humanizes those sucked into the vortex of that power with a striking compassion — the characters’ misjudgments and delusions are deeply and empathetically imagined, wholly alive. The outcome of these errors binds Eniolá’s and Wúràolá’s fates forever, the collision of their worlds underscoring their shared frailty.

Readers around the world may want to turn their gazes from the poor on their neighborhood sidewalks, but the inescapable truth is that the inhabitants of any place remain bound to one another. Not just by space or circumstance, but by our shared vulnerability to the whims of socioeconomic forces, by the recognition that another human’s longings are not so different from our own.

Aamina Ahmad is the author of “The Return of Faraz Ali.”

A SPELL OF GOOD THINGS | By Ayòbámi Adébáyò | 332 pp. | Alfred A. Knopf | $28

Aamina Ahmad is the author of “The Return of Faraz Ali.”

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**End of Document**



[***As Nevada Strikes Gold, Working-Class Voters Miss the Bonanza***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5Y8B-W241-DXY4-X54Y-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Length:** 1497 words

**Byline:** By Jack Healy and Roger Kisby

**Body**

HENDERSON, Nev. -- The signs of Nevada's resurgent economy are everywhere in this community outside Las Vegas, the fastest-growing city in one of the country's fastest-growing states.

New housing developments are spilling up the mountainsides, filled with families and retirees fleeing California and the East Coast for sunshine, cheaper land and lower taxes. Warehouses are sprouting beside a huge new practice facility for the Las Vegas Raiders football team -- another set of California transplants. Even the names on new apartments and Spanish-tiled subdivisions mirror the optimism of a state on a hot streak after years of a plodding economic recovery: Elysian. Inspirada.

''It's a boomtown,'' said Ivonne Hernandez, 28, who was in high school when her family lost their home in the housing crash.

But Ms. Hernandez and other middle-class voters say they are not sharing in Nevada's jackpot. As the state handed out millions in tax incentives to lure businesses here, ***working-class*** voters say they are struggling to keep up with rising rents and still feel economically vulnerable more than a decade after the recession plunged Las Vegas's tourism and construction-dependent economy into disarray.

Today, Ms. Hernandez has a good-paying job at a gas company, but said she has been unable to afford an apartment of her own. She has already voted early for Senator Bernie Sanders ahead of Saturday's Democratic caucuses. ''There's just not opportunity out here for me.''

Nikki Peters, who markets time shares in Henderson, said that despite the booming economy, her family struggles. She and her husband voted early for Mr. Sanders this weekend because they feel he cares about people like them.

''It's not better,'' said Ms. Peters. ''We can't afford to take vacations. We can only pay bills.''

Nevada lagged in recovering from the chasm of the recession, but it is now growing at a faster clip than much of the country. In southern Nevada, median home prices have increased by 40 percent to $305,000, according to the Las Vegas Realtors group, and builders now complain they cannot find enough workers.

As new neighborhoods sprawl into the creosote desert, local officials here in Clark County have begun warning they are running out of space, and have proposed opening new federal lands to development. In Reno, a flood of newcomers from the Bay Area and companies including the electric-car maker Tesla have set off a runaway spree of growth.

To President Trump's supporters, Nevada's growth has become the strongest argument for his re-election. Housing prices have rebounded. Marquee projects like a $4 billion Resorts World development and the Raiders' onyx-black stadium are reshaping the Vegas skyline.

Victoria Seaman, a Republican Las Vegas councilwoman, lauds the president for it all. She recently wrote an op-ed declaring that Nevada was the beneficiary of a ''blue-collar boom'' driven by Mr. Trump's tax cuts and trade policies. Over the past six months, 500 new businesses have opened in her ward on the west side of the city.

''I don't think he gets enough credit,'' Ms. Seaman said in her seventh-floor city offices overlooking a jumble of half-built buildings, shortly before she dashed off for a security screening to meet Mr. Trump as he made a campaign swing through Las Vegas.

Henderson, the second-largest city in Nevada, with 316,000 residents, cultivates an image as Vegas's genial kid sibling, a spread of subdivisions, golf courses and master-planned communities knit together by the decidedly un-Sin City slogan, ''A Place to Call Home.''

It is whiter than the rest of Nevada, which is nearly 30 percent Latino and 10 percent black, but local officials and demographers say waves of new arrivals are transforming it into a more diverse suburb with an increasing number of foreign-born residents.

''There was a lot of empty real estate here for many years after the recession,'' said Scott Muelrath, chief executive of Henderson's Chamber of Commerce, as he drove down St. Rose Parkway. And now, ''You can go two weeks and come down this street, and there'll be something new going on.''

He passed just-opened big-box stores and bulldozers leveling the rocky ground for new shipping and distribution warehouses. Henderson, like the rest of Nevada, has tried to diversify its economy since the crash to make it less vulnerable to Nevada's boom-and-bust cycles. Google has opened a data center, and plans are underway to build a machine-tool plant and a huge Amazon fulfillment center.

Of the more than 141,000 people who moved to Nevada in 2018, about 50,000 of them were from California, The Las Vegas Review-Journal reported, amplifying an eastward flow that goes back decades. Today, nearly a third of the eligible voters in Clark County, which contains about 70 percent of Nevada's population, were born in California, said Robert Lang, the executive director of Brookings Mountain West. Only one in 10 is from Nevada.

Political analysts argue the recent surge in migration has helped Democrats solidify their control in Nevada. Democrats have about 110,000 more registered voters than Republicans, and have a powerful turnout machine in the unions that represent thousands of casino and hotel workers.

The culinary union, for instance, is particularly powerful because it represents many of the workers in Las Vegas's casinos. Leaders of the group, which is over half Latino, have said they are opposed to Mr. Sanders's single-payer plan.

''This is a very difficult state for any Republican to win statewide,'' said Jon Ralston, the editor of The Nevada Independent.

But Nevada is also drawing people fed up with blue-state liberalism. Tamra West, 42, a real estate office manager, and her husband decided on a whim to sell their house in Riverside, Calif., and move to a rental in Henderson. Ms. West said Nevada's low taxes hewed more to her conservative economic values.

Though Ms. West's husband is a registered Democrat, she said they are both solidly behind Mr. Trump's re-election. As the Democratic candidates debated this week at the Paris resort, Ms. West said she worried that their economic policies would torpedo the housing market by raising interest rates and taxes.

''Democrats are not pro-business,'' she said.

Nevada's growth is at the heart of Ms. Hernandez's job. She coordinates natural-gas hookups for the new businesses that have helped lift job growth here to an annual rate of 2.5 percent since the end of 2016, a full percentage point higher than the national average, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

After working as a contractor for two years, she celebrated getting hired full time last year by renting her first apartment. It was more than a milestone: Her parents lost their home and declared bankruptcy during the crash. She lost her college scholarship in Nevada after she and her family relocated to Utah looking for construction work for her stepfather.

Ms. Hernandez loved the one-bedroom apartment she found in Henderson, but said she could not cope with the $1,468 she paid on rent, utilities and internet. Rents across Nevada have increased about 15 percent since 2016, about double the national average, according to Zillow. Ms. Hernandez moved out a month ago and is now living with her boyfriend's mother.

''It feels like you can't catch up,'' she said.

With the national economy growing and unemployment at 3.6 percent -- slightly lower than Nevada's rate of 3.8 percent -- the fight to frame the economy is an election-year battlefield.

Mr. Trump boasts about a ''great American comeback'' while the Democratic candidates hoping to replace him focus on slow wage growth, soaring student debt and a chasm between the rich and everybody else.

Adjusted for inflation, Nevada's median household income of $61,864 is still about $4,000 less than families earned before the recession. The lagging pace of wage growth has sharpened debates about whether Nevada's boom-and-bust economy is growing sustainably this time, or building another bubble that will hurt the poorest when it bursts.

When Rita Story, 61, lost her telecom job in 2018, she said that family and the promise of a fresh start in a growing economy pulled her to move from Indiana to Las Vegas with her 24-year-old daughter.

There is plenty of work, but Ms. Story said they have struggled to find anything full time. She is earning $13 an hour doing tax-season work at an accounting office, and her daughter works part-time retail shifts. They are sleeping on a rollout bed and couch in her sister's home, and hoping that a Democratic president will lift their wages and lower their $500 monthly health care costs.

''That's my No. 1 -- jobs that pay you enough,'' Ms. Story said as she waited in line to vote early for the California businessman Tom Steyer in the caucuses this week. ''I'm starting over. I thought it might have been better.''

Nelson D. Schwartz contributed reporting from New York.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/21/us/nevada-caucuses-economy.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/21/us/nevada-caucuses-economy.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: A new complex for the N.F.L.'s Raiders. The team is part of a wave of transplants to Las Vegas. (A1)

A flood of new subdivisions with names like Inspirada, above, in Henderson, reflect a feeling of optimism in Nevada, where builders say they can't find enough workers.

Rita Story has struggled to find full-time work since losing her telecom job in 2018. She said she was voting for Tom Steyer.

''It's a boomtown,'' said Ivonne Hernandez, center, with her mother and stepfather. Ms. Hernandez has a good-paying job but can't afford her own apartment. She said she voted for Bernie Sanders. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY ROGER KISBY FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A12)

**Load-Date:** February 22, 2020

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[***Scapegoated by Everyone, Wanted by No One***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68PB-KPJ1-DXY4-X0NR-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Length:** 994 words

**Byline:** By Joshua Levkowitz

**Body**

ANTAKYA, Turkey -- It was the Syrians who were responsible for the earthquakes. That's what a Turkish man told Seyfeddin Selim, a refugee from Homs, Syria, who used to sell groceries in Antakya, the capital of Hatay province in southern Turkey. When the earthquakes hit in February, Mr. Selim's shop was cleared out by looters before he could get there.

The blame that followed added insult to injury, but it wasn't anything new. Mr. Selim didn't say anything to the man in his defense, he told me, because he was worried an altercation could get him deported. But when I spoke to him months later, the encounter still made him burn up inside. He didn't have money to replace the stock, so now he tries to make money however he can -- repairing cellphone screens and handling informal money transfers, known as hawala, from the counter of his shop. Now homeless, he sometimes sleeps in the shop, sometimes in a friend's tent.

Turkey is host to the largest number of refugees of any country in the world -- including about 3.6 million Syrians. For the first few years after the Syrian conflict began in 2011, Turkey's open-door policy was a source of national pride, and Turkey was lauded for its emergency care.

Twelve years, a collapsing currency and runaway inflation have changed the mood. Hate crimes have risen. Reports and rumors accuse Syrians of being responsible for myriad, occasionally conflicting problems in the country: They get salaries from the Turkish government without working and they're behind the increase in the number of people begging. They push ***working-class*** wages down but force taxi prices up. They're the reason Turks have to wait longer for public services. They commit voter fraud. Their very presence invites natural disasters.

Hatay is Turkey's southernmost province, poking down into Syria like a thumb. Syrians started crossing into Hatay in the early days of the uprising. By the time the earthquakes hit in late winter this year, more than 400,000 Syrian refugees were living in the province, making up around a quarter of the total population.

Many, including Mr. Selim, would like to make their way to Europe, but the money -- nearly $9,000, Mr. Selim said -- that smugglers want for the trip across the sea is prohibitive. Instead, they have been stuck in a kind of extended limbo, unwanted by the country they're in, unable to move on and unwilling to go back.

President Bashar al-Assad of Syria, meanwhile, has been staging a remarkable comeback from his long isolation. In May, he attended an Arab League summit, in Saudi Arabia, for the first time in more than a decade. In June, a meeting of officials from Turkey, Syria, Russia and Iran in Kazakhstan had the stated goal of normalizing Syrian-Turkish relations.

Returning refugees to Syria is a big part of the motivation for this normalization process. Syrians might not be ready to move back, but neighboring countries are ready to move on.

In 2011, President Recep Tayyip Erdogan of Turkey welcomed Syrian refugees as ''brothers,'' and for a time, they appeared to fit his vision of Turkey -- according to the government, around 200,000 Syrians have become Turkish citizens.

But times have changed. Mr. Erdogan announced a plan not long before the presidential elections in May to repatriate one million Syrian ''brothers and sisters'' to northern Syria.

Mr. Erdogan has said that his government has already facilitated the voluntary return of nearly 600,000 Syrians. In 2022, Human Rights Watch reported that Turkish officials had coerced hundreds of Syrians into signing ''voluntary return'' forms and then forced them across the border ''at gunpoint.'' (Being able to claim that refugees are willingly returning to a conflict is important because Turkey is bound by the principle of nonrefoulement under the 1951 Refugee Convention.) Syrians in Antakya told me that these returns continue and that they'd had friends go back across the border and disappear.

Even so, when Mr. Erdogan won the second round, many Syrians were relieved. In Antakya, some still see him as an ally who welcomed them into the country. Khaled Amr, from Aleppo, sitting in a blue tent within sight of his collapsed apartment building, told me that his ''only happy memory this year is that Erdogan won.''

Others said that the one million would surely include many in Hatay because of its proximity to the border and were anxiously pursuing their applications for Turkish citizenship, paying bribes to get the necessary documents or enrolling in a university. Anything to not be sent back.

On a recent Sunday, Om Luay, a 65-year-old widow, sat on a bench at Hama Social Club in Antakya's northern outskirts, where a group of Syrians sat playing cards and sipping mate. In 2015 she had applied for resettlement to Germany, where two of her daughters live. In February, another daughter and her family died in the earthquakes. In May, she finally received a call from Germany telling her to expect an interview soon.

Ms. Luay waited six days in the cold to identify her family's bodies in February, she said. Waiting for anything else was easy.

If she is successful, she will be one of the lucky ones. For Syrians in exile, there were always few good options, and the list is getting shorter.

One evening in Antakya I walked by a cluster of tents where some Syrians were borrowing the glow from a well-lit, post-earthquake encampment for Turks on the other side of a fence. Nobody I spoke with could countenance returning to a country still ruled by Mr. al-Assad. I wondered whether anyone is listening.

Joshua Levkowitz is a fellow at the Institute of Current World Affairs.

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**Graphic**

This article appeared in print on page A23.

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[***Home Cooking Becomes a Hot-Button Issue in Arizona Politics***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:683G-XW11-DXY4-X2FK-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Length:** 1529 words

**Byline:** By Jack Healy

**Body**

Gov. Katie Hobbs vetoed a bill that would have allowed an informal network of home cooks to sell perishable food legally. The backlash has been fierce.

PHOENIX -- Milagros Cruz was down to her last $75, and sleeping in a car, when she heard her mother's voice guiding her in a dream: My girl, make tamales.

Arizona did not make it easy. Though the state promotes itself as a low-tax, low-regulation haven for private enterprise, it does not allow the sale of perishable foods made at home. So for years, a thriving economy of ***working-class***, mostly Latina home cooks has operated underground, selling tacos, tres leches cakes and chile-dusted corn illegally from living rooms and outside laundromats and soccer games.

Ms. Cruz, 41, sells her pillowy green-chile and pork tamales near a Phoenix auto-parts store, and worries about getting cited under a state law that punishes home cooks who break the rules with a $500 fine and six months in jail. She said she would gladly operate legally if she could, but the state offered no way for her to do so.

This month, Republicans who control the state's fractious Legislature came together with Democrats in a moment of unusual bipartisan accord to try to change all that. They passed a bill that would let Arizona's home cooks register with the state to legally sell perishable foods like salsas and tamales.

But Katie Hobbs, the state's new Democratic governor, vetoed the measure last week, citing concerns about the potential for food-borne illnesses, as well as rats and insects in home kitchens.

Her veto set off a ferocious culinary and cultural backlash from the Capitol to kitchens across Arizona, offering a political lesson for the new governor: Do not mess with the tamale makers.

''I respect our governor -- I voted for our governor -- but this veto, I do not agree with,'' said Imelda Hartley, who started her culinary career making tamales from home and now runs her Happy Tamales business in a commercial kitchen. ''It's hurting our Latino community,'' Ms. Hartley said of the veto.

She said cooking from home was the only realistic choice for immigrants, many of them undocumented, who wanted to get a toehold in running a food business. A cook can book time in a shared commercial kitchen more cheaply than renting an entire restaurant or buying a food truck, but Ms. Hartley said some of those shared spaces had long waiting lists and could be hard to reach without a car.

Republicans, who slammed Ms. Hobbs for preserving restrictions on small businesses, tried unsuccessfully to override her veto on Tuesday, with a rally featuring food vendors outside the Capitol and ''Free the Tamales'' stickers. But most Democrats decided to stand by the governor on Tuesday, with one Democratic lawmaker deriding the override effort as Republicans ''pandering'' to Latino voters.

Christian Slater, a spokesman for the governor, said Ms. Hobbs would work with lawmakers to balance the interests of small businesses with public health concerns.

The governor's Democratic allies have applauded her for vetoing or promising to veto other Republican bills, including efforts to limit transgender rights, restrict discussions of race in schools and weaken abortion rights. But some Democrats have also criticized her for killing what is widely being called the ''tamale bill.''

They said her move was a slap in the face of Latino constituents who voted for Ms. Hobbs, and whose support was crucial in a politically fractured state that is about 32 percent Latino. Critics said her veto would hurt the ***working-class*** immigrants that Ms. Hobbs had championed during her campaign.

''We should not criminalize poor people for trying to put food on the table,'' said State Representative Alma Hernandez, one of five Democrats who voted to override the veto on Tuesday. ''That is just absurd.''

Ms. Hernandez said she felt personally connected to the issue. Her mother had worked as a biochemist in Mexico, but after immigrating to the United States, and after Ms. Hernandez's father was injured on his construction job, she said her mother had to start a new career out of the family's kitchen.

''She used to be the Cake Lady,'' Ms. Hernandez said. ''If she didn't do that, we wouldn't have had gas to move our car. We wouldn't have been able to put food on the table. I'm so proud of that, and I'm so glad she did it.''

Under Arizona's tamale bill (or ''tamal bill,'' to use the Spanish spelling), home cooks making perishable foods who take a $10 online food-safety class, register with the state and label their foods could join the roughly 15,000 people who are already registered as part of Arizona's legal ''cottage food'' industry, selling homemade tortillas, cookies, roasted nuts and other foods that do not need refrigeration. Several tamale vendors said they would gladly register with the state if they could.

Informal food businesses are an economic lifeline for thousands of people across the country, many of them undocumented women: mango vendors in Manhattan, boiled-peanut stands along Georgia highways, bacon-wrapped hot dog stands outside Los Angeles sporting events and many others.

But it is precarious work, and vendors say they worry about being fined or reported to the authorities. In 2019, a woman selling churros in Brooklyn was handcuffed by the police, and last year a Texas county health department confiscated 25 dozen tamales that a couple was selling illegally from the back of their car.

''I always worry about being cited,'' said Javier Lara, 48, who works at a countertop maker and on weekends sells green-chile tamales from his kitchen in Phoenix, using a recipe his grandmother taught him. ''I make minimum wage -- I've got to make extra money. Anything I can do to survive in this world.''

Every year, he said he makes a six-hour pilgrimage to Hatch, N.M., to buy 300 pounds of green chiles, and then spends days afterward peeling and seeding them by hand. Every week, as orders pour in from his Facebook page and over the phone, Mr. Lara said, he spreads masa dough onto hundreds of corn husks, adds a bit of meat, cheese or chile, and then folds up each tamale and cooks them in a huge steel pot for two and a half hours.

It is exhausting work, he said, because he suffers from arthritis, but ''my hands do wonders with tamales.''

The debate over food safety in Arizona could affect many kinds of foods, but it has focused on tamales because they hold a special, Proustian place in Arizona's culinary soul. Tamales are a staple of Christmases and birthdays, the inspiration for the farming town of Somerton's December Tamale Festival and the subject of passionate debate: Lard or no lard? Dough from sweet elote corn kernels, or more neutral masa? Wrapped in banana leaves or corn husks?

For Yanet Guadalupe Azamar Uscanga, selling Veracruz-style tamales out of her tiny kitchen in suburban Phoenix is a ladder to bigger dreams -- running her own restaurant, paying off debts and helping to support her 11-year-old granddaughter.

''I'm doing honest work to get ahead,'' Ms. Uscanga said. ''I try to be good to the whole world.''

She awakens at 4 a.m. to make tamales, opening windows and blasting fans as she stirs a huge pot of masa in her ground-floor kitchen, where a statue of a grinning chef oversees the operation.

She earns more now selling tamales, cheesecake and frozen ice pops than she did from prior jobs cleaning hotel rooms, and she rarely has to leave home to make a delivery. Customers arrive after work to pick up their orders, have a glass of hibiscus tea and talk about children, work and life.

''This is therapy,'' Ms. Uscanga said.

Lately, her customers are buzzing about the politics of tamales. Ms. Uscanga said she lived in fear of losing her business, and with it the money she had invested in food, kitchen supplies and an extra refrigerator.

On Sunday afternoon, Beny Vela Vaaz arrived to place an order for her son's 15th birthday party, and to commiserate.

''It's so bad,'' Ms. Vaaz said of the veto. ''We need the food that she makes.''

Nearly a year after that night in the car when Ms. Cruz dreamed about her mother's advice, her new business, called La Tamalería, is growing fast.

Ms. Cruz and her wife, Alexandra Herrera, make more than 1,000 tamales by hand every week, cooking huge cuts of beef and pork, slicing dozens of ears of corn and knotting the tamales closed with strands of corn husk, the way Ms. Cruz's mother, who died in 2017, taught her to do.

They began their business in an open-air hallway outside Ms. Cruz's sister's apartment, but they have since been able to rent their own apartment and also recently moved into a rented kitchen space. Ms. Cruz wants to expand the business into a tamale empire, while Ms. Herrera hopes to one day start her own business manufacturing construction supplies.

''We're here making tamales,'' Ms. Herrera said. ''At the end is your dream.''

But not yet. Late on Sunday afternoon, they had a long list of orders and 350 steaming tamales to sell. Ms. Herrera packed them into coolers and headed out to the parking lot. Ms. Cruz stayed behind to start on the next day's batch.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/04/25/us/arizona-tamales-katie-hobbs-veto.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/04/25/us/arizona-tamales-katie-hobbs-veto.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: A bill to give people like Alexandra Herrera a way to legally sell perishable food was vetoed. (A1)

Yanet Guadalupe Azamar Uscanga, above center, hopes homemade tamales will help her support her 11-year-old granddaughter. Imelda Hartley, below right, says cooking from home is the only realistic route for immigrants seeking to start a food business.

Milagros Cruz, left, and her wife, Alexandra Herrera, make more than 1,000 tamales a week. Under the vetoed bill, home cooks could register with the state and take an online food-safety class. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY CAITLIN O'HARA FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A17) This article appeared in print on page A1, A17.

**Load-Date:** April 26, 2023

**End of Document**



[***Banks Opens Run for Seat In the Senate From Indiana***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67BK-Y211-JBG3-620S-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

January 18, 2023 Wednesday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; National Desk; Pg. 14

**Length:** 512 words

**Byline:** By Jonathan Weisman

**Body**

The seat will be open as Senator Mike Braun runs for governor instead.

Representative Jim Banks, a staunch conservative with the backing of a deep-pocketed political action committee, opened his bid for an Indiana Senate seat on Tuesday with an ad highlighting his deployment to Afghanistan and issuing a broadside against ''radical socialist Democrats.''

Mike Braun, who currently holds the seat and is one of the state's two Republican senators, will run for governor next year, creating an opening that could lead to a crowded primary fight in the reliably Republican state. Mr. Banks, who recently led the House's Republican Study Committee, a conservative caucus that is broader and less confrontational than the House's Freedom Caucus, turned to the Senate after he lost his bid to be whip, the No. 3 Republican position in the G.O.P.'s new House majority.

He enters the contest with the backing of the Club for Growth, a moneyed conservative political action committee that spent millions of dollars to get its preferred House and Senate candidates across the line in the November midterms. The group and its super PAC ''are prepared to spend whatever it takes to help Banks secure the nomination and victory,'' its president, David McIntosh, said Tuesday.

The Club for Growth is already spending money against another possible candidate, the former Indiana governor Mitch Daniels, whom it considers too conciliatory. Mr. Banks signaled that he too would focus on Mr. Daniels, who was also president of Purdue University and a White House budget director under President George W. Bush.

Mr. Daniels a decade ago called for a truce on cultural issues, a stance Mr. Banks appeared to call out in an interview with Politico, saying that issues like abortion and gender ''matter more than at any point in my lifetime.''

''I'll never be calling for a truce on social issues or cultural issues,'' he told Politico.

Mr. Banks also has the endorsement of Representative Larry Bucshon, another Indiana Republican, and Senator Tom Cotton, Republican of Arkansas.

But Indiana's current governor, Eric Holcomb, who is facing a term limit, is considering a run for the Senate, as is Representative Victoria Spartz, whose Ukrainian birth has elevated her voice in Congress.

In his announcement, Mr. Banks called himself ''a small-town kid from a ***working-class*** home'' with deep roots in Indiana and a record fighting overseas and in Congress for ''conservative Hoosier values.'' He threw in a nod to former President Donald J. Trump, calling him ''the strongest president in my lifetime.''

Mr. Braun, a businessman who had little political experience when he ran against Senator Joe Donnelly, a Democrat, in 2018, beat him by six percentage points. His victory came two years after Representative Todd Young breezed past Evan Bayh, a Democrat and former senator who had come out of retirement to try a comeback. Those defeats signaled just how difficult a Democratic comeback in the state would be.

In November, Mr. Young won re-election with nearly 59 percent of the vote.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/01/17/us/politics/jim-banks-senate-indiana.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/01/17/us/politics/jim-banks-senate-indiana.html)

**Graphic**

This article appeared in print on page A14.

**Load-Date:** January 18, 2023

**End of Document**



[***Representative Jim Banks Announces Senate Bid in Indiana***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67BF-1DW1-JBG3-611Y-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

January 17, 2023 Tuesday 13:27 EST

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**Section:** US; politics

**Length:** 514 words

**Byline:** Jonathan Weisman

**Highlight:** The seat will be open as Senator Mike Braun runs for governor instead.

**Body**

The seat will be open as Senator Mike Braun runs for governor instead.

Representative Jim Banks, a staunch conservative with the backing of a deep-pocketed political action committee, opened his bid for an Indiana Senate seat on Tuesday with [*an ad*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7sA9aTQg5bw) highlighting his deployment to Afghanistan and issuing a broadside against “radical socialist Democrats.”

Mike Braun, who currently holds the seat and is one of the state’s two Republican senators, will run for governor next year, creating an opening that could lead to a crowded primary fight in the reliably Republican state. Mr. Banks, who recently led the House’s Republican Study Committee, a conservative caucus that is broader and less confrontational than the House’s Freedom Caucus, turned to the Senate after he lost his bid to be whip, the No. 3 Republican position in the G.O.P.’s new House majority.

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The Club for Growth is already spending money against another possible candidate, [*the former Indiana governor Mitch Daniels*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/12/19/us/politics/mitch-daniels-indiana-senate.html), whom it considers too conciliatory. Mr. Banks signaled that he too would focus on Mr. Daniels, who was also president of Purdue University and a White House budget director under President George W. Bush.

Mr. Daniels a decade ago [*called for a truce on cultural issues*](https://www.cato.org/blog/mitch-daniels-social-issues-truce), a stance Mr. Banks appeared to call out in [*an interview with Politico*](https://www.politico.com/news/2023/01/17/banks-conservative-indiana-senate-race-00077946?nname=playbook&amp;nid=0000014f-1646-d88f-a1cf-5f46b7bd0000&amp;nrid=0000014e-f0f6-dd93-ad7f-f8f7924c0000&amp;nlid=630318), saying that issues like abortion and gender “matter more than at any point in my lifetime.”

“I’ll never be calling for a truce on social issues or cultural issues,” he told Politico.

Mr. Banks also has the endorsement of Representative Larry Bucshon, another Indiana Republican, and Senator Tom Cotton, Republican of Arkansas.

But Indiana’s [*current governor, Eric Holcomb*](https://www.wishtv.com/news/indiana-news/holcomb-wont-say-if-hes-considering-senate-run-in-2024-therell-be-time-for-me-to-think-about-the-future-in-the-future/), who is facing a term limit, is considering a run for the Senate, as is [*Representative Victoria Spartz*](https://www.politico.com/news/2022/09/23/hoosier-free-for-all-spartz-eyes-senate-run-in-2024-as-braun-pursues-gov-race-00058598), whose Ukrainian birth has elevated her voice in Congress.

In his announcement, Mr. Banks called himself “a small-town kid from a ***working-class*** home” with deep roots in Indiana and a record fighting overseas and in Congress for “conservative Hoosier values.” He threw in a nod to former President Donald J. Trump, calling him “the strongest president in my lifetime.”

Mr. Braun, a businessman who had little political experience when he ran against [*Senator Joe Donnelly*](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/10/21/us/politics/joe-donnelly-indiana-braun-trump.html), a Democrat, in 2018, beat him by [*six percentage points*](https://www.nytimes.com/elections/results/indiana-senate). His victory came two years after Representative Todd Young [*breezed past Evan Bayh*](https://www.nytimes.com/elections/2016/results/indiana-senate-bayh-young), a Democrat and former senator who had come out of retirement [*to try a comeback*](https://www.nytimes.com/2016/10/01/us/politics/evan-bayh-indiana-senate.html). Those defeats signaled just how difficult a Democratic comeback in the state would be.

In November, Mr. Young won re-election with [*nearly 59 percent*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2022/11/08/us/elections/results-indiana-us-senate.html) of the vote.

This article appeared in print on page A14.

**Load-Date:** February 17, 2023

**End of Document**



[***The Hot Issue Bedeviling Arizona’s New Governor: Tamales***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:683B-N5S1-JBG3-64HH-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

April 25, 2023 Tuesday 10:21 EST

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**Section:** US

**Length:** 1620 words

**Byline:** Jack Healy

**Highlight:** Gov. Katie Hobbs vetoed a bill that would have allowed an informal network of home cooks to sell perishable food legally. The backlash has been fierce.

**Body**

Gov. Katie Hobbs vetoed a bill that would have allowed an informal network of home cooks to sell perishable food legally. The backlash has been fierce.

PHOENIX — Milagros Cruz was down to her last $75, and sleeping in a car, when she heard her mother’s voice guiding her in a dream: My girl, make tamales.

Arizona did not make it easy. Though the state promotes itself as a low-tax, low-regulation [*haven*](https://www.azcentral.com/story/money/business/economy/2023/02/10/arizona-leaders-use-phoenix-open-to-tout-state-to-new-businesses/69888684007/) for private enterprise, it does not allow the sale of perishable foods made at home. So for years, a thriving economy of ***working-class***, mostly Latina home cooks has operated underground, selling tacos, tres leches cakes and chile-dusted corn illegally from living rooms and outside laundromats and soccer games.

Ms. Cruz, 41, sells her pillowy green-chile and pork tamales near a Phoenix auto-parts store, and worries about getting cited under a state law that punishes home cooks who break the rules with a $500 fine and six months in jail. She said she would gladly operate legally if she could, but the state offered [*no way*](https://www.azdhs.gov/preparedness/epidemiology-disease-control/food-safety-environmental-services/cottage-food-program/index.php#approved-foods) for her to do so.

This month, Republicans who control the state’s fractious Legislature came together with Democrats in a moment of unusual bipartisan accord to try to change all that. They passed a [*bill*](https://legiscan.com/AZ/votes/HB2509/2023) that would let Arizona’s home cooks register with the state to legally sell perishable foods like salsas and tamales.

But Katie Hobbs, the state’s new Democratic governor, vetoed the measure last week, citing concerns about the potential for food-borne illnesses, as well as rats and insects in home kitchens.

Her [*veto*](https://mcusercontent.com/44a5186aac69c13c570fca36a/files/c5e26d69-d707-597d-0e8a-cba477f316fd/Veto_Letter_2509.pdf) set off a ferocious culinary and cultural backlash from the Capitol to kitchens across Arizona, offering a political lesson for the new governor: Do not mess with the tamale makers.

“I respect our governor — I voted for our governor — but this veto, I do not agree with,” said Imelda Hartley, who started her culinary career making tamales from home and now runs her Happy Tamales business in a commercial kitchen. “It’s hurting our Latino community,” Ms. Hartley said of the veto.

She said cooking from home was the only realistic choice for immigrants, many of them undocumented, who wanted to get a toehold in running a food business. A cook can book time in a shared commercial kitchen more cheaply than renting an entire restaurant or buying a food truck, but Ms. Hartley said some of those shared spaces had long waiting lists and could be hard to reach without a car.

Republicans, who slammed Ms. Hobbs for preserving restrictions on small businesses, tried unsuccessfully to override her veto on Tuesday, with a rally featuring food vendors outside the Capitol and “Free the Tamales” stickers. But most Democrats decided to stand by the governor on Tuesday, with one Democratic lawmaker deriding the override effort as Republicans “pandering” to Latino voters.

Christian Slater, a spokesman for the governor, said Ms. Hobbs would work with lawmakers to balance the interests of small businesses with public health concerns.

The governor’s Democratic allies have applauded her for vetoing or promising to veto other Republican bills, including efforts to limit transgender rights, restrict discussions of race in schools and weaken abortion rights. But some Democrats have also criticized her for killing what is widely being called the “tamale bill.”

They said her move was a slap in the face of Latino constituents who voted for Ms. Hobbs, and whose support was crucial in a politically fractured state that is about 32 percent Latino. Critics said her veto would hurt the ***working-class*** immigrants that Ms. Hobbs had championed during her campaign.

“We should not criminalize poor people for trying to put food on the table,” said State Representative Alma Hernandez, one of five Democrats who voted to override the veto on Tuesday. “That is just absurd.”

Ms. Hernandez said she felt personally connected to the issue. Her mother had worked as a biochemist in Mexico, but after immigrating to the United States, and after Ms. Hernandez’s father was injured on his construction job, she said her mother had to start a new career out of the family’s kitchen.

“She used to be the Cake Lady,” Ms. Hernandez said. “If she didn’t do that, we wouldn’t have had gas to move our car. We wouldn’t have been able to put food on the table. I’m so proud of that, and I’m so glad she did it.”

Under Arizona’s tamale bill (or “tamal bill,” to use the Spanish spelling), home cooks making perishable foods who take a $10 online food-safety class, register with the state and label their foods could join the roughly 15,000 people who are already registered as part of Arizona’s legal “cottage food” industry, selling homemade tortillas, cookies, roasted nuts and other foods that do not need refrigeration. Several tamale vendors said they would gladly register with the state if they could.

[*Informal food businesses are an economic lifeline*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/04/25/dining/queens-corona-plaza-food-vendors.html) for thousands of people across the country, many of them undocumented women: mango vendors in Manhattan, boiled-peanut stands along Georgia highways, bacon-wrapped hot dog stands outside Los Angeles sporting events and many others.

But it is precarious work, and vendors say they worry about being fined or reported to the authorities. In 2019, a woman selling [*churros*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/11/11/nyregion/churro-lady-subway-arrest.html) in Brooklyn was handcuffed by the police, and last year a Texas county health department [*confiscated*](https://www.yourbasin.com/news/health-department-responds-to-viral-tamale-photo/) 25 dozen tamales that a couple was selling illegally from the back of their car.

“I always worry about being cited,” said Javier Lara, 48, who works at a countertop maker and on weekends sells green-chile tamales from his kitchen in Phoenix, using a recipe his grandmother taught him. “I make minimum wage — I’ve got to make extra money. Anything I can do to survive in this world.”

Every year, he said he makes a six-hour pilgrimage to Hatch, N.M., to buy 300 pounds of green chiles, and then spends days afterward peeling and seeding them by hand. Every week, as orders pour in from his Facebook page and over the phone, Mr. Lara said, he spreads masa dough onto hundreds of corn husks, adds a bit of meat, cheese or chile, and then folds up each tamale and cooks them in a huge steel pot for two and a half hours.

It is exhausting work, he said, because he suffers from arthritis, but “my hands do wonders with tamales.”

The debate over food safety in Arizona could affect many kinds of foods, but it has focused on tamales because they hold a special, Proustian place in Arizona’s culinary soul. Tamales are a staple of Christmases and birthdays, the inspiration for the farming town of Somerton’s December Tamale Festival and the subject of passionate debate: Lard or no lard? Dough from sweet elote corn kernels, or more neutral masa? Wrapped in banana leaves or corn husks?

For Yanet Guadalupe Azamar Uscanga, selling Veracruz-style tamales out of her tiny kitchen in suburban Phoenix is a ladder to bigger dreams — running her own restaurant, paying off debts and helping to support her 11-year-old granddaughter.

“I’m doing honest work to get ahead,” Ms. Uscanga said. “I try to be good to the whole world.”

She awakens at 4 a.m. to make tamales, opening windows and blasting fans as she stirs a huge pot of masa in her ground-floor kitchen, where a statue of a grinning chef oversees the operation.

She earns more now selling tamales, cheesecake and frozen ice pops than she did from prior jobs cleaning hotel rooms, and she rarely has to leave home to make a delivery. Customers arrive after work to pick up their orders, have a glass of hibiscus tea and talk about children, work and life.

“This is therapy,” Ms. Uscanga said.

Lately, her customers are buzzing about the politics of tamales. Ms. Uscanga said she lived in fear of losing her business, and with it the money she had invested in food, kitchen supplies and an extra refrigerator.

On Sunday afternoon, Beny Vela Vaaz arrived to place an order for her son’s 15th birthday party, and to commiserate.

“It’s so bad,” Ms. Vaaz said of the veto. “We need the food that she makes.”

Nearly a year after that night in the car when Ms. Cruz dreamed about her mother’s advice, her new business, called La Tamalería, is growing fast.

Ms. Cruz and her wife, Alexandra Herrera, make more than 1,000 tamales by hand every week, cooking huge cuts of beef and pork, slicing dozens of ears of corn and knotting the tamales closed with strands of corn husk, the way Ms. Cruz’s mother, who died in 2017, taught her to do.

They began their business in an open-air hallway outside Ms. Cruz’s sister’s apartment, but they have since been able to rent their own apartment and also recently moved into a rented kitchen space. Ms. Cruz wants to expand the business into a tamale empire, while Ms. Herrera hopes to one day start her own business manufacturing construction supplies.

“We’re here making tamales,” Ms. Herrera said. “At the end is your dream.”

But not yet. Late on Sunday afternoon, they had a long list of orders and 350 steaming tamales to sell. Ms. Herrera packed them into coolers and headed out to the parking lot. Ms. Cruz stayed behind to start on the next day’s batch.

PHOTOS: A bill to give people like Alexandra Herrera a way to legally sell perishable food was vetoed. (A1); Yanet Guadalupe Azamar Uscanga, above center, hopes homemade tamales will help her support her 11-year-old granddaughter. Imelda Hartley, below right, says cooking from home is the only realistic route for immigrants seeking to start a food business.; Milagros Cruz, left, and her wife, Alexandra Herrera, make more than 1,000 tamales a week. Under the vetoed bill, home cooks could register with the state and take an online food-safety class. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY CAITLIN O’HARA FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A17) This article appeared in print on page A1, A17.

**Load-Date:** April 29, 2023

**End of Document**



[***Miami Has Matured into a Cultural Capital. What’s Next?***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69T4-GP61-JBG3-60HB-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

December 5, 2023 Tuesday 14:44 EST

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**Section:** ARTS; design

**Length:** 2285 words

**Highlight:** Thirty years ago, the city was barely a blip on the art world’s radar. Now, partly because of Art Basel, it has become a global hot spot. But can it manage its growing pains?

**Body**

Thirty years ago, the city was barely a blip on the art world’s radar. Now, partly because of Art Basel, it has become a global hot spot. But can it manage its growing pains?

Their move overseas from London was all set. “We were both 23 years old, right out of art school,” recalled the experimental filmmaker Dara Friedman of that moment in the summer of 1992, with her then-boyfriend, now husband, the sculptor Mark Handforth.

“Where could we go that was inexpensive where we could start being artists?” The unlikely answer was a city the art world had deemed a cultural backwater: Miami.

That dismissal of Miami as a merely tropical getaway has shifted. This week sees virtually all eyes within the contemporary art milieu turn to South Florida for the 21st annual [*Art Basel Miami Beach*](https://www.artbasel.com/miami-beach) fair, an event that draws well-heeled art collectors, dealers and curators from around the globe. The Basel fair, open to the public Friday to Sunday and featuring [*277 galleries*](https://www.artbasel.com/miami-beach/the-show) hosting booths inside the Miami Beach Convention Center, is only part of the attraction.

As Basel unfolds, satellite fairs, pop-up exhibitions and splashy art-themed corporate branding exercises will appear throughout greater Miami. All of this artsy activity falls under the Chamber of Commerce-blessed moniker of Miami Art Week, though virtually everyone attending any chunk of it simply refers to it as Art Basel.

Basel’s spotlight has also helped catalyze a year-round art scene for the city by putting its homegrown talent on an international stage and convincing locals and out-of-towners to pay attention.

Miami has established itself as part of the constellation of cities worldwide known for their arts and culture. Paris, London and New York — also home to major art fairs — had a head start getting into this elite club, with their storied museums and centuries-long commitment to arts. Other cities that started hosting art fairs more recently, including Hong Kong and Seoul, are newer arrivals to the party.

But no one has made an entrance quite as striking as Miami’s. In the perception of many, the city has recently eclipsed Chicago as the third American art city after Los Angeles and New York. Accompanying this transformation have been charges of art-fueled [*gentrification*](https://www.nytimes.com/2015/11/24/arts/design/miamis-art-world-sets-sights-on-little-haiti-neighborhood.html), as previously low-income neighborhoods fill with new museums and galleries, and fears that post-Basel growth is unsustainable.

Concurrently, the cost of living has soared — a recent Miami Herald-led study found the average monthly rent on a one-bedroom apartment had increased by 80 percent since 2019. Only Boston, San Francisco and the New York City area had higher rents.

A look at separate generations of successful Miami artists whose careers came of age before, during and since the 2002 [*debut of Art Basel*](https://www.nytimes.com/2002/12/22/arts/art-architecture-for-the-swiss-in-miami-beach-a-five-day-wingding.html?searchResultPosition=1) illustrates the impact of the fair and the challenges ahead.

Dara Friedman and Mark Handforth

Daily expenses were foremost on Ms. Friedman’s mind as she planned her and Mr. Handforth’s 1992 move “from art school into the world.” Raised in West Palm Beach, Fla., and Germany, Ms. Friedman was eager to return to the United States. A scouting visit that spring sold her on Miami’s affordability.

“Fast cash from the A.T.M. in New York City was $100 and fast cash from the A.T.M. in Miami was $20,” she explained. Miami’s film and fashion industries offered gig work, and she said she had already lined up an apartment in an Art Deco building on Miami Beach for $350 a month. Best of all, the Slade School of Fine Art, Mr. Handforth’s alma mater, had just awarded him a 4,000 pound travel grant (about $11,000 today). “I remember thinking, ‘We can do this!’”

The Slade’s grant administrators were less convinced, Ms. Friedman said. “When they found out Mark was going to use the travel grant to go to Miami, they revoked it. They said ‘Miami is not a serious art place.’ We were supposed to go to Paris or Berlin. But Miami? Not so fast.”

Three decades later, now ensconced in a greenery-shrouded home in Miami’s Coconut Grove neighborhood, [*Ms. Friedman*](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/11/15/arts/design/dara-friedman-miami-perez-art-museum-miami-perfect-strangers.html) and [*Mr. Handforth*](https://www.luhringaugustine.com/artists/mark-handforth#tab:thumbnails) have had the last laugh. The city figures large in both Ms. Friedman’s [*short films*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m_GWT6jah_U), with their loving focus on otherworldly moments within misleadingly ordinary lives, and in Mr. Handforth’s [*playfully tweaked street objects*](https://mcachicago.org/publications/video/2011/mca-chicago-plaza-project-mark-handforth) and [*fluorescent light tubes*](https://icamiami.org/video/ica-speaks-mark-handforth-full-lecture/). And both artists have enviable CVs packed with museum shows, public art commissions and private collection placements.

Mr. Handforth credits Miami as key to that success. It was the city’s notorious hurricanes that first shifted his own thinking about art, he said.

“It was not just having a lamppost down in the street. It was this idea that within a very short period of time, everything that seems so solid could suddenly become so flexible.”

And it was the cheap rent of the ’90s that gave the couple freedom from full-time day jobs to put their art-making ideas into practice, he added. By the time Basel’s circus rolled into town, they were already positioned to take full advantage of its opportunities for further exposure.

Hernan Bas

The local hoopla surrounding Basel was still in the future in 1996, when [*Hernan Bas*](https://www.snitzer.com/hernan-bas-gallery) graduated from the [*New World School of the Arts*](https://nwsa.mdc.edu/highschool/), a magnet high school in Miami, and left for Cooper Union in New York.

“Miami had such a small, kind of nonexistent art scene,” Mr. Bas recalled of that period, “you just felt like you needed to go somewhere else to make anything happen.”

He lasted only a single semester, though, expelled for “not going to classes,” he admitted with a sheepish laugh. “We were painting nude figures and 90 percent of the kids in the class had never done that before. I’d been doing that back at New World since the 10th grade. There were other factors, like my just being young. But generally speaking, I think I’d had my fill of art school.”

His two roommates, fellow art students also from Miami, were outwardly sympathetic, Mr. Bas said. “But they told me later that when I got kicked out of Cooper they said to each other, ‘Oh, he’s going back to Miami, and that’s a death sentence. He’s never going to get anywhere now.’”

Not quite. Mr. Bas is now arguably Miami’s most sought-after painter, with his homoerotically charged portraits of waifs and dandies attracting critical praise and steady sales — if you can manage to buy one from his galleries. Demand remains so strong, and supply so tight, that Mr. Bas’s work regularly commands mid-six figure prices at auction; last November, one particularly large painting [*sold for 11.2 million Hong Kong dollars*](https://www.christies.com/lot/lot-6404625) (the equivalent of about $1.4 million) at Christie’s in Hong Kong.

His new show, “The Conceptualists,” 35 portraits riffing off his signature evocation of lithe beauty, is timed to open for Basel at Miami Beach’s Bass Museum.

Fredric Snitzer, Mr. Bas’s gallerist in Miami, cites the artist’s innate talent — he began showing his work several years before Basel arrived. But it was the fair, Mr. Snitzer said, that catapulted Bas from a local to a global sensation. “I thought Hernan was the poster child for Art Basel.”

Miami’s pre-eminent art collectors had already begun to buy Mr. Bas’s work in 2001 and early 2002, Mr. Snitzer said, but Basel “was the rocket. Because if a handful of people got led to the work before, now thousands of people paraded through the fair and said ‘Who’s this guy? It’s all sold? Put me on the waiting list immediately.’ So there began the whole bigger game.”

Mr. Bas’s rise also marked a generational break. Mr. Snitzer had made his name in the early ’90s by exhibiting a [*group of Cuban-exile artists*](https://www.newsweek.com/next-wave-havana-197036) freshly arrived in Miami, concentrating on reflecting the trauma of daily life in Castro’s Cuba and the poignant loss associated with escaping from it.

But in late 1998, when Mr. Bas and several kindred young artists — Naomi Fisher, Bert Rodriguez and Shannon Spadaro — pitched Mr. Snitzer on a group show, their outlook was something altogether new.

“They were Miami kids, they were born and raised here,” Mr. Snitzer explained. “If they were Cuban American, like Hernan, they weren’t born in Cuba.”

Their art reflected that change.

“It was simply responding to Miami” — a new Miami of daytime film sets and neon-bathed nightlife. The result was November 1998’s “Fashion Issue: four simple steps towards younger looking skin,” a show, Mr. Snitzer explained, “about growing up in the shadow of a fashion community and the impact they were feeling from South Beach with all of its photo shoots and models.”

The young artists’ collective spirit took a beating after Basel’s ensuing gold-rush mentality. Mr. Bas began spending much of his time in Detroit.

“I had to get away from Miami and the whole scene,” he said. “There was a sort of semi-competitiveness that turned me off.” He recalled the steady stream of collectors and art advisers who tried to sidestep his dealers to buy a painting directly.

“It had gotten so crazy during the early fair years that people were coming to the studio and knocking on the door without an invitation,” he said. “‘No, you can’t just come in! Go away!’”

Bas is now back in Miami year round. He’s made his peace with the fevered state of his market, but he’s also grateful for it.

“Miami is just ridiculously one of the most expensive cities,” he said. “I still live here. I don’t dislike it. But my God, if I didn’t have the money to afford it. …” He trailed off silently.

Jared McGriff

It’s not only Miami artists who have been closely tracking Art Basel’s local impact. [*Jared McGriff*](https://spinelloprojects.com/artist/jared-mcgriff/) was watching from the San Francisco Bay Area, where he worked in finance and then tech for almost two decades, carving out time to quietly paint on the side.

His Instagram handle, [*@watercolorbrother*](https://www.instagram.com/watercolorbrother/?hl=en), perfectly captures the engrossing fugue state his paintings can inspire — ethereal scenes of Black life suck the viewer in, only to reveal deeper layers and troubling narratives. Yet his brushwork remained largely hidden from public view, until 2017 when he finally “pulled the plug” on his old life and moved to Miami.

“I knew I needed to move to a place where other people were making work all around me,” the self-taught artist said. Visits to Art Basel led him to the satellite [*Prizm fair*](https://prizm.art/), focusing on work by artists from Africa and the African diaspora, which, Mr. McGriff said, “unlocked this understanding of the breadth of the Black art-making community here.” Miami, with its network of arts organizations, felt not only supportive, but — at least compared to the Bay Area — financially manageable.

Local response came fairly quickly upon his arrival. A 2019 solo show at Spinello Projects sparked a flood of purchases by influential collectors, which then led to marquee exhibitions at the Rubell Museum Miami and the NSU Art Museum. This year’s Art Week sees him included alongside a who’s who of contemporary art stars in the show “Gimme Shelter” at the [*Historic Hampton House*](https://www.historichamptonhouse.org/), a segregation-era Green Book hotel remade into a cultural center. With Spinello and another Basel exhibitor, Vielmetter Los Angeles, also featuring his work, he seems poised to continue his ascent.

“The pace at which it all occurred was surprising,” Mr. McGriff said. Though based on his own experience, he added wryly, “it takes 20 years to be an overnight success.”

Artists and Other Endangered Species

At the [*Emerson Dorsch*](https://emersondorsch.com/) gallery, which began as a living-room exhibition space inside its founder’s walk-up apartment, and now occupies a customized warehouse in the Little Haiti neighborhood, business is booming. The gallery’s director, Ibett Yanez del Castillo, said the pandemic’s surge of moneyed new Florida residents had brought “new eyes and new collections, it’s definitely given us a fresh sense of energy.”

Yet her phone calls from young artists are no longer from New Yorkers curious about relocating south. Instead, they are from the gallery’s own stable of local talents who are anguished over whether they’ll be able to remain in Miami.

“There’s been this push for welcoming a new tax bracket,” she said of Miami’s city officials, “and that’s definitely making it difficult for the ***working class***.”

There have been calls from several corners of the local art world for a new focus on housing. The nonprofit Oolite Arts added a housing stipend to its core studio residency program, hoping to set an example, while the art collector and real estate developer Craig Robins (who was a key force in bringing Basel to Miami), said in an interview that affordable rentals weren’t enough.

“The great thing political leaders can and should do is put financing behind ownership projects,” he insisted. So far though, like the plans to address the sea level rise that [*threatens*](https://www.nbcmiami.com/news/local/will-miami-be-underwater-someday/3119902/) to [*submerge*](https://mdc.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer3d/index.html?id=b92a9fa4ff8847bf97f3e628a195a398) much of the coastal area in a matter of decades, there’s little agreement on — or funding for — a comprehensive program.

“I feel like we’re on the cusp,” Ms. Friedman, the artist, said. “Miami’s notoriously immature, but its art scene is no longer the new kid on the block. So what’s it going to do now as it hits middle age? Well, it’s Miami, so it’s going to go to the gym, get a face lift and buy a fancy car. And then maybe find a moment to reflect. Maybe.”

PHOTOS: Above, the Miami artist Jared McGriff on the roof of Spinello Projects, a local gallery that represents him. He moved to the city from the Bay Area; left, Hernan Bas helping to install his show “The Conceptualists” at the Bass Museum in Miami Beach; and the artists Mark Handforth and Dara Friedman. (F3); Above left, the outside of the Bass Museum in Miami Beach, which is hosting the Hernan Bas show “The Conceptualists”; and right, “For Us All To Breathe in Peace (Rest In Paradise Raymond),” 2023, by Mr. McGriff at his studio. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY SCOTT MCINTYRE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page F3, F8.

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**End of Document**



[***‘Primary Trust’ Review: Sipping Mai Tais, Until Bitter Reality Knocks; Critic’s Pick***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:689W-5K31-DXY4-X2J1-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** THEATER

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**Byline:** Naveen Kumar

**Highlight:** In Eboni Booth’s new play, William Jackson Harper performs with astonishing vulnerability as a man alone and adrift.

**Body**

In Eboni Booth’s new play, William Jackson Harper performs with astonishing vulnerability as a man alone and adrift.

Maybe you’ve seen him tucked into the corner of a dive bar, muttering to himself now and then, empty glasses multiplying on his table. And perhaps you’ve thought — though, it’s just as likely you haven’t — What’s up with that guy?

In “[*Primary Trust*](https://www.roundabouttheatre.org/get-tickets/2022-2023-season/primary-trust/?gad=1&amp;gclid=Cj0KCQjwjryjBhD0ARIsAMLvnF8ebeYPAhmCGyYjKr09L6RxUzlk2CIBKQfyvVGGN9fkZQ99x2_nAKsaAk_pEALw_wcB&amp;gclsrc=aw.ds),” the playwright Eboni Booth zooms in on one such man: He lives in a fictional suburb of Rochester, N.Y., where mai tais are his drink of choice at an unlikely tiki bar named Wally’s. He is alone and adrift in this tender, delicately detailed portrait, though surely he has not always been. Listen, and he’ll tell you about the moment he almost drowned and how he learned to keep his head above water.

“Primary Trust,” which opened at the Laura Pels Theater in Manhattan on Thursday, finds Kenneth (William Jackson Harper, of “The Good Place”) approaching 40 when the bookstore where he’s worked for 20 years closes shop. (The owner, played by Jay O. Sanders, needs cash for surgery.) But Kenneth has never found a job on his own; social workers helped him get his current one some years after he was orphaned.

Much of this back story Kenneth relays himself, addressing the audience, in the director Knud Adams’s graceful production for Roundabout Theater Company, from what resembles a miniaturized model of a provincial square. (The scaled-down set is by Marsha Ginsberg, and the elegant lighting is by Isabella Byrd.) In 15 years, Kenneth explains, all this will be leveled and replaced by condominiums. The municipal motto — “Welcome Friend, You’re Right on Time!” — feels laden with uncertain melancholy: It could be a salutation from the threshold of death.

Mordant subtext and typically empty sentiments are among the ways Booth demonstrates that language can convey deep pain one minute and ring utterly hollow the next, usually in the service of capitalism. In contrast to Kenneth’s confessional narration are the rote greetings of a carousel of servers at Wally’s (all played by April Matthis, including one who becomes a fast and flirtatious friend) and the sales pitches Kenneth later lobs at customers (also played by Matthis) after he lands a teller position at a local bank. (“Primary Trust” doubles as the name of Kenneth’s new employer, and an abbreviated metaphor for what was lost when his mother died.)

As in her superstore dark comedy “[*Paris*](https://www.roundabouttheatre.org/get-tickets/2022-2023-season/primary-trust/?gad=1&amp;gclid=Cj0KCQjwjryjBhD0ARIsAMLvnF8ebeYPAhmCGyYjKr09L6RxUzlk2CIBKQfyvVGGN9fkZQ99x2_nAKsaAk_pEALw_wcB&amp;gclsrc=aw.ds),” presented by Atlantic Theater Company in 2020, Booth again probes the half-dread of ***working-class*** Black characters in a one-freeway-exit corner of the Northeast. And though Kenneth’s Blackness is an underlying aspect of his experience, it is not the acute source of his alienation. His foundational trauma, and his longtime coping mechanisms, are gradually revealed (early on it becomes clear that Bert, his near-constant companion played by Eric Berryman, is imaginary), and he begins to reach through the cracks of his isolation to discover good, decent people.

Harper, who is onstage for nearly all of the production’s 95 minutes, [*performs with astonishing ease and vulnerability*](https://www.roundabouttheatre.org/get-tickets/2022-2023-season/primary-trust/?gad=1&amp;gclid=Cj0KCQjwjryjBhD0ARIsAMLvnF8ebeYPAhmCGyYjKr09L6RxUzlk2CIBKQfyvVGGN9fkZQ99x2_nAKsaAk_pEALw_wcB&amp;gclsrc=aw.ds), particularly given the depths he is asked to plumb in monologues directly to the audience; he lends the currents flowing through Kenneth’s interior life extraordinary subtlety and immediacy. Booth’s one-man study is wonderfully vivid, but there’s only so much emotional engagement that the unburdening of feelings, rather than their enactment or discovery, can inspire. Her other characters are far more loosely sketched: Sanders and Matthis turn small roles, rich with concise, sideways detail, into four-course meals, paradoxically making them feel underused.

The production’s play on perspective and proportion, with people as tall as buildings, enhance the undertones in Booth’s work that question who, and what, we pay attention to and why. Do New Yorkers, for example, who Kenneth remarks “step over human beings sleeping in the street,” think about places like this, or about why someone might be drinking for two at happy hour and talking to no one?

Throughout the production a bell, like the ones that summon unseen workers from behind service counters, dings repeatedly, sometimes seemingly incessantly, variously marking the reset or passage of time. It feels like a disruption — an unexplained and overused device that interrupts the flow of life. Maybe it’s actually a wake up call, and not just for the man who’s been living in a daze.

Primary Trust

Through July 2 at the Laura Pels Theater, Manhattan; [*roundabouttheatre.org*](https://www.roundabouttheatre.org/get-tickets/2022-2023-season/primary-trust/?gad=1&amp;gclid=Cj0KCQjwjryjBhD0ARIsAMLvnF8ebeYPAhmCGyYjKr09L6RxUzlk2CIBKQfyvVGGN9fkZQ99x2_nAKsaAk_pEALw_wcB&amp;gclsrc=aw.ds). Running time: 1 hour 35 minutes.

Primary Trust Through July 2 at the Laura Pels Theater in Manhattan; roundabouttheatre.org. Running time: 1 hour 35 minutes.

PHOTO: Eric Berryman, far left, and William Jackson Harper in “Primary Trust,” at the Laura Pels Theater. (PHOTOGRAPH BY SARA KRULWICH/THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page C5.

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[***The D.N.C. Has a Primary Problem***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68N9-MVK1-DXY4-X4BC-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Body**

Last December, the 30-odd members of the Democratic Party's rules and bylaws committee filed in to the Omni Shoreham, the glittering resort hotel that once hosted Franklin D. Roosevelt's inaugural ball. All of the Democrats, many of them gray-haired habitués of the rubber-chicken circuit, knew they had come to Washington to hash out, after months of debate, what the presidential-primary calendar would look like come 2024.

The order in which the states vote has defined American politics since the 1970s, when Jimmy Carter rocketed to the presidency on the strength of his performance in the Iowa caucuses. Always Iowa first, then New Hampshire -- which zealously guarded its status as the first-in-the-nation actual primary, luring all future presidents to the rickety diner back rooms and high school gymnasiums of the flinty Northern state with a streak of independence. Joe Biden performed terribly in each of those contests in 2020, hitting his stride only in larger states with fewer white voters. It was now understood that the curious caucus system -- voters clustering on frost-tinged church and library floors to choose candidates -- needed to be retired, particularly after Iowa failed to tally the vote in a timely manner.

So Iowa would be demoted, as would tolerance for any kind of caucus. New Hampshire, perhaps, would vote first, along with Nevada and its increasing Latino population. That seemed like plenty of change as Biden, who will turn 81 this November, seeks a breezier path to a second term as president.

Instead, the co-chair of the rules and bylaws committee -- and the grandson of Franklin Roosevelt -- made a different announcement.

''I move a resolution, which will be displayed on the screen,'' James Roosevelt Jr. said, ''which grants waivers to Rule 12-A, conditional upon the outlined stipulations for a state-run primary in South Carolina on Feb. 3, 2024; New Hampshire and Nevada on Feb. 6; Georgia on Feb. 13. ... ''

The room offered no immediate public reaction to the legalese. But privately, some members were astounded. ''Everyone was shocked,'' one told me, speaking on the condition of anonymity to avoid antagonizing the White House. ''We would have to vote for it anyway, because the feeling was you're either with the president or against him.''

A few members of the Democratic National Committee had known what was coming -- but only because Biden-administration officials called them on the phone mere hours after Biden himself sent a letter to the rules and bylaws committee, on the first day of December, outlining his demand for a primary calendar that ensured that ''voters of color have a voice in choosing our nominee much earlier in the process and throughout the entire early window.'' Biden called Black voters the ''backbone'' of the party, though he didn't specifically mention South Carolina in his letter. It was left to his aides to tell the top-ranking D.N.C. members, including Roosevelt, that South Carolina was the new first-in-the-nation primary. It had been decreed, and so it would be done.

But New Hampshire, the state that prides itself on its Live Free or Die motto, has declared that it will vote first anyway, setting up a clash with the D.N.C. that could widen to publicly embarrass Biden -- who, assuming he coordinates with the D.N.C. on its new calendar, would not be on the New Hampshire ballot in this scenario -- handing the incumbent president a shocking statewide defeat.

Biden has the entire party establishment on his side. The D.N.C. has formally endorsed him, which means that the organization, in addition to rubber-stamping a primary calendar that is far more favorable to him, will not sponsor any debates. Normally, this wouldn't matter much; incumbent presidents enjoy such deference. But Biden is already the oldest president in history and would be 86 if he finishes a second term. Polls have consistently shown that a majority of Democrats don't want him to run again (though this doesn't mean they won't vote for him). His approval ratings consistently hover around 40 percent.

At the same time, Robert F. Kennedy Jr., a son of the slain senator and attorney general and a nephew of the slain president, has polled at 20 percent nationally among Democratic voters and has begun a campaign blitz in New Hampshire, where voters and politicians alike are aggrieved over the D.N.C.'s revision of the primary calendar, with the secretary of state, David Scanlan, a Republican, calling the first-in-the-nation status a defining part of the state's ''culture.'' It is also enshrined in state law. Iowa's reaction has been more muted because there are so few Democrats of note left in the state after successive Republican electoral waves. Still, Iowa Democrats may sync their caucuses with the Republicans anyway, defying the D.N.C.

Kennedy was once widely respected as an environmentalist; he has since drawn condemnation for his anti-vaccine advocacy, taste for conspiracy theories and incendiary statements -- including invoking ''Hitler Germany'' in a speech about American vaccine mandates -- but may hold appeal for the large base of libertarian voters in New Hampshire. (Marianne Williamson, the author and spiritual figure who dropped out of the 2020 race, is running again as well.) Democrats there are alarmed.

''The reality is that New Hampshire is going to keep the first-in-the-nation primary,'' Ray Buckley, the chairman of the New Hampshire Democratic Party and a longtime D.N.C. member, told me, ''and the question only is whether or not the president is going to put his name on the ballot. They're trying to come after New Hampshire, but it's not going to be successful. So why go through all that pain?''

D. Arnie Arnesen, a left-leaning New Hampshire talk-show host and former Democratic state representative, understands the arguments against her state: ''We're too white, too rich, too privileged,'' she conceded. New Hampshire has two Democratic senators but a Republican-controlled state government (including a governor, Chris Sununu, who once considered his own presidential challenge this cycle). On the question of the 2024 primaries, however, Arnesen sides with Buckley. ''They knew the Republicans were going to Iowa and New Hampshire anyway. Why change now? There's no upside. Not one iota of benefit for Joe Biden. Nothing. No benefit to Joe, no benefit to the Democrats. They shot themselves in the foot.''

As chairman of the Democratic National Committee, Jaime Harrison, a 47-year-old who rose to his position two years ago from statewide politics in South Carolina and whose profile has risen along with his state's, has to try to play mediator between angered state Democrats and a White House that expects fealty from the national organization. For now, Harrison is sanguine about all of it. The New Hampshire situation. Biden's advanced age. The party's declining share of many demographic groups, especially Latino voters and those without college degrees. A dire Senate map, where Democratic incumbents in Montana, Ohio and West Virginia could fall, along with the formerly Democratic senator in Arizona, Kyrsten Sinema, plunging Democrats into an indefinite minority.

In Harrison's office at D.N.C. headquarters, which looks out on the dome of the Capitol, there hangs a portrait of Biden with Jim Clyburn, the 82-year-old South Carolina congressman whose endorsement and championing of Biden in 2020 is credited with rescuing his candidacy. Displayed over Harrison's desk is a vintage sign for Ron Brown, who in 1989 became the first Black chairman of the D.N.C. Brown and Clyburn are both heroes to Harrison, who was Clyburn's intern and, later, his director of floor operations when the congressman served as majority whip. A lucrative private-sector career followed as a lobbyist at the Podesta Group. With Clyburn's blessing, he became chairman of the South Carolina Democratic Party. Harrison then ran a very high-profile, extremely expensive and ultimately unsuccessful campaign in 2020 for the Senate seat held by Lindsey Graham. Now Clyburn's protégé heads a D.N.C. that has put their home state, where Harrison still lives with his family, quite literally first.

Harrison insisted that Clyburn never advocated for South Carolina as the very first state -- only for it to retain its status as the first of the Southern states. ''I think, for him, he always wanted South Carolina -- and I felt the same way -- we enjoyed and took a lot of pride in being the first in the South,'' Harrison told me on a June afternoon, sitting beneath that portrait. ''People thought early on, Oh, God, Jaime's the chair of the D.N.C., so therefore he's going to put his finger on the scale for South Carolina. And everybody will tell you, I was evenhanded in this. The only thing that I wanted was that South Carolina would remain, because I think it's earned its spot as an early state.'' But South Carolina, of course, moved up, and Harrison is now thrilled. ''National Geographic said that 90 percent of African Americans can trace one of their ancestors to South Carolina. In our primary, 50 to 60 percent of the people who vote in the Democratic primary will be Black folks. Think about how powerful this is, that the descendants of those enslaved people will be the very first people in this country to determine the most powerful person on the face of this planet. That's transformative.''

A few dissidents in the D.N.C., made up of New Hampshirites and some Iowans, progressives and union members, see it differently: Biden is elevating a state that a Democratic presidential candidate hasn't carried since 1976. Beyond Clyburn, there are few Democrats of note in South Carolina, and the state has the lowest percentage of union membership in America. Progressive candidates could, cycle after cycle, meet a wall of opposition there.

The persistent quandary, which no version of the primary calendar could resolve, is how to account for the various long-range challenges of the Democratic Party. A first-in-the-nation South Carolina primary lends Black moderates, a pivotal Democratic constituency, the kind of clout that many believe they deserve. White rural voters -- the sort who need to be courted in Iowa and New Hampshire -- have not proved loyal to the Democratic brand. But there are only so many of them that Democrats can afford to lose in a general election. New Hampshire, which Biden carried by less than 10 points in 2020, is not guaranteed to be eternally blue.

For Harrison, South Carolina's premier placement will mean that the many men and women who dream of commanding the Oval Office will need to pay attention to completely different issues and concerns. ''Now, instead of talking about ethanol in Iowa, we're going to be talking about the infant-mortality rate in the Black community,'' he said. ''It changes the agenda. It changes the conversation. And now presidential candidates will then be making promises to those communities.''

On a summer day in the late 1990s, Don Fowler, the chairman of the D.N.C., needed help. The South Carolinian and former head of the state party had bushels of juicy peaches sent up from farmers back home, and he wanted the president of the United States to sample some. None of his interns were free. He queried the most powerful Democrat in his state: Would he have a hand to spare?

Clyburn, the Charleston congressman, did. ''They sent me,'' Jaime Harrison recalled, beaming at the memory. ''It was one of the most amazing moments of my life at that point, to have these bags of peaches that I'm going to deliver to Bill Clinton, right?''

Harrison, peaches in tow, trekked from the Capitol to the White House. He ended up in the East Wing -- no face-to-face with the president -- but the journey stoked his ambition, which he says has been realized with the position he has held since Biden selected him. ''If I don't do anything else in politics for the rest of my life, I have hit a great point, being the D.N.C chair.''

On my June visit, a wall in the D.N.C. lobby featured portraits honoring the highest-ranking Democrats: Biden; Vice President Kamala Harris; Senator Chuck Schumer, the majority leader; the head of the Senate's campaign arm, Senator Gary Peters of Michigan; Jaime Harrison. But the wall seemed to have been frozen in pre-midterm 2022: Nancy Pelosi, not Hakeem Jeffries, the new House minority leader, had a portrait on the wall, as did Sean Patrick Maloney, the New York Democrat who led the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee. Not only is Maloney no longer the D.C.C.C. chair, but he's not in Congress at all. He lost his re-election bid, one of the seats with which the Democrats lost their majority.

At the core of its mission, the D.N.C. raises and spends titanic sums of money on organizing and messaging for political contests: more than $300 million over the course of 2021 and 2022, leading up to the midterms. The committee is a constellation of various interests -- activists, wealthy donors, state party chairs -- that is more fractious than its Republican counterpart because of the sheer number of individuals who make up the 483-member national committee, which far outstrips the 168-member R.N.C. The Republican Party has had its own ideological struggles, but the once-insurgent Trump wing has come to largely command party business, with Ronna McDaniel, a Trump ally, well into her seventh year as party chair.

In the aftermath of Donald Trump's victory over Hillary Clinton, amid lingering bitterness from progressives who felt that the D.N.C. had unfairly supported Clinton over Bernie Sanders during the 2016 primaries and convention, Harrison was one of several Democrats who very publicly vied for the D.N.C. chairman title. He operated, though, on the periphery of that contest, as the ideological and institutional factions organized around two candidates: Tom Perez, Obama's labor secretary; and Keith Ellison, a Minnesota congressman and Sanders supporter. With tacit backing from Obama, Perez narrowly won the vote of several hundred eligible D.N.C. members at the party's meeting in Atlanta.

After Perez's victory was announced, Ellison supporters erupted in anger, chanting, ''Party for the people, not big money!'' Perez placated them by naming Ellison deputy chairman. Under Perez's leadership, a so-called Unity Reform Commission overhauled the superdelegate system, restricting their vote on the convention's first ballot (the superdelegates, who are party elites, had operated like free agents, unaccountable to how their states actually voted). He also partnered with Howard Dean, the former D.N.C. chairman who was the architect of the party's short-lived strategy to compete in all 50 states, to create the Democratic Data Exchange: a private company, mirroring Republican Party efforts, that allows various Democratic campaigns, committees, unions and other left-leaning groups to share the information they gather on voters.

Building on successes during the 2018 blue-wave year, the D.N.C. pumped more than $95 million into its midterm programs in 2022 -- tripling its investment from 2018 and paying for as many as 35 campaign staff positions in Georgia, 42 in Michigan and 53 in Pennsylvania. The D.N.C. now pours more cash into state parties than it did during the Obama years and has established a ''red state'' fund that can add paid staff to Republican-dominated states in the hopes of growing the Democratic vote there in the years to come. Senator Tammy Duckworth of Illinois, who was born in Thailand, raised in Hawaii and is now a D.N.C. vice chair, hopes to raise more cash to improve Democratic organizing efforts with Asian Americans. ''We've seen that when we don't speak to that community, they can vote Republican like they did in New York,'' she said, referring to the state-level results in the midterms. ''You had Brooklyn switch over and elect Republican representatives.''

Asian American voters, as Duckworth noted, migrated significantly rightward last year, and not just in Brooklyn. The share of Latino voters supporting Democrats continues to slip, from 66 percent in 2018 to 57 percent in 2022, according to AP VoteCast, a survey of the national electorate. Some analysts warn that the Latino voters who swung to Republicans in 2020 and sat out the 2022 midterms could buoy a Republican presidential contender. The white ***working class*** continues to defect from Democratic candidates, and there's some evidence that culturally conservative nonwhite voters, once reflexive Democrats, are slowly sorting into the Republican coalition. From 2016 to 2020, Trump was able to grow his share of the Black vote, and over the last decade, almost every cohort of voters under 50 has shifted toward the right, belying predictions of a permanent Democratic hold on millennials.

Ruy Teixeira, a scholar who studies political demographics -- and recently decamped from the liberal Center for American Progress to the conservative American Enterprise Institute -- believes that Democrats, despite their recent victories, are losing too many ***working-class*** voters as they rush leftward on identity concerns at the expense of class. ''They are a party very dependent on the college-educated vote,'' Teixeira told me. ''In a way, Democrats were getting a premium among some nonwhite voters, getting way above the underlying ideology of voters in terms of their support. That's changing.''

The D.N.C. will learn, soon enough, if its confidence heading into the next election is warranted. The 2022 midterm results could have been, as Harrison contends, a reflection of Biden's policy accomplishments and the savvy of the party's myriad investments. Or the outcome might have been because of the Supreme Court's overturning of Roe v. Wade, which galvanized outraged Democratic voters, and the many extreme and inexperienced candidates who upended Republican primaries and then stumbled badly in the fall.

''I don't think the building is on fire,'' Harrison said confidently. The decline of the white ***working-class*** voter in the Democratic coalition could be reversed, Harrison argued, because Biden is the most ''pro-union'' president in recent years -- the A.F.L.-C.I.O. endorsed him in June, and he appeared at rally with union workers in Philadelphia later that month -- but many of those elusive ***working-class*** voters don't belong to unions anymore. Latinos defecting to the right, Harrison said, could be won back by pointing out how cruel some Republican governors have been for busing and flying migrants north -- never mind that not all Latinos who are American citizens have sympathy for those making illegal border crossings. Eric Adams, the Democratic mayor of New York, who once deemed himself the ''Biden of Brooklyn,'' has castigated Biden's response to the migrant crisis in unusually public criticism of the White House, declaring that his city is being ''destroyed'' by the large influx of asylum seekers.

Yet if voters only knew more about what Democrats have done for them, there would be no doubt about their mutual allegiance, according to Harrison. ''We're going to make sure they understand where the Democratic Party is, what our values are,'' he said, ''and that we are the only party that will fight for them.''

The results of 2022 were inarguably rosy, from a Democratic standpoint, defying historical precedent: The president's party gained a seat in the Senate, won several high-profile governor's races, flipped state legislatures and almost, despite forecasts of a red wave, retained control of the House. In Barack Obama's first midterm as president, Republicans netted 63 seats in the House, the largest electoral shift since 1948. Democrats lost six Senate seats. The enormous majorities of the 2008 election had vanished, never to be regained.

The Obama era was particularly cataclysmic for Democrats on the state level. Republicans dominated a redistricting process that safeguarded their legislative majorities for much of the next decade; by 2016, the last full year of Obama's presidency, Democrats had full control of just seven states. Even now, after the Democrats' triumphant midterms, Republicans control 28 state legislatures to the Democrats' 19. And it's these state legislatures that decide much of the policy -- taxes, education, transit -- that impacts everyday American life.

The D.N.C. suffered under Obama, in part because he created his own political group, Organizing for Action, outside the aegis of the party. The group built a parallel structure that hoovered up donor cash. State party chairs were livid, believing that the group, which focused chiefly on the promotion of Obama's policy agenda, deprived them of attention and dollars. Heading into 2020, the Democratic presidential contenders, including Biden, pledged not to create another extraparty organ.

Historically, Democratic presidents have undercut or ignored the D.N.C., especially compared with their Republican counterparts and their willingness to bolster the R.N.C. According to Daniel Galvin, a political-science professor at Northwestern University, every Democratic president in the second half of the 20th century -- John F. Kennedy, Lyndon B. Johnson, Jimmy Carter, Bill Clinton -- raided funds meant for party building or shot down proposals to strengthen down-ballot campaigns. For many decades, Democrats enjoyed congressional and statehouse majorities that seemed unbreakable, Galvin argues in his 2010 book, ''Presidential Party Building,'' and this incentivized them to focus on policy promotion over extensive investments in the future of party organizing. ''Republican presidents saw a path forward taking their own popularity and platform and ability to raise money and grafting it onto the Republican Party,'' he said. ''Democrats didn't.''

Harrison, who refused to directly criticize Obama to me, repeatedly emphasized that it was Biden who now cared about building the Democratic Party; it was Biden who was, in his favored word of the moment, transformative. ''My boss -- it is Joe Biden. He is the head of our party. We are doing things in the image of what he wants for this party, and we are very fortunate because he believes in the strength of the party. He believes in the D.N.C.,'' he said with typical cheer. ''I'm not the final word on where we go as the Democratic Party. I am part of the machinery.''

Like past D.N.C. chairmen, he is subordinate to the president, though reports have suggested he hasn't always been entirely pleased about it. The de facto boss of the D.N.C. is not simply Biden, but the White House staff members closest to him, those charged with executing his political vision. None of the state party chairs who regularly interact with the D.N.C. had an ill word for Harrison; if they don't always regard him as a visionary, they at least find him to be an affable power broker with an intimate understanding of the mechanics of party building.

Many state chairs consider, rather, operatives like Anita Dunn, one of Biden's closest senior advisers, and Jen O'Malley Dillon, a Biden deputy chief of staff, as the top shot-callers; Ron Klain, Biden's first chief of staff, was part of that cohort before he left the White House. Sam Cornale, the D.N.C.'s executive director, carries out their mandates. And if Biden's inner circle cares far more than Obama ever did about the fate of a governor, a statehouse majority or even the House elections, they are still, naturally, most focused on 2024, and the small number of states in the Electoral College that will decide the next president. No Biden White House is going to sign off on a very expensive, long-range plan to turn Nebraska or Mississippi blue.

Rhetorically, Howard Dean's 50-state vision has won out: D.N.C. staff members talk fondly of Dean's tenure. But many of the largest investments today -- the millions of dollars transferred, the sophisticated targeting of voters, the dispatching of seasoned operatives -- are reserved for the relatively few states that play host to the prime federal races. Dean himself wishes that the states where the Republicans now dominate got far more attention from the national party. ''The reason Democrats don't win there is because they do not put the work in,'' Dean said. ''You cannot abandon a state. Otherwise, it's Rush Limbaugh and Tucker Carlson giving the Democratic message to voters.''

The state party chairs who sing the highest praises for Biden, Harrison and the D.N.C. are naturally in the battlegrounds. Lavora Barnes, the chair of the Michigan Democratic Party, said she speaks with Harrison at least once a month and called him ''terrifically helpful.'' Michigan was, perhaps, the brightest spot for Democrats last year, with Gov. Gretchen Whitmer winning re-election and Democrats winning full control of the State Legislature for the first time in nearly 40 years. Ben Wikler, the chair of the Democratic Party of Wisconsin, extolled both Harrison and his predecessor, Perez, for recognizing that year-round campaign organizing was required in his state, where Republicans and Democrats are virtually deadlocked. He called the D.N.C. a ''godsend'' for Wisconsin.

Tina Podlodowski, who until this year served as chair of Washington State's Democratic Party, has a more conflicted view. ''For the folks that believe a national party should be focused in on the presidential race and Washington, D.C., the D.N.C. functions exceedingly well,'' Podlodowski said; Washington State reliably votes blue in presidential elections. ''I think for people like me who believe there should be more investment in down-ballot races and building state party organizing, the D.N.C. is a disappointment.''

Podlodowski called the D.N.C.'s investment in her state ''negligible,'' even with Democrats there battling to win a majority in the legislature and flip crucial House seats, pointing enviously to the D.N.C.'s strong support of Wisconsin. ''Ben Wikler is a good chair, but honestly Wisconsin has a million less voters than Washington State, and the amount of money that has been spent should have a better return.''

Jane Kleeb, the chair of the Nebraska Democratic Party, said states like hers, which used to send Democrats to the Senate with regularity but now are G.O.P. strongholds, aren't receiving enough aid. ''State parties continue to really be on their own,'' she said. ''I would love to see us get back to where we were during the 50-state strategy days,'' she told me. ''There will always be tension, I think, between how national thinks things should be run versus when you're on the ground. But we really do always have to trust and believe the on-the-ground perspective first.''

Relaying that perspective can be a challenge. D.N.C. members describe tightly choreographed meetings where dissenting resolutions are stifled. And with an incumbent in the White House, even members of pivotal committees, like rules and bylaws, lack tangible clout. ''The White House advises they want X, Y, Z,'' the member of the rules committee told me, ''and then we vote on it.''

In June, the brinkmanship continued, as the D.N.C.'s rules and bylaws committee met again, this time deciding to allow New Hampshire Democrats until Sept. 1 to continue negotiating a plan for their primary. But Georgia's new status as an early-voting state is also now in doubt: The spokesperson for the Republican secretary of state, Brad Raffensperger, said in a statement that he would not go along with the new Democratic calendar and would keep the established March primary date.

What difference more time will make for New Hampshire is unclear. Democrats there insist that it is their right to go first, ahead of South Carolina. Biden, as of now, plans to be nowhere near the Granite State next winter. In theory, Harrison's D.N.C. will simply not recognize the New Hampshire primary nor any of the delegates won by Kennedy and Williamson. For national Democrats, the ugliness of it all -- a sitting president losing a primary to the incendiary son of a Democratic icon -- would be harder to dismiss.

The way Arnesen, the New Hampshire talk-show host, sees it, unless one of the warring factions blinks, Republicans will have free rein in her state for the next half a year as Biden and his surrogates are absent. ''If I am going to have to vote in that first presidential primary in New Hampshire, who do I vote for: Marianne or R.F.K.? No Biden on the ballot. What's my [expletive] choice?''

Harrison, for now at least, is not budging. ''The D.N.C. is recognizing South Carolina as the first primary,'' he told me firmly. ''Regardless of what New Hampshire does or whatever, our D.N.C. has authorized that the first primary we are counting toward the allocation of delegates will be South Carolina.'' New Hampshire, he added, will have ''plenty of time to come to the table and figure it out, and we're going to give them as many opportunities as possible.''

Ross Barkan is a contributing writer for the magazine who last wrote about the crises facing the New York State Democratic Party. He is the author of two novels and a nonfiction account of Covid's impact on New York City. David Williams is a Colorado-based photographer whose work offers a distinct glimpse into the lives, cultures and cuisines that make up society today.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/07/05/magazine/democratic-national-committee-2024.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/07/05/magazine/democratic-national-committee-2024.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: Jaime Harrison, chairman of the Democratic National Committee, in Minneapolis last month. (PHOTOGRAPH BY DAVID WILLIAMS) (MM42-MM43) This article appeared in print on page MM42, MM43, MM44, MM45, MM46, MM47.

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[***Scapegoated by Everyone, Wanted by No One; Guest Essay***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68NX-C871-JBG3-6261-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

July 12, 2023 Wednesday 20:48 EST

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 992 words

**Byline:** Joshua Levkowitz

**Highlight:** Syrians in Turkey do not want to go home. They may not have a choice.

**Body**

ANTAKYA, Turkey — It was the Syrians who were responsible for the earthquakes. That’s what a Turkish man told Seyfeddin Selim, a refugee from Homs, Syria, who used to sell groceries in Antakya, the capital of Hatay province in southern Turkey. When the earthquakes hit in February, Mr. Selim’s shop was cleared out by looters before he could get there.

The blame that followed added insult to injury, but it wasn’t anything new. Mr. Selim didn’t say anything to the man in his defense, he told me, because he was worried an altercation could get him deported. But when I spoke to him months later, the encounter still made him burn up inside. He didn’t have money to replace the stock, so now he tries to make money however he can — repairing cellphone screens and handling informal money transfers, known as hawala, from the counter of his shop. Now homeless, he sometimes sleeps in the shop, sometimes in a friend’s tent.

Turkey is host to the largest number of refugees of any country in the world — including about [*3.6 million Syrians*](https://www.unhcr.org/tr/en/refugees-and-asylum-seekers-in-turkey). For the first few years after the Syrian conflict began in 2011, Turkey’s [*open-door policy*](https://www.nytimes.com/2014/12/30/world/europe/turkey-strengthens-rights-of-syrian-refugees.html) was a source of national pride, and Turkey [*was lauded for its emergency care*](https://www.crisisgroup.org/europe-central-asia/western-europemediterranean/turkey/now-turkey-copes-well-syrian-influx-hatay-province).

Twelve years, a [*collapsing currency*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/07/business/turkey-lira-erdogan.html) and runaway inflation have changed the mood. Hate crimes [*have risen*](https://usercontent.one/wp/stockholmcf.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/Hate-Speech-and-Hate-Crimes-Against-Syrians.pdf?media=1685028663). Reports and rumors accuse Syrians of being responsible for myriad, occasionally conflicting problems in the country: They get salaries from the Turkish government [*without working*](https://icg-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/248-turkey-s-syrian-refugees.pdf) and they’re behind the increase in the number of people begging. They push ***working-class*** wages down but force taxi prices up. They’re the reason Turks have to wait longer for public services. They commit voter fraud. Their very presence invites natural disasters.

Hatay is Turkey’s southernmost province, poking down into Syria like a thumb. Syrians started crossing into Hatay in the early days of the uprising. By the time the earthquakes hit in late winter this year, more than [*400,000 Syrian refugees*](https://www.infomigrants.net/fr/post/35606/syrians-under-temporary-protection-in-turkey-top-37-million) were living in the province, making up around a quarter of the total population.

Many, including Mr. Selim, would like to make their way to Europe, but the money — nearly $9,000, Mr. Selim said — that smugglers want for the trip across the sea is prohibitive. Instead, they have been stuck in a kind of extended limbo, unwanted by the country they’re in, unable to move on and unwilling to go back.

President Bashar al-Assad of Syria, meanwhile, has been staging a remarkable comeback from his long isolation. In May, he [*attended an Arab League summit*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/18/world/middleeast/syria-assad-arab-league.html), in Saudi Arabia, for the first time in more than a decade. In June, a meeting of officials from Turkey, Syria, Russia and Iran in Kazakhstan had [*the stated goal of normalizing Syrian-Turkish relations*](https://apnews.com/article/russia-syria-turkey-iran-kazakhstan-talks-cda6fa6d2ef0f244de2452c9b33d01c4).

Returning refugees to Syria is a big part of the motivation for this normalization process. Syrians might not be ready to move back, but neighboring countries are ready to move on.

In 2011, President Recep Tayyip Erdogan of Turkey welcomed Syrian refugees as “[*brothers*](https://www.nytimes.com/2016/07/24/magazine/erdogans-people.html),” and for a time, they appeared to fit his vision of Turkey — [*according to the government*](https://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/over-193-000-syrians-became-turkish-citizens-minister-171631), around 200,000 Syrians have become Turkish citizens.

But times have changed. Mr. Erdogan announced [*a plan*](https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-05-03/turkey-plans-return-of-a-million-syrians-as-refugee-critics-grow#xj4y7vzkg) not long before the presidential elections in May to repatriate one million Syrian “brothers and sisters” to northern Syria.

Mr. Erdogan has said that his government has already facilitated the voluntary return of [*nearly 600,000 Syrians*](https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/turkeys-erdogan-faces-struggle-meet-syrian-refugee-promise-2023-05-31/). In 2022, Human Rights Watch [*reported*](https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/10/24/turkey-hundreds-refugees-deported-syria) that Turkish officials had coerced hundreds of Syrians into signing “voluntary return” forms and then forced them across the border “[*at gunpoint*](https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/10/24/turkey-hundreds-refugees-deported-syria).” (Being able to claim that refugees are willingly returning to a conflict is important because Turkey is bound by the [*principle of nonrefoulement*](https://www.unhcr.org/uk/about-unhcr/who-we-are/1951-refugee-convention#:~:text=The%20cornerstone%20of%20the%201951,to%20their%20life%20or%20freedom.) under the 1951 Refugee Convention.) Syrians in Antakya told me that these returns continue and that they’d had friends go back across the border and disappear.

Even so, when Mr. Erdogan won the second round, many Syrians were relieved. In Antakya, some still see him as an ally who welcomed them into the country. Khaled Amr, from Aleppo, sitting in a blue tent within sight of his collapsed apartment building, told me that his “only happy memory this year is that Erdogan won.”

Others said that the one million would surely include many in Hatay because of its proximity to the border and were anxiously pursuing their applications for Turkish citizenship, paying bribes to get the necessary documents or enrolling in a university. Anything to not be sent back.

On a recent Sunday, Om Luay, a 65-year-old widow, sat on a bench at Hama Social Club in Antakya’s northern outskirts, where a group of Syrians sat playing cards and sipping mate. In 2015 she had applied for resettlement to Germany, where two of her daughters live. In February, another daughter and her family died in the earthquakes. In May, she finally received a call from Germany telling her to expect an interview soon.

Ms. Luay waited six days in the cold to identify her family’s bodies in February, she said. Waiting for anything else was easy.

If she is successful, she will be one of the lucky ones. For Syrians in exile, there were always few good options, and the list is getting shorter.

One evening in Antakya I walked by a cluster of tents where some Syrians were borrowing the glow from a well-lit, post-earthquake encampment for Turks on the other side of a fence. Nobody I spoke with could countenance returning to a country still ruled by Mr. al-Assad. I wondered whether anyone is listening.

Joshua Levkowitz is a fellow at the Institute of Current World Affairs.

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This article appeared in print on page A23.

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[***In These Four Story Collections, Feminist Horror Abounds; The Shortlist***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68NY-MYP1-JBG3-6285-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

July 12, 2023 Wednesday 22:34 EST

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**Section:** BOOKS; review

**Length:** 1105 words

**Byline:** Kate Folk

**Highlight:** New short fiction by Agustina Bazterrica, Joyce Carol Oates, Nishanth Injam and Kathleen Alcott.

**Body**

“She was horrified by the traces of monstrosity in everyday life,” Agustina Bazterrica writes of a character in her new collection, NINETEEN CLAWS AND A BLACKBIRD: Stories (Scribner, 154 pp., paperback, $17.99), and it could be read as a unifying principle for all 20 stories. Her breakout novel, “Tender Is the Flesh,” depicted a world in which humans are bred for meat, and while these tales trade in the macabre, they’re set in a universe that’s distinctly ours, lending them a subtler, more insidious resonance. Moses’ translation from the Spanish captures the playful gruesomeness of the Argentine writer’s prose.

Misogyny and its knock-on effects are an animating force throughout. In “A Light, Swift, and Monstrous Sound,” a dentist narrowly misses being struck by the body of an upstairs neighbor who’s jumped from his balcony and landed on her ground-floor patio, and she believes the dead man’s face contains hatred for her, specifically. In “Unamuno’s Boxes,” a woman suspects her cabdriver is a serial killer, tipped off by his perfectly manicured nails. In “The Continuous Equality of the Circumference,” Ada attempts to transform her body into a circle through increasingly grotesque methods, while “Candy Pink” is a manifesto for the brokenhearted: “Write the word ‘list’ and enumerate the items you need to purchase in order to die with the style and dignity of a cartoon character.”

Endings come with a twist as characters sanguinely accept their fates, as if to concede they should have seen it coming. Bazterrica takes big swings throughout, and while not every punch lands, these stories are fresh and unnerving.

A vein of feminist horror runs through Joyce Carol Oates’s latest collection, ZERO-SUM: Stories (Knopf, 251 pp., $29). In the electric “Mr. Stickum,” a group of teenage girls ensnares sex criminals in a flypaper-like contraption they’ve installed in an abandoned mill. “For always it is expected of girls, as of adult women, that we will be loving, forgiving, merciful,” the collective voice muses. “But Mr. Stickum has taught us that is a losing zero-sum game.” In “The Cold,” a mother grieving a miscarriage is plagued by a chill that prevents her from sleeping. “I have become a brilliant impersonator of myself,” she insists, as her grip on reality loosens.

The collection’s centerpiece, “The Suicide,” is an unsparing portrait of an author named Harold Hofsteader, whom Oates has described in an interview as a fictionalized alter ego of David Foster Wallace. Hofsteader, who has bipolar disorder, agonizes over how suicide might shape his legacy. His ruminations are darkly funny — for instance, he considers using a jump rope before reading the same detail in a French mystery novel: “The final gesture of The Suicide’s life was not going to be plagiarized!”

The third section ventures deeper into genre territory. In “Monstersister,” a parasitic entity grows out of a girl’s skull, eventually sloughing off into an autonomous being; the true horror is that the girl’s family prefers her cast-off “sister.” While the final two, post-apocalyptic stories tread familiar ground, the overall trajectory feels satisfying, with the book’s zero-sum games advancing to an existential battle between humanity and the destructive forces it has unleashed.

In “The Math of Living,” the shortest story in Nishanth Injam’s stunning debut, THE BEST POSSIBLE EXPERIENCE: Stories (Pantheon, 212 pp., $25), the narrator calculates a formula for their yearly visit home to see their parents in India. “What has exile done?” they reflect. “It has taken everything I had in return for the idea of a home far, far away.” This ambivalence drives many of the book’s stories, in which characters — all living in India or its diaspora in the United States — yearn for a home, and a version of themselves, that no longer exists.

In “Summers of Waiting,” Sita returns to her village to visit the emotionally distant grandfather who raised her, Thatha, who is mired in grief over past losses: “Thatha, living the story, could not see the one thing in which his son still lived: her.” In “The Bus,” a man riding a bus home for the Diwali weekend observes that fellow passengers who enter the bathroom never emerge. He narrates to his brother, who died when they were children, with arch fatalism: “Now you’re dead and I’m stuck on this bus.”

The book’s poignant title story details the relationship between Alex and his father, whom he calls Mr. Lourenco after they watch “Great Expectations” — “like a certain Pip in the movie, who acquired culture by politely addressing older men as Mr.” An affectionate but erratic parent who sometimes blows their rent money on glossy magazines, Mr. Lourenco takes pride in his work as a tour bus driver in Goa, hoping to provide his passengers with “the best possible experience so that they could sleep that night with satisfaction.” Injam’s narratives strike a perfect balance of darkness and light.

In the title story of Kathleen Alcott’s richly layered collection, EMERGENCY: Stories (Norton, 188 pp., $27.95), a gossipy collective narrator tells the story of Helen Tiel, a troubled woman who’s the object of their morbid fascination. “Helen still believed in a notion we had all worked to disavow, as all adults must,” they observe of her failed marriage: “that to any rule, she might prove the brilliant exception.”

Many characters in the book persist in this belief, to their peril. Money is a prominent concern, with stories centering primarily on young women from ***working-class*** backgrounds who have clawed their way into tenuous middle-class stability. In “Reputation Management,” Alice becomes conflicted about her role in rehabilitating the image of a Yeshiva teacher who’s been accused of sexual abuse when she learns his alleged, teenage victim has killed himself. Of Alice’s titular job, Alcott writes, “It was the first time in her adult life that her talents as a chameleon had felt translatable, and also that she hadn’t smelled of the entrees carried three at a time on her forearm.”

In the elegiac “Temporary Housing,” a psychiatrist recalls a girl she grew up with in Petaluma, Calif. Alcott evokes the confusing intensity of teenage friendship, a closeness bordering on the erotic: “The idea of there being some sound we’d never heard the other make, some face we’d never seen that meant exactly that, was as illogical as the fact we’d soon parcel our lives apart.” Alcott’s prose, both sensuous and cerebral, abounds with insight into people and the shapes life contorts them into.

Kate Folk is the author of “Out There.”

PHOTOS This article appeared in print on page BR26.

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[***Scapegoated by Everyone, Wanted by No One***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68NX-N8H1-DXY4-X0XX-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

July 12, 2023 Wednesday

The New York Times on the Web

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**Section:** Section ; Column 0; Foreign Desk; GUEST ESSAY

**Length:** 993 words

**Byline:** By Joshua Levkowitz

**Body**

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Turkey is host to the largest number of refugees of any country in the world -- and currently about 3.6 million Syrian refugees. For the first few years after the Syrian conflict began in 2011, Turkey's open-door policy was a source of national pride, and Turkey was lauded for its emergency care.

Twelve years, a collapsing currency and runaway inflation have changed the mood. Hate crimes have risen. Reports and rumors accuse Syrians of being responsible for myriad, occasionally conflicting problems in the country: They get salaries from the Turkish government without working and they're behind the increase in the number of people begging. They push ***working-class*** wages down but force taxi prices up. They're the reason Turks have to wait longer for public services. They commit voter fraud. Their very presence invites natural disasters.

Hatay is Turkey's southernmost province, poking down into Syria like a thumb. Syrians started crossing into Hatay in the early days of the uprising. By the time the earthquakes hit in late winter this year, more than 400,000 Syrian refugees were living in the province, making up around a quarter of the total population.

Many, including Mr. Selim, would like to make their way to Europe, but the money -- nearly $9000, Mr. Selim said -- that smugglers want for the trip across the sea is prohibitive. Instead they have been stuck in a kind of extended limbo, unwanted by the country they're in, unable to move on and unwilling to go back.

President Bashar al-Assad of Syria, meanwhile, has been staging a remarkable comeback from his long isolation. In May, he attended an Arab League summit, in Saudi Arabia, for the first time in more than a decade. In June, a meeting of officials from Turkey, Syria, Russia and Iran in Kazakhstan had the stated goal of normalizing Syrian-Turkish relations.

Returning refugees to Syria is a big part of the motivation for this normalization process. Syrians might not be ready to move back, but neighboring countries are ready to move on.

In 2011, President Recep Tayyip Erdogan of Turkey welcomed Syrian refugees as ''brothers,'' and for a time, they appeared to fit his vision of Turkey -- according to the government, around 200,000 Syrians have become Turkish citizens.

But times have changed. Mr. Erdogan announced a plan not long before the presidential elections in May to repatriate one million Syrian ''brothers and sisters'' to northern Syria.

Mr. Erdogan has said that his government has already facilitated the voluntary return of nearly 600,000 Syrians. In 2022, Human Rights Watch reported that Turkish officials had coerced hundreds of Syrians into signing ''voluntary return'' forms and then forced them across the border ''at gunpoint.'' (Being able to claim that refugees are willingly returning to a conflict is important because Turkey is bound by the principle of non-refoulement under the 1951 Refugee Convention.) Syrians in Antakya told me that these returns continue and that they'd had friends go back across the border and disappear.

Even so, when Mr. Erdogan won the second round, many Syrians were relieved. In Antakya, some still see him as an ally who welcomed them into the country. Khaled Amr, from Aleppo, sitting in a blue tent within sight of his collapsed apartment building, told me that his ''only happy memory this year is that Erdogan won.''

Others said that the one million would surely include many in Hatay because of its proximity to the border and were anxiously pursuing their applications for Turkish citizenship, paying bribes to get the necessary documents or enrolling in a university. Anything to not be sent back.

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If she is successful, she will be one of the lucky ones. For Syrians in exile there were always few good options, and the list is getting shorter.

One evening in Antakya I walked by a cluster of tents where some Syrians were borrowing the glow from a well-lit, post-earthquake encampment for Turks on the other side of a fence. Nobody I spoke to could countenance returning to a country still ruled by Mr. Assad. I wondered whether anyone is listening.

Joshua Levkowitz is a fellow at the Institute of Current World Affairs.

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**Graphic**

PHOTO: A Syrian child and others sheltered in a former carwash in Antakya, Turkey, in the days after the earthquake in February. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Emily Garthwaite for The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** July 12, 2023

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[***A Guide to Guadalajara, Mexico’s City of Makers; Flocking To***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69N9-3RY1-DXY4-X1B8-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

November 17, 2023 Friday 13:50 EST

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**Section:** T-MAGAZINE

**Length:** 2026 words

**Byline:** Michael Snyder and Richard Pedaline

**Highlight:** Steeped in cultural heritage, the capital of Jalisco is drawing a new wave of artists.

**Body**

Steeped in cultural heritage, the capital of Jalisco is drawing a new wave of artists.

T’s monthly travel series, Flocking To, highlights places you might already have on your wish list, sharing tips from frequent visitors and locals alike. [*Sign up here*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/t-list?campaign_id=133&amp;emc=edit_tmag_20220629&amp;instance_id=65336&amp;module=inline&amp;nl=the-t-list&amp;regi_id=61320578&amp;segment_id=97139&amp;te=1&amp;user_id=2c7ba7ca88ff45eec219646b0a9a1009) to find us in your inbox once a month, and to receive our weekly T List newsletter. Have a question? You can always reach us at [*tlist@nytimes.com*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/t-list?campaign_id=133&amp;emc=edit_tmag_20220629&amp;instance_id=65336&amp;module=inline&amp;nl=the-t-list&amp;regi_id=61320578&amp;segment_id=97139&amp;te=1&amp;user_id=2c7ba7ca88ff45eec219646b0a9a1009).

For much of the 20th century, the image of Mexico popularized abroad through film, music, art and literature was, more accurately, a portrayal of Jalisco state and especially its capital, Guadalajara. Mariachi and tequila both originated here as did some of Mexico’s most famous singers and actors. The writer Juan Rulfo, whose 1955 novel, “Pedro Páramo,” still stands as the central monument of modern Mexican literature, grew up in Jalisco and vividly depicted its arid, sun-blasted landscapes in his writing, while the architect Luis Barragán, who moved from Guadalajara to Mexico City in the 1930s, carried with him an appreciation for his home state’s cloisters, haciendas and humble country buildings, which he translated in his own work as austere, inscrutable volumes of stucco. “Jalisco,” as a popular saying goes, “is Mexico.”

The third largest metropolitan area in Mexico, with some five million people, Guadalajara moves at a slower pace than the nation’s capital. An ideal weekend here might well be spent in the timeworn cantinas in the busy Centro Histórico and design shops like Occidente, located on the ground floor of the Foro Arquitectura (Architecture Forum) in the tree-lined Colonia Americana neighborhood. Perfect taquerias and raucous seafood joints seem to crop up on every corner — everyone has their personal favorite — and even a comparatively high-concept restaurant like Xokol, run by the chefs Xrysw Ruelas and Oscar Segundo, serves its mostly corn-based dishes with a refreshing dose of playfulness. Countless family workshops, where tradespeople use simple machinery to manipulate tin plate, brick and stone, are found in the city’s central neighborhoods, while master artisans, like the ceramist Angel Santos, maintain and advance the traditions of craft villages like Tonalá and Tlaquepaque, now absorbed into Guadalajara’s ever-expanding periphery. For the local artists, architects and designers who have increasingly chosen to stay here, as well as their counterparts from elsewhere in Mexico and abroad who have begun to settle in the city alongside them, Guadalajara is an unusually inviting and collaborative place to make things.

The Insiders

Alma Saladin, who was born in Paris and moved to Mexico in 2017, co-owns the gallery Guadalajara90210 with her partners, Marco Rountree and Alberto López Corcuera, offering cultural programs dedicated to contemporary and site-specific art in both Mexico City and Guadalajara.

Xrysw Ruelas is a co-founder and chef, with her partner Oscar Segundo, of Guadalajara’s Xokol restaurant.

Isaac Hernández, a Guadalajara native, was a principal dancer at the English National Ballet, based in London, for seven years, until returning to the San Francisco Ballet in 2022.

Renata Franco is a co-founder, along with her sister Julia, of the clothing label Julia y Renata and the Guadalajara design shop Albergue Transitorio.

Sleep

“The [*Demetria*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/t-list?campaign_id=133&amp;emc=edit_tmag_20220629&amp;instance_id=65336&amp;module=inline&amp;nl=the-t-list&amp;regi_id=61320578&amp;segment_id=97139&amp;te=1&amp;user_id=2c7ba7ca88ff45eec219646b0a9a1009) was really the first hotel to focus on Guadalajara’s modern architectural heritage when it opened in 2011. It’s so harmonious with the houses on either side, one by Pedro Castellanos, an important contemporary of Luis Barragán, and the other an early Barragán (it now houses the gallery Travesía Cuatro). The Demetria fomented so much of what’s happened since in the neighborhood — the galleries, the artist studios, the restaurants — and Julia and I have our shop there, so it’s really special to us.” Avenida de la Paz 2219, Lafayette; rooms from about $210 a night — Renata Franco

“Whenever I come back to Guadalajara, I stay at the [*Casa Habita*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/t-list?campaign_id=133&amp;emc=edit_tmag_20220629&amp;instance_id=65336&amp;module=inline&amp;nl=the-t-list&amp;regi_id=61320578&amp;segment_id=97139&amp;te=1&amp;user_id=2c7ba7ca88ff45eec219646b0a9a1009). It’s one of those hotels that doesn’t feel like a hotel. The whole atmosphere of the place — the lobby, the restaurant — reminds me of being at a friend’s house. Even if I’m not staying there, I’ll go there just to have lunch. It’s become part of my routine.” Lerdo de Tejada 2308, Lafayette; rooms from about $130 a night — Isaac Hernández

“[*Casa Mucha*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/t-list?campaign_id=133&amp;emc=edit_tmag_20220629&amp;instance_id=65336&amp;module=inline&amp;nl=the-t-list&amp;regi_id=61320578&amp;segment_id=97139&amp;te=1&amp;user_id=2c7ba7ca88ff45eec219646b0a9a1009) is a beautiful space. You come in off the street and, on the ground floor, there’s a cafe called Rin Tin Tin and a little craft and design store. The roof has this seating area and sculpture from an artist in Mexico City whose partner is from Guadalajara. And it has these very nice touches throughout. The founder has great taste — it’s all very somber and elegant but also really warm.” Juan Manuel 1168, Santa Teresita; rooms from about $115 a night — Alma Saladin

Eat and Drink

“Lately, I’ve been going a lot to Siete y Medio de Paco for seafood. It’s a bit farther from the center, but everything — especially the scallops, the shrimp and the chicharrón de pescado, made by frying pieces of fish — is always so fresh and delicious. I Latina was the first place in Guadalajara I know of to talk about and distribute natural wines. The restaurant has been around for 25 years and, thanks to the owners, it’s been at the forefront of the city’s culinary scene.” Siete y Medio de Paco, Calle Industria 1099, San Juan Bosco; I Latina, Avenida Inglaterra 3128, Vallarta Poniente — R.F.

“My whole family has been going to Menuderia Las Condenadas in Zapopan since I was a kid. We’re 11 brothers and sisters and the owners have watched us all grow up, have watched my whole career, and they take so much pride in all of us. And the best thing is that the menudo — a classic tripe soup often served for breakfast — is the same now as it’s always been.” Javier Mina 371, Zapopan — I.H.

“One of the best places for something traditional is Birriería David in the back of the Mercado Alcalde in the Centro Histórico. The meat, which is goat rather than beef, is cooked in a spice rub and finished in an oven, so it comes out really golden and crispy and a bit less fatty than other birria. I have family in [the neighboring state of] Michoacán, and I remember when I was a kid the market there served it that way.” Calle Joaquín Angulo 188E, Centro Barranquitas — Xrysw Ruelas

“There’s a spot near our gallery for carne en su jugo [beef in its own juices], which is a really emblematic dish from Jalisco, and of course there are versions of it served everywhere and everyone has their favorite, but this one we love. It’s called [*Las Originales Carnes en Su Jugo*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/t-list?campaign_id=133&amp;emc=edit_tmag_20220629&amp;instance_id=65336&amp;module=inline&amp;nl=the-t-list&amp;regi_id=61320578&amp;segment_id=97139&amp;te=1&amp;user_id=2c7ba7ca88ff45eec219646b0a9a1009), and when you order the dish, it comes with guacamole and these delicious, super creamy beans, which really makes it.” Calle José María Vigil 1551, Villaseñor — A.S.

Shop

“José Noé Suro is the person who’s done the most to facilitate all this movement around the city’s art scene, and his ceramics studio, [*Cerámica Suro*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/t-list?campaign_id=133&amp;emc=edit_tmag_20220629&amp;instance_id=65336&amp;module=inline&amp;nl=the-t-list&amp;regi_id=61320578&amp;segment_id=97139&amp;te=1&amp;user_id=2c7ba7ca88ff45eec219646b0a9a1009) — it’s somewhere between a factory and an artisanal workshop — is a space where artists come from all over the world to produce work. You can make an appointment for a tour.” Calle 5 1006, Colón Industrial — R.F.

“Tlaquepaque, which is a craft town that’s technically separate from the city but has been absorbed into its outskirts, is one of my favorite places. The main street is lined with craft shops, but I especially love the studio of the artist [*Rodo Padilla*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/t-list?campaign_id=133&amp;emc=edit_tmag_20220629&amp;instance_id=65336&amp;module=inline&amp;nl=the-t-list&amp;regi_id=61320578&amp;segment_id=97139&amp;te=1&amp;user_id=2c7ba7ca88ff45eec219646b0a9a1009) and the way he represents these emblematic characters from Mexican life. They’re very playful. The first time I visited the workshop, I bought a statue of a vendor on a bicycle selling birds. It’s almost a meter high, and I brought it with me all the way back to London.” — I.H.

“The Mercado San Juan de Dios is incredible. It’s the architecture, of course, but also you can find everything there. There’s a place there that sells really good tejuino [a sweet cold beverage made from lightly fermented masa] that’s been there almost as long as the market itself, and then you can buy a molcajete [a traditional stone mortar and pestle] or leather boots and huaraches. It’s like a mall but from the barrio.” — X.R.

“I love the books at [*Impronta,*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/t-list?campaign_id=133&amp;emc=edit_tmag_20220629&amp;instance_id=65336&amp;module=inline&amp;nl=the-t-list&amp;regi_id=61320578&amp;segment_id=97139&amp;te=1&amp;user_id=2c7ba7ca88ff45eec219646b0a9a1009) which is this tiny local editorial house that still prints with letterpress machines. It has a lovely patio with a little cafe, and upstairs is a fantastic project space that always has nice exhibitions.” Calle Penitenciaría 414, Colonia Americana — A.S.

Take Home

“Chamula Hecho a Mano has some of the nicest crafts in the city. The owners are careful and conscientious about what they select and very respectful of the artisans — they go to their studios, build relationships, sometimes design pieces in collaboration with them. They have a diverse selection of things, like clay bananas made by the local artisan Iván López and wonderful earthenware vases in a style called barro canelo made by Pablo Pajarito in Tonalá.” Manuel M. Dieguez 13, Ladrón de Guevara — R.F.

“Throughout his life, my father wore a pair of boots from Los Potrillos in the center of Guadalajara, and when we were kids we would go with him into the city to visit the shop. We had family friends who had a ranch outside the city — equestrian culture is a huge thing in Jalisco — so we would wear our boots whenever we went out into the country. As a kid, I used to wear a sheepskin jacket from there, too. My mom recently sent it to me, and now my son wears it. These things are made to last.” C. José María Morelos 51, Zona Centro — I.H.

“[*Mezonte*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/t-list?campaign_id=133&amp;emc=edit_tmag_20220629&amp;instance_id=65336&amp;module=inline&amp;nl=the-t-list&amp;regi_id=61320578&amp;segment_id=97139&amp;te=1&amp;user_id=2c7ba7ca88ff45eec219646b0a9a1009) is a tiny, low-key tasting room that has the best selection [of agave spirits] in the city, but it’s also a larger organization that focuses on responsible sourcing and that’s closely involved with the dissemination of knowledge about, and conservation of, Mexican distillates. One of my favorites is the raicilla made in Cabo Corrientes in western Jalisco by a producer called Hildegardo Joya, or ‘Japo.’” Calle Argentina 299, Colonia Americana — X.R.

Explore

“The essential thing is the [*Hospicio Cabañas Museum*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/t-list?campaign_id=133&amp;emc=edit_tmag_20220629&amp;instance_id=65336&amp;module=inline&amp;nl=the-t-list&amp;regi_id=61320578&amp;segment_id=97139&amp;te=1&amp;user_id=2c7ba7ca88ff45eec219646b0a9a1009) [*.*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/t-list?campaign_id=133&amp;emc=edit_tmag_20220629&amp;instance_id=65336&amp;module=inline&amp;nl=the-t-list&amp;regi_id=61320578&amp;segment_id=97139&amp;te=1&amp;user_id=2c7ba7ca88ff45eec219646b0a9a1009) First of all, there are the [José Clemente] Orozco murals — the way they interact with the building, it’s just so amazing. But I also love that the museum has a contemporary program connected to what’s happening now and strong cultural programming in the ***working-class*** neighborhoods nearby. Even just walking around inside, you can get lost and suddenly come out onto a perfect patio with a fountain. It’s cool and quiet and so Guadalajara.” Calle Cabañas 8, Plaza Tapatía, Centro — A.S.

“You’ll find parks like Los Colomos Forest in most major cities in the world. When I was young, I’d go there to run or ride horses. When you step inside, the city just disappears.” — I.H.

“The Belén Cemetery, near the northern limit of the Centro Histórico, is such a beautiful place. It was first developed in the 19th century, and today it’s practically a museum, with all the amazing tombs inside. You can go during the day, but they also do these night tours now that are great and kind of creepy.” Calle Belén 684, El Retiro — X.R.

Practical Matters

“In February, during pre-MACO [the weeklong lead-up to Mexico City’s annual art fair Zona MACO], you get to visit the studios of artists like Jose Dávila, Eduardo Sarabia, Jorge Méndez Blake. It’s such a great opportunity to meet the people who bring the city so much of its creative energy.” — R.F.

“The best way to visit the city is to pay attention to a few specific architects — Alejandro Zohn or Fernando González Gortázar, for example — and follow their work around town. [*MoMo Guadalajara*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/t-list?campaign_id=133&amp;emc=edit_tmag_20220629&amp;instance_id=65336&amp;module=inline&amp;nl=the-t-list&amp;regi_id=61320578&amp;segment_id=97139&amp;te=1&amp;user_id=2c7ba7ca88ff45eec219646b0a9a1009) has a digital map on its website to guide you.” — A.S.

These interviews have been edited and condensed.

PHOTOS: Los Colomos Forest is a large park in the middle of Guadalajara, Mexico.; One of the guest rooms at Casa Mucha, left; and the breakfast area at Casa Habita.; Clockwise from top: a quesadilla, pellizcada and menudo at Menuderia Las Condenadas.; Cerámica Suro, José Noé Suro’s studio, left; and Impronta, a local publishing house.; Chamula Hecho a Mano, a shop that sells crafts from local artists and collaborates on designs.; The Hospicio Cabañas Museum’s chapel, left; and Belén Cemetery, which offers night tours. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY MARIANO FERNANDEZ) This article appeared in print on page D3.

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[***Education Divide Bared In Vaccination Behavior***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:62RT-VMJ1-DXY4-X317-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** By David Leonhardt

**Body**

The biggest vaccination gap isn't based on race or partisanship. It's based on class.

It is common to hear about two different demographic groups that are hesitant to receive a Covid-19 vaccination: Republican voters; and racial minorities, especially Black and Latino Americans.

The two groups seem to have different motivations. For Republicans, the attitude is connected to a general skepticism of government and science. For Black and Hispanic Americans, it appears to stem from the country's legacy of providing substandard medical treatment, and sometimes doing outright harm, to minorities.

These ideas all have some truth to them. But they also can obscure the fact that many unvaccinated Republicans and minorities have something in common: They are ***working class***. And there is a huge class gap in vaccination behavior.

As you can seein the chart below, ***working-class*** members of every group are less likely to have received a vaccine and more likely to be skeptical. ''No matter which of these groups we looked at, we see an education divide,'' Mollyann Brodie, who oversees the Kaiser surveys, told me. In some cases, different racial groups with the same education levels -- like Black and white college graduates -- look remarkably similar.

This poll did not break out Asian-Americans, but other Kaiser surveys have, and it's consistent: Asian-Americans have higher median income than Black, Hispanic or white Americans and also a higher vaccination rate.

All of which points to the fact that the class divide is bigger than the racial divide.

There are still differences by ethnicity, because racial inequities are a reality of U.S. life. Many Hispanic Americans, across social classes, say either that they want a shot but have not yet received one or that they are waiting to see how the vaccines affect other people. And there are even bigger differences by partisanship, with many Republicans, including professionals, skeptical of the vaccines.

But you can't understand the country's struggle to vaccinate everyone -- and save thousands of lives -- without understanding the class gap.

The 'Coming Apart'

The story here is bigger than Covid-19. Last year, the economists Anne Case and Angus Deaton published a book called ''Deaths of Despair and the Future of Capitalism'' that documented the growing class divide in one area of American life after another.

Income and wealth have grown much more quickly over recent decades for people with a bachelor's degree than people without one. Marriage, church attendance and self-reported happiness have declined more for the ***working class*** than the professional class; chronic pain, obesity and alcohol consumption have increased more. As the title of the book indicates, life expectancy has also diverged, partly because of deaths from alcoholism, drug overdoses and suicide.

''This B.A./non-B.A. divide,'' says Mr. Deaton, a Nobel laureate, ''just comes up again and again and again.''

Ms. Case and Mr. Deaton, who are Princeton professors, argue that behind these trends is a ''coming apart'' of the ***working-class*** experience. For many people, life lacks the structure, status and meaning that it once had.

Frequently, people are not officially employed by the company where they work, which robs them of the pride that comes from being part of a shared enterprise. They don't belong to a labor union, either. The timing of their work shifts can change unexpectedly. Many parents are trying to raise children without a partner.

These challenges can interfere with Covid vaccination in multiple ways. Carving out the time -- to do the logistical research, get the shot, cope with side effects and schedule a second shot -- can be hard. ***Working-class*** Americans also have less reason to trust public health officials; if you had suffered the damaging ''coming apart'' of the past few decades, would you trust people in positions of authority?

After I described the vaccination trends to Ms. Case and Mr. Deaton, they sent me some broader data on life expectancy, by both race and class. It shows a significant Black-white gap. But that gap has not grown over the past decade. What has grown is the life-expectancy gap between college graduates and non-graduates, among both Black and white Americans.

What to Do?

The growing class divide in living standards is one of the country's greatest problems, and it obviously will not be solved before the pandemic ends. But public health experts believe that there are specific strategies that can narrow the vaccination divide.

One is information. About 25 percent of unvaccinated people remain unsure whether somebody who previously had Covid should still get the vaccine, according to Kaiser. The answer is yes: Almost everybody 12 and older should.

Another promising strategy is making shots even more convenient. Employers can help by hosting on-site vaccinations and giving workers paid time off -- including the day after the shot for people who experience side effects. Drugstores and supermarkets can accept walk-ins, as some already do. Government officials can send mobile, walk-in clinics into more communities. (Text your ZIP code to 438829 -- or text ''VACUNA'' for Spanish -- and you'll find your local options.)

Finally, friends and relatives can turn a vaccination into a something more than just a shot. ''Say, 'Let's do this together. Let's do something, so if you get vaccinated, let's grab dinner after. Let's celebrate together,' '' Dr. Edith Bracho-Sanchez, a New York pediatrician, told CNN.

The U.S. is on the verge of victory over Covid. But the disease remains a threat to millions of Americans. The illness and death that occurs in coming months is likely to aggravate the country's already extreme inequality.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2021/05/23/pageoneplus/24rex-morningnl.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/05/23/pageoneplus/24rex-morningnl.html)

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[***Democrats, Holding the Reins in a Deeply Divided Michigan, Test Their Mettle***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67WR-PB31-JBG3-6095-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Body**

With a strong governor, a Legislature passing a raft of liberal measures and a looming early presidential primary, Democrats are testing the promise and pitfalls of complete control of the state.

The governor of Michigan is considered one of her party's brightest stars. Her state's Democratic-controlled Legislature is rapidly approving a raft of ambitious priorities. The Democratic Party is planning to host one of its earliest presidential primaries in Michigan, while the state's Republican Party is in chaos.

Seven years after Michigan helped cement Donald J. Trump's presidential victory, the state has transformed into a new -- if fragile -- focal point of Democratic power, testing the promise and pitfalls of complete Democratic governance in one of the nation's pre-eminent political battlegrounds.

Michigan's Democratic leaders, however, recoil at the idea that their state -- once a reliable stronghold for the party in presidential years -- is turning blue once more.

''No! Michigan's not a blue state,'' Gov. Gretchen Whitmer insisted in an interview last week in Bay City, nestled in a windy, ***working-class*** county near Saginaw Bay that Mr. Trump won twice. Ms. Whitmer captured it too, prevailing there and across the state in Democrats' November sweep.

''It would be a mistake for anyone to look at that and think Michigan is not still a tossup, very competitive, very diverse state that's going to decide the outcome of the next national election again,'' she said.

''Everybody thinks, Oh, Michigan's done, it's a blue state,'' added Representative Debbie Dingell, a Michigan Democrat. ''Tenuous is the operative word.''

Against that backdrop -- significant victories last fall, in a state that is still closely divided -- state Democrats are pursuing a flood of liberal legislation, while measuring the durability of an unwieldy coalition that defeated Republicans in the last three elections.

Democratic triumphs were fueled by both moderate suburbanites and liberal city dwellers, left-wing college students and even some onetime Trump voters who thought their party had gone too far.

''The state Republican Party is not reflective of the average Republican in Michigan,'' Ms. Whitmer said, nodding to the hard-right turn of the Michigan G.O.P. ''I don't think that everyone's all of a sudden become Democrats.''

Ms. Whitmer has cautioned against claiming political ''mandates.''

But Democrats have moved assertively to act on their power, which includes full control of the Legislature and governor's mansion for the first time in 40 years, focusing on both pocketbook priorities and cultural issues.

They have shepherded through a major tax package, and, to the consternation of some in the business community, made Michigan the first state in nearly 60 years to repeal right-to-work rules, which had weakened organized labor. They have expanded L.G.B.T.Q. protections and pursued anti-gun violence measures, and have moved to repeal a now-unenforceable abortion ban from 1931.

Ms. Whitmer has also signed a measure moving up Michigan's presidential primary, a move blessed by national Democrats, though it is unclear how Republicans will proceed.

If that calendar change takes hold, voters around the country who were once made intimately familiar with the Iowa State Fair may soon become acquainted with the Posen Potato Festival and a Michigan cheeseburger festival, as the state moves into a position of greater prominence in the Democratic nominating process.

Ms. Whitmer's victory margin of nearly 11 percentage points -- on par or ahead of governors in several more liberal states -- has only encouraged a perception among many Democrats that she is possible presidential material.

But she insisted she would not run for president in 2024, regardless of President Biden's re-election plans. He is expected to run and would have strong support from party leaders including Ms. Whitmer, but has not yet announced a bid.

''I have made a commitment to the people of Michigan, I'm going to do this job till the end of this term,'' Ms. Whitmer said. Pressed on whether there was anything about the presidency that appealed down the road, she first demurred -- ''no, not at the moment'' -- before allowing, ''I think that this country is long overdue for a strong female chief executive.''

Republicans, for their part, who as recently as 2018 controlled the state levers of power, are now adrift and divided. Ahead of what should be a marquee Senate race to succeed Senator Debbie Stabenow, a Democrat who is retiring, the challenge of nominating someone who would both survive a primary contest and thrive in a general election is growing more apparent by the week.

The state Republican Party is now helmed by an election denier, Kristina Karamo, who lost her November race for secretary of state by 14 points and has stoked doubts about her ability to run a serious operation.

''People have concerns that the incumbent will have trouble raising money when she openly maligns the same donors she needs to bring in to help win the Senate race,'' said Gustavo Portela, a former spokesman for the Michigan Republican Party. ''She'll have a challenge being able to balance the grass roots and donors.''

Ms. Karamo did not respond to requests for comment.

Just last week, the Michigan G.O.P. promoted an image on social media that compared efforts to curb gun violence with the Nazis' theft of wedding rings from Holocaust victims, then defended the posts amid a backlash.

''The Republican Party in Michigan is dead for the foreseeable future,'' said former Representative Dave Trott, who represented a suburban Detroit district as a Republican but now considers himself an independent, supporting Mr. Biden in 2020. ''Even if the right people were in charge, the MAGA movement is such that any candidate that would be more acceptable to a general electorate can't win the primary.''

''If I'm Elissa Slotkin,'' he added, ''I'm already trying to figure out which Senate building I want my office in.''

The primary and the general elections for Senate are political lifetimes away, but Ms. Slotkin, a Democratic congresswoman from a competitive district, is currently in a commanding position in the race.

Several of the state's highest-profile Democrats have passed on a Senate run, giving her running room in the primary, though a number of other Democrats -- hoping to see more representation of Black voters, Detroit voters, or both in the race -- could still get in.

Among Republicans, former Representative Peter Meijer, who voted to impeach Mr. Trump, is perhaps the best-known potential candidate. Kevin Rinke, who ran a largely self-funded Republican primary campaign for governor, has also been seen as a possible contender, among others. Both men lost primaries last year to far-right candidates who were then defeated in general elections.

Maggie Abboud, a spokeswoman for the National Republican Senatorial Committee, said the committee had seen ''a number of strong potential candidates reach out.''

Certainly, it is difficult to predict how the Democratic strength on display last fall will translate in 2024. The contests were defined in part by an extraordinary backlash to the overturning of Roe v. Wade and a major, successful initiative to enshrine abortion protections in the State Constitution -- and it is far too early to say what issues will be galvanizing next year.

Democrats benefited from a redistricting process. And party leaders freely acknowledge how quickly the political environment in the state can shift.

''We were looking into the brink and decided to work our backsides off,'' Ms. Slotkin said. ''The minute you sleep on Michigan, it can go the other direction.''

There were also warning signs in Wayne County, which is home to Detroit and the state's largest population of Black Americans. Turnout was lower in 2022 than it was in the 2018 midterms.

''We have an opportunity to do more,'' said Lt. Gov. Garlin Gilchrist II, himself a Detroiter. ''I certainly spent a lot of time with Black voters and particularly our younger voters and our Black male voters who we've got to make sure are deeply engaged, and that we invest in that engagement.''

Still, the party's gains were significant, including signs of new inroads in white ***working-class*** territory that has become exceedingly difficult for Democrats around the country.

''In my district, folks were outraged by Jan. 6, but if that's all you talk to them about, you're not going to win their vote,'' said State Senator Kristen McDonald Rivet, a Democrat whose seat includes parts of Bay County, and who emphasized both kitchen-table economic issues and abortion rights in her race.

''By demonstrating that we are moving on real issues that people care about and doing it very aggressively with Democratic power,'' she said, she hoped Michiganders would believe that ''voting for a Democrat means things are going to get better.''

Democrats ''were really demoralized after the Trump victory, and suddenly we are seeing people coming to party meetings again,'' she added. ''The Democratic trifecta in Michigan has mobilized Democrats in a way that I haven't seen in a really long time.''

But Ms. Dingell, the Democratic congresswoman, remains keenly focused on pro-Trump sentiment in the state, and she is already warning of another challenging election cycle, arguing that races up and down the ballot will be highly competitive.

''We will be ground zero for every race,'' she said.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/29/us/politics/michigan-democrats-whitmer.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/29/us/politics/michigan-democrats-whitmer.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Clockwise from above: Gov. Gretchen Whitmer of Michigan, a Democrat, comfortably won re-election

Representative Elissa Slotkin, is running for Senate

Kristen McDonald Rivet, a state senator. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY EMILY ELCONIN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

Kristina Karamo getting the endorsement of former President Donald J. Trump last April. She now leads the state G.O.P. (PHOTOGRAPH BY BRITTANY GREESON FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A18.

**Load-Date:** March 30, 2023

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[***Why Biden Is Behind, and How He Could Mount a Comeback***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69K3-CMT1-DXY4-X4RN-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

November 7, 2023 Tuesday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; National Desk; Pg. 14

**Length:** 1873 words

**Byline:** By Nate Cohn and Alicia Parlapiano

**Body**

A polling deficit against Trump across six key states is mainly about younger, nonwhite and less engaged voters. Kamala Harris performs slightly better.

Four years ago, Joe Biden was the electability candidate -- the broadly appealing, moderate Democrat from Scranton who promised to win the white ***working-class*** voters who elected Donald J. Trump.

There are few signs of that electoral strength today.

In a new set of New York Times/Siena College polls, Mr. Trump leads Mr. Biden in five of the six battleground states likeliest to decide the presidency, as widespread discontent with the state of the country and growing doubts about his ability to perform his job as president threaten to unravel the diverse coalition that elected him in 2020.

Overall, Mr. Trump leads by 48 percent to 44 percent among registered voters across the six states, including leads in Pennsylvania, Michigan, Georgia, Arizona and Nevada -- most likely more than enough to win the 270 electoral votes needed to win the presidency. Mr. Biden led in the sixth state, Wisconsin.

With one year to go until the election, there's still plenty of time for the race to change. In contrast with four years ago, the poll finds a disengaged, disaffected and dissatisfied electorate, setting the stage for a potentially volatile campaign. Many voters only agonizingly support these two disliked candidates. Some will shift as the campaign gets underway. Others simply won't vote at all.

The poll contains considerable evidence that it shouldn't necessarily be daunting for Democrats to reassemble a coalition to defeat Mr. Trump, who remains every bit as unpopular as he was three years ago. But even if Mr. Trump remains eminently beatable, the poll also suggests it may nonetheless be quite challenging for Mr. Biden himself.

The survey finds that Mr. Biden enters his campaign as a badly weakened candidate, one running without the strengths on personal likability, temperament and character that were essential to his narrow victories in all six of these states in 2020. Long-festering vulnerabilities on his age, economic stewardship, and appeal to young, Black and Hispanic voters have grown severe enough to imperil his re-election chances.

On question after question, the public's view of the president has plummeted over the course of his time in office. The deterioration in Mr. Biden's standing is broad, spanning virtually every demographic group, yet it yields an especially deep blow to his electoral support among young, Black and Hispanic voters, with Mr. Trump obtaining previously unimaginable levels of support with them.

Mr. Biden barely leads at all among nonwhite voters under 45, even though the same voters reported backing Mr. Biden by almost 40 points in the last election. As a result, the candidates are essentially tied among voters 18 to 29, a group that has reliably backed Democrats by a wide margin for two decades.

Just as strikingly, Mr. Trump has cut Mr. Biden's lead among nonwhite voters in half, not only with staggering gains among the younger part of that group but with more modest gains among older voters as well. Overall, Mr. Trump earns more than 20 percent support among Black voters, a tally that would be unprecedented in the post-Civil Rights Act era.

In contrast, Mr. Biden has retained the entirety of his support among older white voters, helping him stay relatively competitive in the older and predominantly white Northern battleground states of Michigan, Wisconsin and Pennsylvania, even as Mr. Trump builds a more comfortable lead in the more diverse Sun Belt states.

There's no reason to assume that next November's final election tallies will match the results of these surveys. But if they did, it could represent an epochal shift in American politics, one with the potential to reverberate for decades as young and nonwhite voters make up a growing share of the electorate. Many familiar patterns in American politics would be blurred. Racial and generational polarization would fade. It would be the culmination of a decade-long realignment of the electorate along the lines of Mr. Trump's conservative populism, all while dashing Democratic hopes of assembling a progressive majority around a new generation of young and nonwhite voters.

While all of this raises the specter of catastrophe for Democrats, there is still plenty of time for the electorate's preferences to gradually come back into alignment with the familiar demographic patterns of the last few decades. The poll suggests that it shouldn't necessarily be difficult for Mr. Biden to reassemble his winning coalition -- at least on paper. To win, he merely needs to reinvigorate voters from traditional Democratic constituencies, groups that the poll finds remain quite open to Democrats in a matchup against Mr. Trump.

In a hypothetical race without Mr. Biden, an unnamed generic Democrat leads Mr. Trump by eight points, 48 to 40 -- a wider lead than the three-point edge held by an unnamed Democrat at this time in 2019.

Even Kamala Harris -- no political juggernaut so far -- fares a bit better than Mr. Biden, trailing Mr. Trump by three points in a hypothetical matchup, compared with Mr. Biden's five-point deficit (Mr. Trump appears to lead by four points in the top-line 48-44 result because of rounding).

While Mr. Biden doesn't fare all that much worse than his running mate, the top-line similarity obscures major differences in their support: A full 11 percent of Ms. Harris's would-be supporters do not back Mr. Biden, and two-thirds of them are either nonwhite or younger than 30.

As a result, Mr. Biden would lead by three points among registered voters and two points among likely voters across the battlegrounds, including leads in five of the six states, if he could regain the nonwhite and young voters who would be willing to vote for his own not-especially-popular vice president. His lead among Black, Hispanic and young voters would return to 2020 levels as well, at least among likely voters.

The Kamala-not-Joe voters aren't the only voters Mr. Biden will seek in pursuit of re-election, but they encapsulate his challenge. They do not support Mr. Trump strongly. Only 16 percent of the Kamala-not-Joe voters said they would ''definitely'' back Mr. Trump over Mr. Biden. A majority didn't even support Mr. Trump when first asked -- more than 60 percent initially said they would vote for someone else, didn't know, or said they simply wouldn't vote. They supported Mr. Trump only on a second question pressing which way they would lean if the election were held today.

The relatively tepid support for Mr. Trump among young and nonwhite voters raises the possibility that many of the voters fueling his gains simply might not vote next November. In fact, virtually all of Mr. Biden's weakness is concentrated among less engaged voters who sat out the last midterm election. Many of these voters will ultimately vote in a presidential race, but not all of them will. As a result, Mr. Biden fares slightly better among likely than registered voters across the six states, including closing the gap with Mr. Trump in Michigan. If so, Mr. Biden's deficit may be somewhat smaller than it looks.

But if the poll indicates that it shouldn't be so hard to beat Mr. Trump, it also indicates that it might still be very challenging for Mr. Biden to do it. Overall, 49 percent of registered voters say there's ''not really any chance'' they'll support him, including many of the voters who seem as if they ought to be available to Democrats.

Even the Kamala-not-Joe voters start the campaign voicing deep skepticism. More than half of these voters say they support Mr. Trump against Mr. Biden; nearly 43 percent say there's ''not really any chance'' they will support Mr. Biden.

It's not clear whether survey respondents should be taken at their word on a question like this -- not with a year to go, not before the campaign gets underway. But taken seriously, Mr. Biden's path to re-election would be quite challenging. Whether he could ultimately win them back might depend on the exact source of his challenge, whether there's anything he can do about it, and whether his campaign can refocus the electorate's attention on Mr. Trump and other more favorable issues.

Mr. Biden's challenge with these voters is not ideological. Just 18 percent of the Kamala-not-Joe voters say Mr. Biden isn't progressive or liberal enough, while a slightly greater 20 percent say he's too liberal. The preponderance of these voters, 58 percent, say he's not too far either way. And compared with loyal Democratic voters, the Kamala-not-Joe vote is far less liberal and moderate. In fact, more identify as conservatives than liberals.

Instead, Mr. Biden's problems, as seen by voters, are mostly about his handling of the presidency, whether because of the economy, the state of the nation, or deep reservations about his ability to carry out his duties. It is hard to tell which of these problems most explains his weakness. After all, the preponderance of the voters share all these concerns. Regardless of which matters most, each one fuels a belief that Mr. Biden is incapable of handling the challenges facing the nation, let alone improving their lives.

More than half of the Kamala-not-Joe voters said it would ''make no difference'' if Mr. Biden were re-elected, while 36 percent said it would be bad. Just 9 percent said it would be good.

At the outset of the campaign, concerns about Mr. Biden's handling of the presidency prevail over those about Mr. Trump, including on abortion and democracy. Mr. Biden holds the edge over Mr. Trump on these issues, but voters are far less likely to say abortion and democracy are more important than the economy than they were in Times/Siena polling of the same states last fall. The relatively nonideological Kamala-not-Joe voters are particularly likely to say the economy is more important to their vote.

Historically, incumbent presidents have found themselves in a similar position at the start of the race, only to rally their base with the help of a growing economy and a polarizing campaign. It is hard to predict whether views of the economy will improve, but the Biden campaign will undoubtedly try to refocus voters on issues like preserving democracy and abortion rights, just as the Democrats did in the midterms. It's possible that such a campaign will allow Mr. Biden to reassemble his winning coalition, especially since Mr. Biden's weakness is concentrated among less engaged voters.

But it is also possible that the concerns about Mr. Biden's age and the economy are just too great. Whether the Democratic message or their reservations about the messenger is more important might ultimately decide the election.

The New York Times/Siena College polls of 3,662 registered voters in Arizona, Georgia, Michigan, Nevada, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin were conducted by telephone using live operators from Oct. 22 to Nov. 3, 2023. When all states are combined, the margin of sampling error is plus or minus 1.8 percentage points. The margin of sampling error for each state is between 4.4 and 4.8 percentage points. Cross-tabs and methodology are available here.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/05/upshot/polls-biden-trump-2024.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/05/upshot/polls-biden-trump-2024.html)

**Graphic**

This article appeared in print on page A14.

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[***Y'all***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:66P3-65X1-JBG3-639M-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

October 23, 2022 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section MM; Column 0; Magazine Desk; Pg. 16; LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION

**Length:** 916 words

**Byline:** By Maud Newton

**Body**

The South's default collective form of address is the best of the American vernacular.

Growing up in Miami, I dreaded being told that I sounded like a hick. In my teens, a boyfriend pointed out that I tended to say ''sow'' (as in the female pig) in place of ''saw.'' But most verbal indicators of my Texas roots fell away in nursery school, after my family moved from Dallas and I took to using the word ''toilet'' rather than ''commode.'' The way I began to say ''pie'' flummoxed my parents. It sounded, to their ears, like ''poi.'' When my mom joked that I was becoming a Yankee, my father scolded her and taught me ''Dixieland.''

Raised in the Mississippi Delta, he was an ardent believer in the Old South who glorified our antebellum ancestors and published letters in Southern newspapers denouncing politicians as scalawags. My father defended slavery, demanded the subservience of women and adhered to ''spare the rod and spoil the child.'' (When contacted by this magazine, my father broadly disputed my memories of him.) He mostly ignored the changes in my speech, but one thing I said made him clench with fury: ''you guys.'' The term was ''y'all,'' he said, tightening his jaw. Little girls were not guys.

I recall having this conversation a couple of times as I moved through kindergarten and into elementary school. But every kid I met in Miami said ''you guys.'' And so, outside my father's hearing, I carried on as before. He spanked me once when he overheard me saying it to a couple of playmates, both girls. The belt didn't make me like ''y'all'' any better. On the one hand, I associated the South's default collective form of address with my Texan granny, who was warm and fun and full of ***working-class*** sass. Conversely, ''y'all'' also seemed to reek of forced cheer and hidden demands that I associated with my father. It was tangled up with his tiresome rules about gender, the same rules that told me I wasn't allowed to play with Matchbox cars, read ''The Hardy Boys'' or wear tube socks. It conjured his nostalgia for the Delta of the Jim Crow era, with its poll taxes and whites-only schools. I was at most a Southerner one step removed, and unwilling to claim even that. As I grew older, when Southern family and friends teased me and called me a Yankee, I agreed with relief.

My assumptions about ''y'all'' were muddled at best. Its origins are mysterious: While the term could have originated with Scottish-Irish immigrants, there are reasons to suspect it derives at least in part from the vernacular of enslaved Black people, whose influence on Southern speech is undeniable but difficult to trace. Though a Southern term, it's emblematic of the messiness and heterogeneity of American English -- a language both inspiringly polyglot and marked by an ugly history.

Of course, I didn't know any of that. My resistance to ''y'all'' began to fade only in my mid-20s, when I lived in Tallahassee after law school. My apartment was 17 miles from Florida's border with Georgia, and I practiced law alongside men who took offense when, after a full day opposing them in depositions, I declined their offers to carry my briefcase. My last name was hyphenated, too: a true ''you're not from around here'' demerit. But in grocery stores and coffee shops, on the street and in the library, everyone -- Black and white, queer and straight, ***working-class*** and wealthy -- used ''y'all,'' and soon I did, too. I began to enjoy its warmth and inclusivity, the way everyone was equally gathered under its umbrella. I had to admit: It didn't feel sexist, racist or classist. It felt friendly and -- most of the time -- genuine.

When eventually I moved to Brooklyn, I was relieved to live in a place where no one tried to carry my bag at the end of a workday, and the Civil War monuments I passed honored the Union rather than the Confederacy. I reverted to the ''you guys'' of my youth, conforming to dominant New Yawker ways, but it wasn't the satisfying linguistic homecoming I'd expected. It felt a little brusque, and though it was a betrayal of my 8-year-old self, I had to admit: I didn't identify as a guy.

Living in the city, meanwhile, upended all my conceptions about what my ancestors' preferred collective form of address meant. Far from being a niche Southern phrase, it already had a home here. I might not hear it much in the Brooklyn neighborhoods where I've lived -- Williamsburg, Greenpoint, then Kensington -- but it resounded in Bed-Stuy shops, a favorite Ft. Greene barbecue spot (R.I.P.), a street between City College and the A train. ''Y'all'' had come north in the Great Migration, alongside collards and cornbread. Now it has spread not just to states above the Mason-Dixon line but as far as Australia and near as my current home in Queens. Far from the oppressive ethos I once imagined, ''y'all'' represents the best of American vernacular.

And so, on a bitterly cold night at my local dog run with some friends, I worked up the nerve to say it. As the word left my mouth, I worried I sounded like a caricature of the South, one I've discovered lives in my own head just as it does the heads of Northerners. But my friends took it in stride. True, they haven't started using ''y'all'' yet, but I'll keep evangelizing for this idiom that welcomes anyone who finds a home in it.

Maud Newton is a writer whose first book is ''Ancestor Trouble'' (Random House, 2022). Maud Newtonis a writer whose first book is ''Ancestor Trouble'' (Random House, 2022).

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/18/magazine/yall.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/18/magazine/yall.html)

**Graphic**

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[***How Did a Socialist Win In Buffalo?***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:630V-V1J1-DXY4-X20W-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

June 26, 2021 Saturday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; Editorial Desk; Pg. 21; MICHELLE GOLDBERG

**Length:** 909 words

**Byline:** By Michelle Goldberg

**Body**

On Tuesday night, just after the polls closed, The Buffalo News ran an update about the city's Democratic mayoral primary, which pit the four-term incumbent mayor, Byron Brown, against a socialist challenger, India Walton. ''Those handicapping the race are not betting whether Brown will win, but by how much,'' the paper said. ''Will a 10-point landslide suffice? Or could he post a larger tally?''

An hour and a half later, with almost all of the votes in, Walton, a 38-year-old political newcomer, wasn't just ahead. She was ahead by a lot: 52 percent to Brown's 45 percent. Buffalo is an overwhelmingly Democratic city -- there won't even be a Republican on the general election ballot -- so Walton will almost certainly become the first socialist mayor of a major city in more than 50 years, and the first woman to lead Buffalo, where politics is such an old boys' club that the city council is entirely male.

Walton didn't just upend expectations among local political observers. She also complicated a narrative that's set in since the 2020 election: that surging crime has made progressive politics toxic.

This narrative was strengthened when Eric Adams, a former cop, came out ahead in the initial count of New York City's ranked-choice mayoral primary, whose final results are still being calculated. ''The Democrats' Wake-Up Call,'' said an Axios headline about Adams's strong lead and the political danger of the defund-the-police movement.

That danger is real. Polls reveal that both Black and white voters reject the slogan ''Defund the police.'' Yet Walton has shown that even in a city where shootings have surged a staggering 116 percent so far this year, a socialist promising police reform can win.

When I asked her how, her answer was simple: ''Organizing.'' But it's a little more than that. Walton is a woman with a ***working-class*** background and an inspiring personal story who knows how to make progressive ideas sound like common sense. ''The challenge of the left is that we use our jargony activist language and don't take time to fully explain what we mean to those who may not be as 'woke' as we are,'' she told me.

It was last summer's racial justice protests that finally pushed Walton to run for office, but she shies away from the phrase ''defund the police.'' ''I come from the Marshall Ganz school of organizing,'' she said, referring to the activist turned sociologist. ''I try and avoid using negative language on campaigns.''

Instead of ''defund,'' she said, ''we say we're going to reallocate funds. We're going to fully fund community centers. We're going to make the investments that naturally reduce crime, such as investments in education, infrastructure, living-wage jobs. Nothing stops crime better than a person who's gainfully employed. If you have to go to work, you don't have time to be out in the streets with all these shenanigans.''

Buffalo is a blue-collar city, and Walton, who grew up on the chronically neglected East Side, can relate to the problems of her beleaguered fellow citizens. There are actually similarities between her trajectory and Eric Adams's -- both had hardscrabble backgrounds followed by struggles to master institutions that had frightened and alienated them. For Adams, that was the Police Department. For Walton, it was the medical establishment.

She had her first child at 14, and gave birth to extremely premature twins at 19. Feeling ignored and disrespected in the newborn intensive care unit inspired her to become a nurse. ''I wanted to go to nursing school so that I could return to the NICU and be an example for another young mother who may be in a time of crisis similar to what I experienced,'' she told me.

When she decided to run for office, her core support didn't come from the Black ***working class***. ''The early adopters were definitely white progressives,'' she said. She was embraced by national left-wing groups, including the Working Families Party, which sent people to help professionalize her campaign, and the Democratic Socialists of America.

It took more effort to make inroads among Black ***working-class*** voters. ''I did not necessarily cater to my base,'' she said. ''I communicated with the people that I thought were going to be the more difficult votes to get. So I went to the churches, and I went into the Black community, a population that traditionally is averse to things like really progressive politics.''

In some ways, Walton epitomizes the winning formula for left-wing candidates. Today's left is basically a coalition between well-educated liberal professionals and ***working-class*** people of color. Often those best able to unite these groups are people of color with radical ideals and ***working-class*** ties. Look at the leftists who've been elected to Congress in recent years: Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez was a bartender. Jamaal Bowman was a principal in the Bronx. Cori Bush, like Walton, was a nurse.

Backlash politics may be gaining strength in America, but that doesn't mean the left must retreat. Progressives still are far from a majority, but they can build power if they recruit from the communities they aspire to represent.

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**Graphic**

PHOTO: India Walton, who surprised political handicappers with her victory in Buffalo's Democratic mayoral primary. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Luke Copping FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** June 26, 2021

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[***Williamsburg. What Happened?***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B83-NYR1-DXY4-X070-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

February 4, 2024 Sunday

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**Section:** Section ST; Column 0; Style Desk; Pg. 10

**Length:** 3621 words

**Byline:** By Steven Kurutz

**Body**

A four-decade timeline of total transformation.

A car is moving down Kent Avenue in Williamsburg, Brooklyn. A passenger captures the scene on video -- abandoned factory buildings, vacant lots and a crumbling warehouse beneath grim skies. Twenty-five years later, that same stretch is lined with glassy apartment towers, boutique hotels and a Trader Joe's.

For those who remember the Williamsburg of long ago, or even a decade ago, walking its streets can be disorienting, like running into an old friend who has had extensive plastic surgery. In a dramatic transformation, more than 500 condominium buildings have sprung up there since 2005, and much of the north side has become an upscale shopping district.

The neighborhood seemed to cross a Rubicon in 2023, when Hermès opened a pop-up shop on North Sixth Street and announced plans for a permanent outpost nearby. Then Chanel -- Chanel! -- opened a boutique on the same street.

There have been many Williamsburgs over time. It was a place of tenements in Betty Smith's ''A Tree Grows in Brooklyn''; a haven for Jews escaping persecution in Europe; a stronghold for Puerto Rican, Dominican, Polish and Ukrainian immigrants.

This story concerns more recent history, when a neighborhood of mills, foundries and meatpacking plants became a cheap-rent paradise for artists and, finally, a prime destination for developers and international luxury brands. This timeline charts that remarkable evolution in words and images, year by year.

'Pure Bohemia'

1988

The Lizard's Tail, shown here in its early years, hosts poets, rock bands and one-act plays in a makeshift space under the Williamsburg Bridge, in a neighborhood of mainly Hispanic and Hasidic residents. The New York Times calls the club ''pure bohemia, reminiscent of the Lower East Side in the early 1980s.''

1989

Kerry Smith, a former firefighter, opens the Right Bank Cafe on Kent Avenue. An early customer, the writer Ando Arike, describes it as a place for ''the lost, the confused, the drunks, the drug-addled, the drinkers, the poets,'' as well as ''the old-timers, the Latinos, the Russians, the Poles, the Hasidic Jews, the bridge workers, the bikers,'' and other types. Local bands play on its modest courtyard stage, shown above.

The artist Phyllis Yampolsky founds Independent Friends of McCarren Park with the aim of restoring McCarren Park Pool, a lake-size pool built on the Willamsburg-Greenpoint border in the 1930s. It has fallen into disrepair since it closed in 1983.

1990

It's an art show. It's a concert. It's a party. It's Cat's Head, an all-night event featuring local artists and musicians. It takes place on Bastille Day at the vacant Old Dutch Mustard factory on Metropolitan Avenue, drawing 750 revelers.

1991

Waterfront Week, a zine for the neighborhood's growing community of writers, artists and musicians, starts regular publication.

In a former auto repair shop on North First Street, Annie Herron opens Herron Test-Site, one of the neighborhood's first commercial art galleries.

Keep Refrigerated, a club that hosts wee-hours raves, punk shows and art installations, opens in a former meatpacking plant on North Sixth Street. Roughly 300 people squeeze into its three floors.

1992

Williamsburg makes the cover of New York magazine. The story reports that an estimated 2,000 artists are living in this ''***working-class*** neighborhood.'' Medea de Vyse, a performance artist, provides the money quote: ''In the 70s, it was Soho. In the 80s, the East Village. In the 90s, it will be Williamsburg.''

Mugs Ale House, on Bedford Avenue, becomes a saloon of choice for artists and musicians priced out of Lower Manhattan. The old-school barroom, shown above, is ''dark and dingy,'' the Daily News reports. Newcomers smoke cigarettes, drink craft beers and eat burgers and chops alongside Polish and Ukrainian locals.

'Where It's At'

1993

Oznot's Dish, a Mediterranean-style bistro, opens on Berry Street. It becomes a first-date spot and a place where recent arrivals take visiting family members.

1994

A former Polish luncheonette on Bedford Avenue is revamped as Planet Thailand. A Times critic notes that Williamsburg, as a dining destination, ''is slowly becoming visible against the Milky Way of Manhattan restaurants.''

1995

Located in a former mayonnaise factory, and famous for its sunken reflecting pool, Galapagos Art Space attracts crowds who might encounter a poetry slam or a musician blowing into a didgeridoo. The aroma of nearby meat-processing plants lends a certain ambience.

1996

Two decades after the closing of the Schaefer and Rheingold breweries in Brooklyn, beer-making returns to the borough with the opening of Brooklyn Brewery in a former matzo factory on North 11th Street. Its signature brand is Brooklyn Lager. Mayor Rudolph Giuliani serves as brewmaster on opening day.

1997

Utne Reader names Williamsburg the third hippest place in the nation, behind the Lower Garden District in New Orleans and the Inner Mission in San Francisco.

1998

Andrew Tarlow and Mark Firth open Diner, a restaurant in a dining-car-like structure beneath the Williamsburg Bridge. With its focus on local ingredients, casual-hip service and a considered take on familiar dishes, Diner embodies the artisanal Brooklyn aesthetic that will soon be everywhere.

1999

New York City's Board of Standards and Appeals grants a variance in zoning laws that have long favored manufacturing along the waterfront, allowing for the construction of some 220 apartments in the Austin, Nichols Warehouse, a grand structure on Kent Avenue. Designed in Egyptian Revival style by Cass Gilbert, the architect of the Woolworth Building, it has sat vacant for decades.

The site of Pete's Candy Store, on Lorimer Avenue, was once a general store, a luncheonette and a gambling den. Now it opens as a bar and music venue. The British singer-songwriter Beth Orton plays the first show.

It was once the Real Form Girdle Factory. Now this Bedford Avenue building is a mini mall, with an internet cafe, a cheese shop and a record store. For those in search of art books or Jonathan Lethem's latest, there's Spoonbill & Sugartown Booksellers.

2000

Kokie's Place, on the corner of Berry and North Third, is in a transitional phase. Once an after-hours haunt for some of the area's longtime Puerto Rican residents, it begins to draw a different crowd. The author Robert Anasi describes the regulars as a mix of factory workers, immigrants and ''a couple of artist types with their sideburns and thick-framed glasses.'' It will soon attract a new creature on the scene: the Williamsburg hipster, who is identified by a trucker hat, tattoos and a fondness for indie rock. Reports suggest the establishment's name was literal: patrons could buy cocaine in the back.

An old-school stainless steel diner -- formerly the Wythe Diner, on Wythe Avenue -- is sold by the Ukrainian family who owned it to the proprietor of a West Village burrito joint. After a renovation, it will open as Relish and become a symbol of the new Williamsburg (and a popular film-shoot location).

The neighborhood is changing fast but Peter Luger Steak House stays the same, serving porterhouse steaks, fried potatoes and spinach to city officials and other meat lovers in the shadow of the Williamsburg Bridge. This year, it is one of only two Brooklyn establishments listed in the annual Zagat Survey of New York City's top restaurants.

2001

Northsix, a rock club, opens in the same former factory building as Galapagos. The club presents Moldy Peaches, the Walkmen and Calla, among other acts. Luxx opens the same year on Grand Street and hosts DJ Larry Tee's weekly ''Berliniamsburg'' electroclash party. ''It's official,'' The New York Post declares. ''Brooklyn is where it's at.''

Well past its days as an alternative paper in Montreal, Vice Media moves its headquarters from a building in Manhattan to a Williamsburg warehouse. Its writers, editors and videographers will help turn the neighborhood into a media phenomenon.

'New Life'

2002

In his inaugural address, Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg pledges: ''We will bring new life to our waterfront and stimulate new investment in housing.''

The Gen Xers who arrived in the '90s are having babies. Sam & Seb, shown above, begins serving them from a former arts supply store on Bedford Avenue. Its stock will include tiny Levi's, tiny Dries Van Noten tops, and tiny Che Guevara T-shirts. Sean Kennerly, a local writer, grumbles to The Times: ''You always figure there are places for people who want to have kids. Like over in Park Slope.''

2003

The Gretsch building, a former guitar factory erected in 1916, undergoes a $75 million renovation and becomes luxury lofts. A studio is priced at $500,000; a two-bedroom with river views asks a then-staggering $999,000. Busta Rhymes buys three units; Josh Hartnett nabs the penthouse.

You can't furnish your luxury condo from secondhand shops. Thus opens Future Perfect, shown above, which sells contemporary design by Piet Hein Eek, a Dutch designer, and Lindsey Adelman, whose chandeliers become hanging status symbols.

The Bloomberg administration announces a plan to rezone a 1.6-mile stretch along the East River in Williamsburg and Greenpoint. The change would open the area to residential buildings as high as 350 feet.

Robert Lanham, who arrived in the neighborhood from Virginia about five years earlier, publishes ''The Hipster Handbook,'' a cheeky guide to Williamsburg's signature creature. The hipster, he writes, ''shuns or reduces to kitsch anything held dear by the mainstream'' and ''ideally possesses no more than 2 percent body fat.''

2004

After more than a century, the Domino Sugar Refinery all but ceases operations. ''I learned this past week that I'm a dinosaur,'' says Richard Rednour, a foreman who is laid off. Six months later, the developer Community Preservation Corporation Resources buys the facility and wins city approval to build glassy apartment towers on the 11-acre site.

2005

Clothes-shopping in the area once meant a trip to thrift stores like Domsey's Warehouse Outlet, Beacon's Closet or Buffalo Exchange. The arrival of Wendy Mullin of Built by Wendy -- known for outfitting Beastie Boys and Parker Posey -- brings designer fashion to the neighborhood.

In a May 12 dispatch, The Times reports on a victory for the Bloomberg administration: ''The City Council overwhelmingly approved plans yesterday to rezone 175 waterfront blocks in the Brooklyn neighborhoods of Williamsburg and Greenpoint, removing the last major hurdle to the city's most ambitious redevelopment effort in decades.''

The concert promoter Ron Delsener Presents donates money to clean up McCarren Park Pool, the long-neglected, 55,400-square-foot swimming pool, so that an experimental dance performance can be staged there, with plans for 10 more events the next summer.

The City Council revokes the landmark status of the Austin, Nichols Warehouse. The decision, which comes amid protests from preservationists, allows the developer to alter the exterior while adding six floors for condo units.

2006

Toll Brothers, a home-building company known for suburban McMansions, announces North8, a 6-story residential complex. An ad conveys the vibe: ''Williamsburg. All grown up.''

A music scene coalesces around illegal or semi-legal performance spaces, including Glasslands, which leases a warehouse on Kent Avenue to host Vampire Weekend, MGMT, Dirty Projectors and other indie acts.

The developer Steiner Equities buys the Old Dutch Mustard Factory, where condiments were produced from 1941 until roughly 1980 and underground parties took place in the years after that. Demolition soon clears the way for townhouses and more than 100 apartments.

2007

McCarren Park Pool is reborn as a concert venue, with an indie-rock-heavy roster of performers this summer and next. Acts include Band of Horses, Beastie Boys, Blonde Redhead, Cat Power, Deerhoof, Deerhunter, Deer Tick, Feist, Grizzly Bear, MGMT, M.I.A., Modest Mouse, TV on the Radio and Wilco.

Amid rent hikes, the rock club Northsix is sold to Bowery Presents, the company behind Manhattan's Bowery Ballroom. After a multimillion-dollar renovation, it reopens as Music Hall of Williamsburg. Fiery Furnaces and Patti Smith take the stage.

2008

In an interview with The Brooklyn Paper, Mr. Lanham, the hipster chronicler, notes a change in the local scene: ''What gets on my nerves, though, are the Wall Streeters who have come into the area to 'get dirty with the artists' and have brought their condominiums with them.''

Rick and Michael Mast, bearded brothers from Iowa City, Iowa, ''are giving Willy Wonka a run for his money,'' Time magazine reports, by selling their own ''bean-to-bar'' artisanal chocolate out of their Williamsburg apartment. They will soon open a shop on North Third Street and a factory nearby.

'Yuppification Train'

2009

A desolate waterfront stretch, long the site of low-budget music videos and illegal parties, is now The Edge: two residential towers, with underground parking, fitness centers, an indoor pool, spa treatment rooms, virtual golf and a full-time support staff.

A Duane Reade pharmacy opens on Kent Avenue, heralding the arrival of chain stores.

A popular Tumblr account hints at a sense of hipster overload. Created by the writer and comedian Joe Mande, ''Look at This --ing Hipster'' presents snapshots of the neighborhood's more stylized residents, often with stinging commentary.

The saga of the Austin, Nichols Warehouse comes to an end when the developer agrees to preserve the building's exterior. The 460,000-square-foot interior, however, will be converted into apartments.

2010

CVS opens a branch at The Edge, down the street from the Duane Reade. Shari Lind, a Manhattan transplant, tells The Times she wants more chain retail: ''Please, can you bring in Dunkin' Donuts, too? I also want a Bank of America.'' She soon gets her wish, when the bank opens a Bedford Avenue branch.

A parking lot on Kent Avenue becomes Jungle, an outdoor plant bazaar and event space. It offers rare houseplants and hori hori digging tools imported from Japan.

2011

The NoLIta hot spot Cafe de la Esquina has a second location, shown above: the stainless steel structure occupied for more than a decade by Relish (and, before that, the Wythe Diner). The Times restaurant critic Frank Bruni describes it as ''Studio 54 with chipotle instead of cocaine.''

The Nitehawk Cinema, a dine-in, three-screen theater with a full bar, opens on Metropolitan Avenue. Patrons eat cheese empanadas and fish tacos while watching ''Midnight in Paris,'' ''Submarine'' and ''The Trip.''

An open-air food court, Smorgasburg, pops up at East River State Park. Open on Saturdays, with vendors selling sesame noodles and frozen vegan desserts, the food fair is ''the Woodstock of eating,'' The Times reports.

2012

The 72-room Wythe Hotel opens near the waterfront. The developers of what The Times calls a ''dazzling hotel and night life complex'' include Jed Walentas of Two Trees and Andrew Tarlow of Diner, whose empire will grow to four restaurants, two shops and a literary magazine, Diner's Journal.

The real estate investment firm Midtown Equities buys a vacant warehouse on a block between Bedford Avenue and Berry Street. It announces plans for a 200,000-square-foot ''retail destination'' that will include Equinox, Chipotle, Citibank, T-Mobile and Whole Foods. ''Williamsburg's yuppification train picks up speed,'' Gothamist reports.

The developers of the Domino plant sell the site to Two Trees Management, the company behind the transformation of the nearby Dumbo neighborhood.

After all those raucous summertime concerts, McCarren Park Pool is now ... a swimming pool once more. Mayor Bloomberg reopens it in June, after a 30-month, $50 million renovation.

2013

Nine years into a civic tussle, the opponents of the redevelopment of the Domino Sugar Refinery are mostly quiet when Two Trees unveils its updated plan. ''If Two Trees doesn't develop this, somebody else will, is sort of my mentality, unfortunately,'' Matthew Viragh, the owner of Nitehawk Cinema, tells The Times.

Exercise in Williamsburg once meant stepping outside the bar for a smoke. Now, on Kent Avenue, there is a new branch of the luxury indoor cycling chain SoulCycle.

2014

Now a media brand valued at $5.7 billion, with 400 employees and investments from the Walt Disney Company and the Murdoch family, Vice unveils plans for a 60,000-square-foot office along the waterfront. New York State kicks in with a $6.5 million tax break. Vice's would-be neighbors in the warehouse building -- the music venues Glasslands and Death by Audio -- announce they are closing.

A past version of South Williamsburg takes the spotlight at the 52nd New York Film Festival, which presents a restored version of ''Los Sures,'' a 1984 documentary by Diego Echeverria about the neighborhood's Puerto Rican and Dominican communities. It is accompanied by ''Living Los Sures,'' a new multimedia project inspired by Mr. Echeverria's film.

The French denim brand A.P.C. opens a temporary boutique at the Wythe Hotel.

'Peak Gentrification'

2015

For its first store in Brooklyn, Ralph Lauren chooses Williamsburg, opening Double RL Men's in a former mill on North Third Street. In coming years, the site will make room for the retailers Todd Snyder, Paul Smith, Anine Bing, UpWest, Herman Miller and Away.

Mast Brothers backlash: A food blogger accuses the Williamsburg chocolatiers of exaggerating their homemade ''bean-to-bar'' aesthetic in their marketing materials. In a Times interview, the brothers say the report was mostly untrue.

2016

Instead of dropping into Mikey's Hook Up to get your MacBook Pro repaired, you can now go to the Genius Bar at Apple Williamsburg. Apple's first Brooklyn store is a 13,700-square-foot ersatz industrial space designed by the architecture firm Bohlin Cywinski Jackson. Customers queue up the night before doors open.

The opening of the William Vale Hotel, above, down the block from the Wythe, cements the neighborhood's status as a destination for international tourists. The Hoxton Williamsburg and The Williamsburg (now Arlo Williamsburg) soon follow.

2017

The Domino site signs its first tenants. ''Prices range from $2,746 per month for a studio, and go up to $5,946 per month for a two-bedroom, two-bathroom unit,'' Curbed reports.

Supreme, the streetwear label founded in SoHo in 1994, opens a Grand Street location. At the premiere party, shown above, guests encounter a built-in skate bowl in the back of the store.

Yoga pants come to the neighborhood when Lululemon opens on North Sixth Street.

2018

The North Face opens for business across from Lululemon on North Sixth Street, which is fast becoming a high-end retail corridor.

2019

Loyal customers of Whisk, a kitchen supplies store on Bedford Avenue that was part of an earlier wave of development, mourn its closing. Natasha Amott, the owner, says her rent was $8,600 a month when she opened in 2008. Now the landlord is asking $26,500 a month -- a 300 percent increase. ''Everybody agrees some of the changes have been for good,'' Ms. Amott tells NY1, ''but the neighborhood, from what I hear, is very upset that there's all these multinational and national brands coming in.''

2020

Blank Street Coffee, a cafe backed by venture capital that is soon to be ubiquitous in the city, opens an electric-powered coffee cart in the outdoor garden of what was formerly the site of La Esquina, Relish and the Wythe Diner.

2021

Gucci opens a pop-up shop inside The North Face store on North Sixth Street. A neon sign above the doorway beckons to fashionistas who typically shop on Spring Street and Madison Avenue in Manhattan. Months later, in a former bank building between Kent and Wythe, another Italian luxury label, Bottega Veneta, has its own pop-up.

Jennifer Aniston, Justin Theroux, Jimmy Kimmel, Howard Stern, Jon Hamm and Jason Bateman are spotted by Page Six enjoying a group dinner at Laser Wolf, an Israeli restaurant atop The Hoxton Williamsburg.

2022

The French luxury brand Hermès signs leases for two locations on North Sixth Street -- a pop-up and a forthcoming permanent flagship store. Time Out asks: ''Has Williamsburg reached peak gentrification?''

2023

Kellogg's Diner, a homey restaurant on the corner of Metropolitan and Union avenues since 1928, declares bankruptcy. By year's end, it has new owners, who say it will become a 24-hour Tex-Mex restaurant with a menu of cocktails.

The boxcar-like structure that was previously the Wythe Diner, Relish, La Esquina and Blank Street is repurposed yet again. Chanel turns this retro-styled, Instagrammable space into a pop-up shop during New York Fashion Week. Instead of food, Lucky Chance Diner serves Chanel fragrances.

2024

While many of Williamsburg's historic residents remain, the neighborhood has transformed around them, becoming significantly wealthier and more white. In 1990, the median household income for Williamsburg and Greenpoint (converted to 2022 dollars) was $45,640, according to the New York University Furman Center. In 2023, that figure had more than doubled, to $111,748.

''You have a combination of age, demographics and wealth that are all concentrated in that area,'' said Kael Goodman, the head of Marketproof, an analytics company that specializes in New York real estate. Williamsburg now has 135 active and recently completed development projects greater than 25,000-square-feet, according to Marketproof, the most of any neighborhood in the city.

Christy Harmon contributed research and reporting.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/30/style/williamsburg-brooklyn-evolution.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/30/style/williamsburg-brooklyn-evolution.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: The Lizard's Tail, under the Williamsburg Bridge, hosted poets, rock bands and one-act plays. (PHOTOGRAPH BY MICHELLE V. AGINS/THE NEW YORK TIMES, 1990)

An installation by Dennis Del Zotto at Galapagos Art Space. (PHOTOGRAPH BY ALLAN B. SPIEGEL, 1997)

Mugs Ale House, an old-school barroom on Bedford Avenue. (PHOTOGRAPH BY ED BERESTECKI, 1993)

A poster for Fly Trap. (PHOTOGRAPH BY STAVIT ALLWEIS, 1991)

A waterfront lot, long before development. TED BARRON)

PHOTOS (PHOTOGRAPHS BY VICTOR DELUCIA/THE NEW YORK TIMES, 1989

KEN BUTLER, 1992

NEW YORK MAGAZINE

REBECCA COONEY FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES, 1996

VICTOR DELUCIA/THE NEW YORK TIMES, 1989

ANDREA MOHIN/THE NEW YORK TIMES, 1996

THE MARLOW COLLECTIVE, 1998 (ST10)

N.Y. Citizens, a ska band with neighborhood roots, playing on the corner of Bedford Avenue and North Seventh Street as part of a festival. (PHOTOGRAPH BY EVA SCHICKER, 1993)

Polish immigrants relaxing at McCarren Park. (PHOTOGRAPH BY ANDREW LICHTENSTEIN/ CORBIS, VIA GETTY IMAGES, 1998)

An old-school stainless steel diner reopened after a renovation as Relish. (PHOTOGRAPH BY PHILIP GREENBERG FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES, 2000) (ST10-ST11)

The planners of Organism, an arts event at the Old Dutch Mustard Factory. (PHOTOGRAPH VIA EBON FISHER, 1993)

Rony Vardi, right, with her husband, Dwight Weeks, opened Catbird, a jewelry boutique, on Metropolitan Avenue. (PHOTOGRAPH VIA CATBIRD, 2004)

The Domino Sugar Refinery, in operation since the 1800s, shuts its doors to most of its last 200 workers. (PHOTOGRAPH BY LUCIAN READ FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES, 2004)

The Yeah Yeah Yeahs performing in a Williamsburg parking lot. Nick Zinner, right, is next to Karen O. (PHOTOGRAPH BY MARK PETERSON/CORBIS, VIA GETTY IMAGES, 2002)

PHOTOS (PHOTOGRAPHS BY MICHAEL NAGLE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES, 2005

ANGELA JIMENEZ FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES, 2004

MICHELLE V. AGINS/THE NEW YORK TIMES, 2007) (ST11)

The troupe Company rehearsing ''Agora,'' McCarren Park Pool. (PHOTOGRAPH BY RICHARD TERMINE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES, 2005)

The Bedford Cheese Shop, a go-to spot for Williamsburg curd nerds. (PHOTOGRAPH BY TODD HEISLER/THE NEW YORK TIMES, 2008)

Concertgoers watching TV on the Radio at McCarren Park Pool. (PHOTOGRAPH BY KITRA CAHANA/THE NEW YORK TIMES, 2007)

The start of the renovation that made Northsix into Music Hall of Williamsburg. (PHOTOGRAPH BY GABRIELE STABILE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES, 2007)

PHOTOS (PHOTOGRAPHS BY ERIN BAIANO FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES, 2007

KIRSTEN LUCE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES, 2011) (ST12)

New residential towers and Brooklynites along the East River on a summer evening. (PHOTOGRAPH BY KATIE ORLINSKY FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES, 2009)

An architectural model of the Edge, a luxury condo complex. (PHOTOGRAPH BY ED OU/THE NEW YORK TIMES, 2010)

The arts center Monster Island's last block party. (PHOTOGRAPH BY KARSTEN MORAN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES, 2011)

Reverend Vince Anderson and his Live Choir at Black Betty's final night. (PHOTOGRAPH BY CHRIS CASSIDY, 2009) (ST12-ST13)

A meditation session at the Kitchen, part of the co-living venture Pure House. (PHOTOGRAPH BY BRIAN HARKIN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES, 2015)

The model Isabelle Chaput at Chanel's Lucky Chance Diner. (PHOTOGRAPH BY SEAN ZANNI/WIREIMAGE, 2023)

PHOTOS (PHOTOGRAPHS BY ANDREW KELLY/REUTERS, 2016

KATIE ORLINSKY FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES, 2012

TONY CENICOLA/THE NEW YORK TIMES, 2022

DINA LITOVSKY FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES, 2014

TONY CENICOLA/THE NEW YORK TIMES, 2023

ELIZABETH LIPPMAN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES, 2012

REBECCA SMEYNE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES, 2017

BRIAN BERKOWITZ FOR GUCCI, 2021) (ST13) This article appeared in print on page ST10, ST11, ST12, ST13.

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[***Zombie Reaganomics Still Rules the G.O.P.***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:66GH-2CP1-JBG3-60K9-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; Editorial Desk; Pg. 20; PAUL KRUGMAN

**Length:** 919 words

**Byline:** By Paul Krugman

**Body**

What's my plan for the next two years? I will be happy, healthy and successful. What will I do to achieve these things? What are you, a Marxist?

I've now summarized the essence of the Commitment to America announced by House Republicans last week. This ''plan'' was obviously meant to evoke Newt Gingrich's 1994 Contract With America, which was followed by a Republican takeover of Congress.

But the Contract With America, love it or hate it -- put me in the latter category -- offered a fairly specific policy agenda, with a list of planned legislation. What Republicans have just released, by contrast, is mainly a list of good things they claim will happen, with barely a hint of how they propose to make them happen.

If you squint hard at the economics section of the Commitment to America, however, you can see the faint outlines of a familiar set of ideas -- zombie Reaganomics. Which raises a question: Why are deregulation, benefit cuts and tax breaks for the rich still the ruling ideology of a party that now claims to stand for the ***working class***?

Before I get there, a couple of notes on what the economics portion of the commitment actually says.

First, it's striking how many of the economic complaints are about things that are barely, if at all, affected by government policy, like the price of gas (which has come down a lot since its peak) and supply-chain disruptions (which have been diminishing).

Second, immediately after declaring that ''we have a plan to fix the economy,'' House Republicans say that they will ''curb wasteful government spending.'' As anyone who follows budget debates knows, that's the ultimate weasel phrase. What spending are we talking about, specifically?

Bear in mind that the federal government is basically an insurance company with an army: The great bulk of spending is on health care, retirement and the military. You can't meaningfully cut expenditure without attacking at least one of these. So which parts of that spending are wasteful?

Well, Senator Rick Scott, the chair of the National Republican Senatorial Committee, has called for sunsetting all federal programs -- including Social Security and Medicare -- every five years, which would open the door to gutting America's social safety net. Other Republicans have tried to distance themselves from that idea, although without removing Scott from his position. But again, what is this wasteful spending they propose to cut?

But back to the commitment. Its economic program, such as it is, calls for ''pro-growth tax and deregulatory policies.'' No specifics, but this is clearly a call for zombie Reaganomics.

Why ''zombie''? Because we now have four decades' worth of experience showing that deregulation and tax cuts for the rich do not, in fact, produce higher wages and faster economic growth. So the idea that tax cuts are the secret of prosperity should be dead, yet somehow it's still shambling along, eating Republican brains.

Of course, I'm just saying that because I'm a Marxist. (I'm not, but that's what modern Republicans call anyone who supports progressive taxation and social insurance.) But for what it's worth, financial markets share my skepticism. Look at what's happening in Britain, where Prime Minister Liz Truss's recent announcement of a Reaganite economic plan sent interest rates soaring and the pound plunging.

Which brings me back to my original question: Why is the G.O.P. still committed to a failed economic ideology?

For a long time, the G.O.P. seemed to fit the portrait famously drawn by Thomas Frank in his book ''What's the Matter With Kansas?'' That is, it was a party mostly dedicated to making the rich richer that managed to win elections on social issues -- which in practice meant catering to bigotry while campaigning, then pivoting to tax and benefit cuts immediately afterward.

With the rise of MAGA, however, catering to bigotry is no longer a marketing device; it's the party's main agenda. In that case, however, why continue plutocrat-friendly policies? Why not add some actual populism to the mix? Why did Representative Kevin McCarthy, who will likely become speaker if Republicans take the House, declare that his first bill would be one to repeal additional funding for the Internal Revenue Service, allowing wealthy tax cheats to breathe easy?

Part of the answer may be that anti-abortion, anti-L.G.B.T.Q., anti-immigrant warriors don't know or care much about economic policy, so they've left it in the hands of the usual suspects -- congressional staff members, conservative think tankers and other apparatchiks who've spent their whole careers promoting the tax-cut mystique.

But there may also be a strategy here. Billionaires may no longer run the G.O.P. the way they used to, but the party still wants their money. So plutocrat-friendly policies may be a way of keeping wealthy donors and corporations on board, even if many of them are uncomfortable with the right-wing social agenda.

This strategy depends, however, on ***working-class*** voters not realizing what Republicans are up to. Hence the vacuous nature of the Commitment to America; any acknowledgment of what the G.O.P. might actually do could be a big political problem.

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[*https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/26/opinion/gop-economic-policy.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/26/opinion/gop-economic-policy.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: (PHOTOGRAPH BY Charles Krupa/Associated Press FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

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[***How Did a Socialist Triumph in Buffalo?; Michelle Goldberg***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:630K-B3X1-JBG3-64KS-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 927 words

**Byline:** Michelle Goldberg

**Highlight:** The backlash against &#39;defund the police&#39; didn&#39;t stop India Walton.

**Body**

On Tuesday night, just after the polls closed, The Buffalo News [*ran an update*](https://buffalonews.com/news/local/government-and-politics/live-coverage-will-buffalos-mayor-achieve-a-borrelli-rule-victory/article_c79269ce-d398-11eb-a70f-73f9c04f6c2b.html) about the city’s Democratic mayoral primary, which pit the four-term incumbent mayor, Byron Brown, against a socialist challenger, India Walton. “Those handicapping the race are not betting whether Brown will win, but by how much,” the paper said. “Will a 10-point landslide suffice? Or could he post a larger tally?”

An hour and a half later, with almost all of the votes in, Walton, a 38-year-old political newcomer, wasn’t just ahead. She was ahead by a lot: 52 percent to Brown’s 45 percent. Buffalo is an overwhelmingly Democratic city — there won’t even be a Republican on the general election ballot — so Walton will almost certainly become the first socialist mayor of a major city [*in more than 50 years*](https://buffalonews.com/news/local/government-and-politics/live-coverage-will-buffalos-mayor-achieve-a-borrelli-rule-victory/article_c79269ce-d398-11eb-a70f-73f9c04f6c2b.html), and the first woman to lead Buffalo, where politics is such an old boys’ club that the city council is entirely male.

Walton didn’t just upend expectations among local political observers. She also complicated a narrative that’s set in since the 2020 election: that surging crime has made progressive politics toxic.

This narrative was strengthened when Eric Adams, a former cop, came out ahead in the initial count of New York City’s ranked-choice mayoral primary, whose final results are still being calculated. “The Democrats’ Wake-Up Call,” said [*an Axios headline*](https://buffalonews.com/news/local/government-and-politics/live-coverage-will-buffalos-mayor-achieve-a-borrelli-rule-victory/article_c79269ce-d398-11eb-a70f-73f9c04f6c2b.html) about Adams’s strong lead and the political danger of the defund-the-police movement.

That danger is real. [*Polls reveal*](https://buffalonews.com/news/local/government-and-politics/live-coverage-will-buffalos-mayor-achieve-a-borrelli-rule-victory/article_c79269ce-d398-11eb-a70f-73f9c04f6c2b.html) that both Black and white voters reject the slogan “Defund the police.” Yet Walton has shown that even in a city where shootings have surged a [*staggering 116 percent*](https://buffalonews.com/news/local/government-and-politics/live-coverage-will-buffalos-mayor-achieve-a-borrelli-rule-victory/article_c79269ce-d398-11eb-a70f-73f9c04f6c2b.html) so far this year, a socialist promising police reform can win.

When I asked her how, her answer was simple: “Organizing.” But it’s a little more than that. Walton is a woman with a ***working-class*** background and an inspiring personal story who knows how to make progressive ideas sound like common sense. “The challenge of the left is that we use our jargony activist language and don’t take time to fully explain what we mean to those who may not be as ‘woke’ as we are,” she told me.

It was last summer’s racial justice protests that finally pushed Walton to run for office, but she shies away from the phrase “defund the police.” “I come from the Marshall Ganz school of organizing,” she said, referring to the activist turned sociologist. “I try and avoid using negative language on campaigns.”

Instead of “defund,” she said, “we say we’re going to reallocate funds. We’re going to fully fund community centers. We’re going to make the investments that naturally reduce crime, such as investments in education, infrastructure, living-wage jobs. Nothing stops crime better than a person who’s gainfully employed. If you have to go to work, you don’t have time to be out in the streets with all these shenanigans.”

Buffalo is a blue-collar city, and Walton, who grew up on the chronically neglected East Side, can relate to the problems of her beleaguered fellow citizens. There are actually similarities between her trajectory and Eric Adams’s — both had hardscrabble backgrounds followed by struggles to master institutions that had frightened and alienated them. For Adams, that was the Police Department. For Walton, it was the medical establishment.

She had her first child at 14, and gave birth to extremely premature twins at 19. Feeling ignored and disrespected in the newborn intensive care unit inspired her to become a nurse. “I wanted to go to nursing school so that I could return to the NICU and be an example for another young mother who may be in a time of crisis similar to what I experienced,” she told me.

When she decided to run for office, her core support didn’t come from the Black ***working class***. “The early adopters were definitely white progressives,” she said. She was embraced by national left-wing groups, including the Working Families Party, which sent people to help professionalize her campaign, and the Democratic Socialists of America.

It took more effort to make inroads among Black ***working-class*** voters. “I did not necessarily cater to my base,” she said. “I communicated with the people that I thought were going to be the more difficult votes to get. So I went to the churches, and I went into the Black community, a population that traditionally is averse to things like really progressive politics.”

In some ways, Walton epitomizes the winning formula for left-wing candidates. Today’s left is basically a coalition between well-educated liberal professionals and ***working-class*** people of color. Often those best able to unite these groups are people of color with radical ideals and ***working-class*** ties. Look at the leftists who’ve been elected to Congress in recent years: Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez was a bartender. Jamaal Bowman was a principal in the Bronx. Cori Bush, like Walton, was a nurse.

Backlash politics may be gaining strength in America, but that doesn’t mean the left must retreat. Progressives still are far from a majority, but they can build power if they recruit from the communities they aspire to represent.

The Times is committed to publishing [*a diversity of letters*](https://buffalonews.com/news/local/government-and-politics/live-coverage-will-buffalos-mayor-achieve-a-borrelli-rule-victory/article_c79269ce-d398-11eb-a70f-73f9c04f6c2b.html) to the editor. We’d like to hear what you think about this or any of our articles. Here are some [*tips*](https://buffalonews.com/news/local/government-and-politics/live-coverage-will-buffalos-mayor-achieve-a-borrelli-rule-victory/article_c79269ce-d398-11eb-a70f-73f9c04f6c2b.html). And here’s our email: [*letters@nytimes.com*](https://buffalonews.com/news/local/government-and-politics/live-coverage-will-buffalos-mayor-achieve-a-borrelli-rule-victory/article_c79269ce-d398-11eb-a70f-73f9c04f6c2b.html).

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PHOTO: India Walton, who surprised political handicappers with her victory in Buffalo&#39;s Democratic mayoral primary. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Luke Copping FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** June 25, 2021

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[***Why Zombie Reaganomics Still Rules the G.O.P.; Paul Krugman***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:66GC-RVK1-JBG3-60BK-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 922 words

**Byline:** Paul Krugman

**Highlight:** MAGA is in charge, but policy caters to the wealthy.

**Body**

What’s my plan for the next two years? I will be happy, healthy and successful. What will I do to achieve these things? What are you, a Marxist?

I’ve now summarized the essence of the [*Commitment to America*](https://www.republicanleader.gov/commitment/) announced by House Republicans last week. This “plan” was obviously meant to evoke Newt Gingrich’s 1994 [*Contract With America*](https://teachingamericanhistory.org/document/republican-contract-with-america/), which was followed by a Republican takeover of Congress.

But the Contract With America, love it or hate it — put me in the latter category — offered a fairly specific policy agenda, with a list of planned legislation. What Republicans have just released, by contrast, is mainly a list of good things they claim will happen, with barely a hint of how they propose to make them happen.

If you squint hard at the economics section of the Commitment to America, however, you can see the faint outlines of a familiar set of ideas — zombie Reaganomics. Which raises a question: Why are deregulation, benefit cuts and tax breaks for the rich still the ruling ideology of a party that now claims to stand for the [***working class***](https://www.npr.org/2021/04/13/986549868/top-republicans-work-to-rebrand-gop-as-party-of-working-class)

Before I get there, a couple of notes on what the [*economics portion*](https://www.republicanleader.gov/commitment/strong-economy/#reveal_inflation) of the commitment actually says.

First, it’s striking how many of the economic complaints are about things that are barely, if at all, affected by government policy, like the price of gas (which has come down a lot since its peak) and supply-chain disruptions (which have been [*diminishing*](https://www.newyorkfed.org/research/policy/gscpi#/interactive)).

Second, immediately after declaring that “we have a plan to fix the economy,” House Republicans say that they will “curb wasteful government spending.” As anyone who follows budget debates knows, that’s the ultimate weasel phrase. What spending are we talking about, specifically?

Bear in mind that the federal government is basically [*an insurance company with an army*](https://economistsview.typepad.com/economistsview/2013/01/who-first-said-the-us-is-an-insurance-company-with-an-army.html): The [*great bulk of spending*](https://www.cbpp.org/research/federal-budget/where-do-our-federal-tax-dollars-go) is on health care, retirement and the military. You can’t meaningfully cut expenditure without attacking at least one of these. So which parts of that spending are wasteful?

Well, Senator Rick Scott, the chair of the National Republican Senatorial Committee, has [*called*](https://washingtonmonthly.com/2022/05/20/dont-laugh-off-rick-scotts-nutty-plan-for-america/) for sunsetting all federal programs — including Social Security and Medicare — every five years, which would open the door to gutting America’s social safety net. Other Republicans have tried to distance themselves from that idea, although without removing Scott from his position. But again, what is this wasteful spending they propose to cut?

But back to the commitment. Its economic program, such as it is, calls for “pro-growth tax and deregulatory policies.” No specifics, but this is clearly a call for zombie Reaganomics.

Why “zombie”? Because we now have [*four decades’ worth of experience*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/23/opinion/uk-truss-tax-cut-economy.html) showing that deregulation and tax cuts for the rich do not, in fact, produce higher wages and faster economic growth. So the idea that tax cuts are the secret of prosperity should be dead, yet somehow it’s still shambling along, eating Republican brains.

Of course, I’m just saying that because I’m a Marxist. (I’m not, but that’s what modern Republicans call anyone who supports progressive taxation and social insurance.) But for what it’s worth, financial markets share my skepticism. Look at what’s happening in Britain, where Prime Minister Liz Truss’s recent announcement of a Reaganite economic plan sent interest rates soaring and the [*pound plunging*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/26/business/british-pound-dollar-gbp-usd.html?smid=url-share).

Which brings me back to my original question: Why is the G.O.P. still committed to a failed economic ideology?

For a long time, the G.O.P. seemed to fit the portrait famously drawn by Thomas Frank in his book “[*What’s the Matter With Kansas?*](https://us.macmillan.com/books/9780805077742/whatsthematterwithkansas)” That is, it was a party mostly dedicated to making the rich richer that managed to win elections on social issues — which in practice meant catering to bigotry while campaigning, then pivoting to tax and benefit cuts immediately afterward.

With the rise of MAGA, however, catering to bigotry is no longer a marketing device; it’s the party’s main agenda. In that case, however, why continue plutocrat-friendly policies? Why not add some actual populism to the mix? Why did Representative Kevin McCarthy, who will likely become speaker if Republicans take the House, [*declare*](https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/mccarthy-unveils-house-gops-big-ideas-but-challenges-ahead/2022/09/23/9566b97a-3afb-11ed-b8af-0a04e5dc3db6_story.html) that his first bill would be one to repeal additional funding for the Internal Revenue Service, allowing wealthy tax cheats to breathe easy?

Part of the answer may be that anti-abortion, anti-L.G.B.T.Q., anti-immigrant warriors don’t know or care much about economic policy, so they’ve left it in the hands of the usual suspects — congressional staff members, conservative think tankers and other apparatchiks who’ve spent their whole careers promoting the tax-cut mystique.

But there may also be a strategy here. Billionaires may no longer run the G.O.P. the way they used to, but the party still wants their money. So plutocrat-friendly policies may be a way of keeping wealthy donors and corporations on board, even if many of them are uncomfortable with the right-wing social agenda.

This strategy depends, however, on ***working-class*** voters not realizing what Republicans are up to. Hence the vacuous nature of the Commitment to America; any acknowledgment of what the G.O.P. might actually do could be a big political problem.

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PHOTO: (PHOTOGRAPH BY Charles Krupa/Associated Press FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** September 27, 2022

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[***Why Biden Is Behind, and How He Could Come Back***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69JP-9D11-DXY4-X2TN-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Section:** UPSHOT

**Length:** 1868 words

**Highlight:** A polling deficit against Trump across six key states is mainly about younger, nonwhite and less engaged voters. Kamala Harris performs slightly better.

**Body**

A polling deficit against Trump across six key states is mainly about younger, nonwhite and less engaged voters. Kamala Harris performs slightly better.

Four years ago, Joe Biden was the electability candidate — the broadly appealing, moderate Democrat from Scranton who promised to win the white ***working-class*** voters who elected Donald J. Trump.

There are few signs of that electoral strength today.

In [*a new set of New York Times/Siena College polls*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/11/05/us/elections/times-siena-battlegrounds-registered-voters.html), Mr. Trump [*leads*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/05/us/politics/biden-trump-2024-poll.html) Mr. Biden in five of the six battleground states likeliest to decide the presidency, as widespread discontent with the state of the country and growing doubts about his ability to perform his job as president threaten to unravel the diverse coalition that elected him in 2020.

Overall, Mr. Trump leads by 48 percent to 44 percent among registered voters across the six states, including leads in Pennsylvania, Michigan, Georgia, Arizona and Nevada — most likely more than enough to win the 270 electoral votes needed to win the presidency. Mr. Biden led in the sixth state, Wisconsin.

With one year to go until the election, there’s still plenty of time for the race to change. In contrast with four years ago, the poll finds a disengaged, disaffected and dissatisfied electorate, setting the stage for a potentially volatile campaign. Many voters only agonizingly support these two disliked candidates. Some will shift as the campaign gets underway. Others simply won’t vote at all.

The poll contains considerable evidence that it shouldn’t necessarily be daunting for Democrats to reassemble a coalition to defeat Mr. Trump, who remains every bit as unpopular as he was three years ago. But even if Mr. Trump remains eminently beatable, the poll also suggests it may nonetheless be quite challenging for Mr. Biden himself.

The survey finds that Mr. Biden enters his campaign as a badly weakened candidate, one running without the strengths on personal likability, temperament and character that were essential to his narrow victories in all six of these states in 2020. Long-festering vulnerabilities on his age, economic stewardship, and appeal to young, Black and Hispanic voters have grown severe enough to imperil his re-election chances.

On question after question, the public’s view of the president has plummeted over the course of his time in office. The deterioration in Mr. Biden’s standing is broad, spanning virtually every demographic group, yet it yields an especially deep blow to his electoral support among young, Black and Hispanic voters, with Mr. Trump obtaining previously unimaginable levels of support with them.

Mr. Biden barely leads at all among nonwhite voters under 45, even though the same voters reported backing Mr. Biden by almost 40 points in the last election. As a result, the candidates are essentially tied among voters 18 to 29, a group that has reliably backed Democrats by a wide margin for two decades.

Just as strikingly, Mr. Trump has cut Mr. Biden’s lead among nonwhite voters in half, not only with staggering gains among the younger part of that group but with more modest gains among older voters as well. Overall, Mr. Trump earns more than 20 percent support among Black voters, a tally that would be unprecedented in the post-Civil Rights Act era.

In contrast, Mr. Biden has retained the entirety of his support among older white voters, helping him stay relatively competitive in the older and predominantly white Northern battleground states of Michigan, Wisconsin and Pennsylvania, even as Mr. Trump builds a more comfortable lead in the more diverse Sun Belt states.

There’s no reason to assume that next November’s final election tallies will match the results of these surveys. But if they did, it could represent an epochal shift in American politics, one with the potential to reverberate for decades as young and nonwhite voters make up a growing share of the electorate. Many familiar patterns in American politics would be blurred. Racial and generational polarization would fade. It would be the culmination of a decade-long realignment of the electorate along the lines of Mr. Trump’s conservative populism, all while dashing Democratic hopes of assembling a progressive majority around a new generation of young and nonwhite voters.

While all of this raises the specter of catastrophe for Democrats, there is still plenty of time for the electorate’s preferences to gradually come back into alignment with the familiar demographic patterns of the last few decades. The poll suggests that it shouldn’t necessarily be difficult for Mr. Biden to reassemble his winning coalition — at least on paper. To win, he merely needs to reinvigorate voters from traditional Democratic constituencies, groups that the poll finds remain quite open to Democrats in a matchup against Mr. Trump.

In a hypothetical race without Mr. Biden, an unnamed generic Democrat leads Mr. Trump by eight points, 48 to 40 — a wider lead than the three-point edge held by an unnamed Democrat at this time in 2019.

Even Kamala Harris — [*no political juggernaut*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/10/magazine/kamala-harris.html) so far — fares a bit better than Mr. Biden, trailing Mr. Trump by three points in a hypothetical matchup, compared with Mr. Biden’s five-point deficit (Mr. Trump appears to lead by four points in the top-line 48-44 result because of rounding).

While Mr. Biden doesn’t fare all that much worse than his running mate, the top-line similarity obscures major differences in their support: A full 11 percent of Ms. Harris’s would-be supporters do not back Mr. Biden, and two-thirds of them are either nonwhite or younger than 30.

As a result, Mr. Biden would lead by three points among registered voters and two points among likely voters across the battlegrounds, including leads in five of the six states, if he could regain the nonwhite and young voters who would be willing to vote for his own not-especially-popular vice president. His lead among Black, Hispanic and young voters would return to 2020 levels as well, at least among likely voters.

The Kamala-not-Joe voters aren’t the only voters Mr. Biden will seek in pursuit of re-election, but they encapsulate his challenge. They do not support Mr. Trump strongly. Only 16 percent of the Kamala-not-Joe voters said they would “definitely” back Mr. Trump over Mr. Biden. A majority didn’t even support Mr. Trump when first asked — more than 60 percent initially said they would vote for someone else, didn’t know, or said they simply wouldn’t vote. They supported Mr. Trump only on a second question pressing which way they would lean if the election were held today.

The relatively tepid support for Mr. Trump among young and nonwhite voters raises the possibility that many of the voters fueling his gains simply might not vote next November. In fact, virtually all of Mr. Biden’s weakness is concentrated among less engaged voters who sat out the last midterm election. Many of these voters will ultimately vote in a presidential race, but not all of them will. As a result, Mr. Biden fares slightly better among likely than registered voters across the six states, including closing the gap with Mr. Trump in Michigan. If so, Mr. Biden’s deficit may be somewhat smaller than it looks.

But if the poll indicates that it shouldn’t be so hard to beat Mr. Trump, it also indicates that it might still be very challenging for Mr. Biden to do it. Overall, 49 percent of registered voters say there’s “not really any chance” they’ll support him, including many of the voters who seem as if they ought to be available to Democrats.

Even the Kamala-not-Joe voters start the campaign voicing deep skepticism. More than half of these voters say they support Mr. Trump against Mr. Biden; nearly 43 percent say there’s “not really any chance” they will support Mr. Biden.

It’s not clear whether survey respondents should be taken at their word on a question like this — not with a year to go, not before the campaign gets underway. But taken seriously, Mr. Biden’s path to re-election would be quite challenging. Whether he could ultimately win them back might depend on the exact source of his challenge, whether there’s anything he can do about it, and whether his campaign can refocus the electorate’s attention on Mr. Trump and other more favorable issues.

Mr. Biden’s challenge with these voters is not ideological. Just 18 percent of the Kamala-not-Joe voters say Mr. Biden isn’t progressive or liberal enough, while a slightly greater 20 percent say he’s too liberal. The preponderance of these voters, 58 percent, say he’s not too far either way. And compared with loyal Democratic voters, the Kamala-not-Joe vote is far less liberal and moderate. In fact, more identify as conservatives than liberals.

Instead, Mr. Biden’s problems, as seen by voters, are mostly about his handling of the presidency, whether because of the economy, the state of the nation, or deep reservations about his ability to carry out his duties. It is hard to tell which of these problems most explains his weakness. After all, the preponderance of the voters share all these concerns. Regardless of which matters most, each one fuels a belief that Mr. Biden is incapable of handling the challenges facing the nation, let alone improving their lives.

More than half of the Kamala-not-Joe voters said it would “make no difference” if Mr. Biden were re-elected, while 36 percent said it would be bad. Just 9 percent said it would be good.

At the outset of the campaign, concerns about Mr. Biden’s handling of the presidency prevail over those about Mr. Trump, including on abortion and democracy. Mr. Biden holds the edge over Mr. Trump on these issues, but voters are far less likely to say abortion and democracy are more important than the economy than they were in Times/Siena polling of the same states last fall. The relatively nonideological Kamala-not-Joe voters are particularly likely to say the economy is more important to their vote.

Historically, incumbent presidents have found themselves in a similar position at the start of the race, only to rally their base with the help of a growing economy and a polarizing campaign. It is hard to predict whether views of the economy will improve, but the Biden campaign will undoubtedly try to refocus voters on issues like preserving democracy and abortion rights, just as the Democrats did in the midterms. It’s possible that such a campaign will allow Mr. Biden to reassemble his winning coalition, especially since Mr. Biden’s weakness is concentrated among less engaged voters.

But it is also possible that the concerns about Mr. Biden’s age and the economy are just too great. Whether the Democratic message or their reservations about the messenger is more important might ultimately decide the election.

The New York Times/Siena College polls of 3,662 registered voters in Arizona, Georgia, Michigan, Nevada, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin were conducted by telephone using live operators from Oct. 22 to Nov. 3, 2023. When all states are combined, the margin of sampling error is plus or minus 1.8 percentage points. The margin of sampling error for each state is between 4.4 and 4.8 percentage points. Cross-tabs and methodology are available [*here*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/11/05/us/elections/times-siena-battlegrounds-registered-voters.html).

This article appeared in print on page A14.

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[***The D.N.C. Has a Primary Problem***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68MF-7DF1-JBG3-62FB-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Section:** MAGAZINE

**Length:** 4903 words

**Byline:** Ross Barkan

**Highlight:** The White House wanted South Carolina to vote first in 2024. The Democratic National Committee obliged. It hasn’t gone according to plan.

**Body**

Last December, the 30-odd members of the Democratic Party’s rules and bylaws committee filed in to the Omni Shoreham, the glittering resort hotel that once hosted Franklin D. Roosevelt’s inaugural ball. All of the Democrats, many of them gray-haired habitués of the rubber-chicken circuit, knew they had come to Washington to hash out, after months of debate, what the presidential-primary calendar would look like come 2024.

The order in which the states vote has defined American politics since the 1970s, when Jimmy Carter rocketed to the presidency on [*the strength of his performance in the Iowa caucuses*](https://www.iowapbs.org/iowapathways/artifact/1545/iowa-caucus-history-jimmy-carter-connects-iowans-1976). Always Iowa first, then New Hampshire — which zealously guarded its status as the first-in-the-nation actual primary, luring all future presidents to the rickety diner back rooms and high school gymnasiums of the flinty Northern state with a streak of independence. Joe Biden performed terribly in each of those contests in 2020, hitting his stride only in larger states with fewer white voters. It was now understood that the curious caucus system — voters clustering on frost-tinged church and library floors to choose candidates — needed to be retired, particularly after Iowa failed to tally the vote in a timely manner.

So Iowa would be demoted, as would tolerance for any kind of caucus. New Hampshire, perhaps, would vote first, along with Nevada and [*its increasing Latino population*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/03/us/politics/nevada-elections-democrats-republicans.html). That seemed like plenty of change as Biden, who will turn 81 this November, seeks a breezier path to a second term as president.

Instead, the co-chair of the rules and bylaws committee — and the grandson of Franklin Roosevelt — made a different announcement.

“I move a resolution, which will be displayed on the screen,” James Roosevelt Jr. said, “which grants waivers to Rule 12-A, conditional upon the outlined stipulations for a state-run primary in South Carolina on Feb. 3, 2024; New Hampshire and Nevada on Feb. 6; Georgia on Feb. 13. … ”

The room offered no immediate public reaction to the legalese. But privately, some members were astounded. “Everyone was shocked,” one told me, speaking on the condition of anonymity to avoid antagonizing the White House. “We would have to vote for it anyway, because the feeling was you’re either with the president or against him.”

A few members of the Democratic National Committee had known what was coming — but only because Biden-administration officials called them on the phone mere hours after [*Biden himself sent a letter*](https://democrats.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/DNC_Letter.pdf) to the rules and bylaws committee, on the first day of December, outlining his demand for a primary calendar that ensured that “voters of color have a voice in choosing our nominee much earlier in the process and throughout the entire early window.” Biden called Black voters the “backbone” of the party, though he didn’t specifically mention South Carolina in his letter. It was left to his aides to tell the top-ranking D.N.C. members, including Roosevelt, that South Carolina was the new first-in-the-nation primary. It had been decreed, and so it would be done.

But New Hampshire, the state that prides itself on its Live Free or Die motto, has declared that it will vote first anyway, setting up a clash with the D.N.C. that could widen to publicly embarrass Biden — who, assuming he coordinates with the D.N.C. on its new calendar, would not be on the New Hampshire ballot in this scenario — handing the incumbent president a shocking statewide defeat.

Biden has the entire party establishment on his side. The D.N.C. has formally endorsed him, which means that the organization, in addition to rubber-stamping a primary calendar that is far more favorable to him, will not sponsor any debates. Normally, this wouldn’t matter much; incumbent presidents enjoy such deference. But Biden is already the oldest president in history and would be 86 if he finishes a second term. Polls have consistently shown that a majority of [*Democrats don’t want him to run again*](https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/2024-election/nbc-news-poll-nearly-70-gop-voters-stand-trump-indictment-investigatio-rcna80917) (though this doesn’t mean they won’t vote for him). His approval ratings consistently hover around 40 percent.

At the same time, Robert F. Kennedy Jr., a son of the slain senator and attorney general and a nephew of the slain president, has polled at 20 percent nationally among Democratic voters and has begun a campaign blitz in New Hampshire, where voters and politicians alike are aggrieved over the D.N.C.’s revision of the primary calendar, with the secretary of state, David Scanlan, a Republican, calling the first-in-the-nation status a defining part of the state’s “culture.” It is also enshrined in state law. Iowa’s reaction has been more muted because there are so few Democrats of note left in the state after successive Republican electoral waves. Still, Iowa Democrats may sync their caucuses with the Republicans anyway, defying the D.N.C.

Kennedy was once widely respected as an environmentalist; he has since drawn condemnation for his anti-vaccine advocacy, taste for conspiracy theories and incendiary statements — including invoking “Hitler Germany” in a [*speech about American vaccine mandates*](https://edition.cnn.com/2022/01/23/politics/robert-f-kennedy-nazi-germany-offensive-anti-vaccine-speech/index.html) — but may hold appeal for the large base of libertarian voters in New Hampshire. (Marianne Williamson, the author and spiritual figure who dropped out of the 2020 race, is running again as well.) Democrats there are alarmed.

“The reality is that New Hampshire is going to keep the first-in-the-nation primary,” Ray Buckley, the chairman of the New Hampshire Democratic Party and a longtime D.N.C. member, told me, “and the question only is whether or not the president is going to put his name on the ballot. They’re trying to come after New Hampshire, but it’s not going to be successful. So why go through all that pain?”

D. Arnie Arnesen, a left-leaning New Hampshire talk-show host and former Democratic state representative, understands the arguments against her state: “We’re too white, too rich, too privileged,” she conceded. New Hampshire has two Democratic senators but a Republican-controlled state government (including a governor, Chris Sununu, who once considered his own presidential challenge this cycle). On the question of the 2024 primaries, however, Arnesen sides with Buckley. “They knew the Republicans were going to Iowa and New Hampshire anyway. Why change now? There’s no upside. Not one iota of benefit for Joe Biden. Nothing. No benefit to Joe, no benefit to the Democrats. They shot themselves in the foot.”

As chairman of the Democratic National Committee, Jaime Harrison, a 47-year-old who rose to his position two years ago from statewide politics in South Carolina and whose profile has risen along with his state’s, has to try to play mediator between angered state Democrats and a White House that expects fealty from the national organization. For now, Harrison is sanguine about all of it. The New Hampshire situation. Biden’s advanced age. The party’s declining share of many demographic groups, [*especially Latino voters*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2022/12/19/us/politics/latino-voters-midterms.html) and those [*without college degrees.*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/09/08/us/politics/how-college-graduates-vote.html) A dire Senate map, where Democratic incumbents in Montana, Ohio and West Virginia could fall, along with the formerly Democratic senator in Arizona, Kyrsten Sinema, plunging Democrats into an indefinite minority.

In Harrison’s office at D.N.C. headquarters, which looks out on the dome of the Capitol, there hangs a portrait of Biden with Jim Clyburn, the 82-year-old South Carolina congressman whose endorsement and championing of Biden in 2020 is credited with rescuing his candidacy. Displayed over Harrison’s desk is a vintage sign for Ron Brown, who in 1989 became the first Black chairman of the D.N.C. Brown and Clyburn are both heroes to Harrison, who was Clyburn’s intern and, later, his director of floor operations when the congressman served as majority whip. A lucrative private-sector career followed as a lobbyist at the Podesta Group. With Clyburn’s blessing, he became chairman of the South Carolina Democratic Party. Harrison then ran a very high-profile, extremely expensive and ultimately unsuccessful campaign in 2020 for the Senate seat held by Lindsey Graham. Now Clyburn’s protégé heads a D.N.C. that has put their home state, where Harrison still lives with his family, quite literally first.

Harrison insisted that Clyburn never advocated for South Carolina as the very first state — only for it to retain its status as the first of the Southern states. “I think, for him, he always wanted South Carolina — and I felt the same way — we enjoyed and took a lot of pride in being the first in the South,” Harrison told me on a June afternoon, sitting beneath that portrait. “People thought early on, Oh, God, Jaime’s the chair of the D.N.C., so therefore he’s going to put his finger on the scale for South Carolina. And everybody will tell you, I was evenhanded in this. The only thing that I wanted was that South Carolina would remain, because I think it’s earned its spot as an early state.” But South Carolina, of course, moved up, and Harrison is now thrilled. “National Geographic said that 90 percent of African Americans can trace one of their ancestors to South Carolina. In our primary, 50 to 60 percent of the people who vote in the Democratic primary will be Black folks. Think about how powerful this is, that the descendants of those enslaved people will be the very first people in this country to determine the most powerful person on the face of this planet. That’s transformative.”

A few dissidents in the D.N.C., made up of New Hampshirites and some Iowans, progressives and union members, see it differently: Biden is elevating a state that a Democratic presidential candidate hasn’t carried since 1976. Beyond Clyburn, there are few Democrats of note in South Carolina, and the state has the [*lowest percentage of union membership in America*](https://www.bls.gov/news.release/union2.t05.htm). Progressive candidates could, cycle after cycle, meet a wall of opposition there.

The persistent quandary, which no version of the primary calendar could resolve, is how to account for the various long-range challenges of the Democratic Party. A first-in-the-nation South Carolina primary lends Black moderates, a pivotal Democratic constituency, the kind of clout that many believe they deserve. White rural voters — the sort who need to be courted in Iowa and New Hampshire — have not proved loyal to the Democratic brand. But there are only so many of them that Democrats can afford to lose in a general election. New Hampshire, which Biden carried by less than 10 points in 2020, is not guaranteed to be eternally blue.

For Harrison, South Carolina’s premier placement will mean that the many men and women who dream of commanding the Oval Office will need to pay attention to completely different issues and concerns. “Now, instead of talking about ethanol in Iowa, we’re going to be talking about the infant-mortality rate in the Black community,” he said. “It changes the agenda. It changes the conversation. And now presidential candidates will then be making promises to those communities.”

On a summer day in the late 1990s, Don Fowler, the chairman of the D.N.C., needed help. The South Carolinian and former head of the state party had bushels of juicy peaches sent up from farmers back home, and he wanted the president of the United States to sample some. None of his interns were free. He queried the most powerful Democrat in his state: Would he have a hand to spare?

Clyburn, the Charleston congressman, did. “They sent me,” Jaime Harrison recalled, beaming at the memory. “It was one of the most amazing moments of my life at that point, to have these bags of peaches that I’m going to deliver to Bill Clinton, right?”

Harrison, peaches in tow, trekked from the Capitol to the White House. He ended up in the East Wing — no face-to-face with the president — but the journey stoked his ambition, which he says has been realized with the position he has held since Biden selected him. “If I don’t do anything else in politics for the rest of my life, I have hit a great point, being the D.N.C chair.”

On my June visit, a wall in the D.N.C. lobby featured portraits honoring the highest-ranking Democrats: Biden; Vice President Kamala Harris; Senator Chuck Schumer, the majority leader; the head of the Senate’s campaign arm, Senator Gary Peters of Michigan; Jaime Harrison. But the wall seemed to have been frozen in pre-midterm 2022: Nancy Pelosi, not Hakeem Jeffries, the new House minority leader, had a portrait on the wall, as did Sean Patrick Maloney, the New York Democrat who led the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee. Not only is Maloney no longer the D.C.C.C. chair, but he’s not in Congress at all. He lost his re-election bid, one of the seats with which the Democrats lost their majority.

At the core of its mission, the D.N.C. raises and spends titanic sums of money on organizing and messaging for political contests: more than $300 million over the course of 2021 and 2022, leading up to the midterms. The committee is a constellation of various interests — activists, wealthy donors, state party chairs — that is more fractious than its Republican counterpart because of the sheer number of individuals who make up the 483-member national committee, which far outstrips the 168-member R.N.C. The Republican Party has had its own ideological struggles, but the once-insurgent Trump wing has come to largely command party business, with Ronna McDaniel, a Trump ally, well into her seventh year as party chair.

In the aftermath of Donald Trump’s victory over Hillary Clinton, amid lingering bitterness from progressives who felt that the D.N.C. had unfairly supported Clinton over Bernie Sanders during the 2016 primaries and convention, Harrison was one of several Democrats who very publicly vied for the D.N.C. chairman title. He operated, though, on the periphery of that contest, as the ideological and institutional factions organized around two candidates: Tom Perez, Obama’s labor secretary; and Keith Ellison, a Minnesota congressman and Sanders supporter. With tacit backing from Obama, Perez narrowly won the vote of several hundred eligible D.N.C. members at the party’s meeting in Atlanta.

After Perez’s victory was announced, [*Ellison supporters erupted in anger,*](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/02/25/us/politics/dnc-perez-ellison-chairman-election.html) chanting, “Party for the people, not big money!” Perez placated them by naming Ellison deputy chairman. Under Perez’s leadership, a so-called Unity Reform Commission overhauled the superdelegate system, restricting their vote on the convention’s first ballot (the superdelegates, who are party elites, had operated like free agents, unaccountable to how their states actually voted). He also partnered with Howard Dean, the former D.N.C. chairman who was the architect of the party’s short-lived strategy to compete in all 50 states, to create the Democratic Data Exchange: a private company, mirroring Republican Party efforts, that allows various Democratic campaigns, committees, unions and other left-leaning groups to share the information they gather on voters.

Building on successes during the 2018 blue-wave year, the D.N.C. pumped more than $95 million into its midterm programs in 2022 — tripling its investment from 2018 and paying for as many as 35 campaign staff positions in Georgia, 42 in Michigan and 53 in Pennsylvania. The D.N.C. now pours more cash into state parties than it did during the Obama years and has established a “red state” fund that can add paid staff to Republican-dominated states in the hopes of growing the Democratic vote there in the years to come. Senator Tammy Duckworth of Illinois, who was born in Thailand, raised in Hawaii and is now a D.N.C. vice chair, hopes to raise more cash to improve Democratic organizing efforts with Asian Americans. “We’ve seen that when we don’t speak to that community, they can vote Republican like they did in New York,” she said, referring to the state-level results in the midterms. “You had Brooklyn switch over and elect Republican representatives.”

Asian American voters, as Duckworth noted, [*migrated significantly rightward*](https://catalist.us/whathappened2022/#pp-toc-lnyep7aqmh9v-anchor-5) last year, and not just in Brooklyn. The [*share of Latino voters supporting Democrats continues to slip*](https://apnews.com/article/hispanic-voters-2024-biden-outreach-democrats-election-e184e6d0695368e4f59cb48d28ff22be), from 66 percent in 2018 to 57 percent in 2022, according to AP VoteCast, a survey of the national electorate. Some analysts warn that the Latino voters who swung to Republicans in 2020 and sat out the 2022 midterms could buoy a Republican presidential contender. The white ***working class*** continues to defect from Democratic candidates, and there’s some evidence that culturally conservative nonwhite voters, once reflexive Democrats, are slowly sorting into the Republican coalition. From 2016 to 2020, [*Trump was able to grow his share of the Black vote,*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/28/upshot/election-polling-racial-gap.html) and over the last decade, almost every cohort of [*voters under 50 has shifted toward the right*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/01/upshot/millennials-polling-politics-republicans.html), belying predictions of a permanent Democratic hold on millennials.

Ruy Teixeira, a scholar who studies political demographics — and recently decamped from the liberal Center for American Progress to the conservative American Enterprise Institute — believes that Democrats, despite their recent victories, are losing too many ***working-class*** voters as they rush leftward on identity concerns at the expense of class. “They are a party very dependent on the college-educated vote,” Teixeira told me. “In a way, Democrats were getting a premium among some nonwhite voters, getting way above the underlying ideology of voters in terms of their support. That’s changing.”

The D.N.C. will learn, soon enough, if its confidence heading into the next election is warranted. The 2022 midterm results could have been, as Harrison contends, a reflection of Biden’s policy accomplishments and the savvy of the party’s myriad investments. Or the outcome might have been because of the Supreme Court’s overturning of Roe v. Wade, which galvanized outraged Democratic voters, and the many extreme and inexperienced candidates who upended Republican primaries and then stumbled badly in the fall.

“I don’t think the building is on fire,” Harrison said confidently. The decline of the white ***working-class*** voter in the Democratic coalition could be reversed, Harrison argued, because Biden is the most “pro-union” president in recent years — [*the A.F.L.-C.I.O. endorsed him in June,*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/17/us/politics/biden-again-has-union-support-but-the-unions-look-different-this-time.html) and he appeared at rally with union workers in Philadelphia later that month — but many of those elusive ***working-class*** voters don’t belong to unions anymore. Latinos defecting to the right, Harrison said, could be won back by pointing out how cruel some Republican governors have been for busing and flying migrants north — never mind that not all Latinos who are American citizens have sympathy for those making illegal border crossings. Eric Adams, the Democratic mayor of New York, who once deemed himself the “Biden of Brooklyn,” has castigated Biden’s response to the migrant crisis in unusually public criticism of the White House, declaring that his city is being “destroyed” by the large influx of asylum seekers.

Yet if voters only knew more about what Democrats have done for them, there would be no doubt about their mutual allegiance, according to Harrison. “We’re going to make sure they understand where the Democratic Party is, what our values are,” he said, “and that we are the only party that will fight for them.”

The results of 2022 were inarguably rosy, from a Democratic standpoint, defying historical precedent: The president’s party gained a seat in the Senate, won several high-profile governor’s races, flipped state legislatures and almost, despite forecasts of a red wave, retained control of the House. In Barack Obama’s first midterm as president, Republicans netted 63 seats in the House, the largest electoral shift since 1948. Democrats lost six Senate seats. The enormous majorities of the 2008 election had vanished, never to be regained.

The Obama era was particularly cataclysmic for Democrats on the state level. Republicans dominated a redistricting process that safeguarded their legislative majorities for much of the next decade; by 2016, the last full year of Obama’s presidency, Democrats had full control of just seven states. Even now, after the Democrats’ triumphant midterms, Republicans control 28 state legislatures to the Democrats’ 19. And it’s these state legislatures that decide much of the policy — taxes, education, transit — that impacts everyday American life.

The D.N.C. suffered under Obama, in part because he created his own political group, Organizing for Action, outside the aegis of the party. The group built a parallel structure that hoovered up donor cash. State party chairs were livid, believing that the group, which focused chiefly on the promotion of Obama’s policy agenda, deprived them of attention and dollars. Heading into 2020, the Democratic presidential contenders, including Biden, [*pledged not to create another extraparty organ.*](https://www.politico.com/story/2019/08/27/democrats-subtweeted-organizing-for-action-1476569)

Historically, Democratic presidents have undercut or ignored the D.N.C., especially compared with their Republican counterparts and their willingness to bolster the R.N.C. According to Daniel Galvin, a political-science professor at Northwestern University, every Democratic president in the second half of the 20th century — John F. Kennedy, Lyndon B. Johnson, Jimmy Carter, Bill Clinton — raided funds meant for party building or shot down proposals to strengthen down-ballot campaigns. For many decades, Democrats enjoyed congressional and statehouse majorities that seemed unbreakable, Galvin argues in his 2010 book, “Presidential Party Building,” and this incentivized them to focus on policy promotion over extensive investments in the future of party organizing. “Republican presidents saw a path forward taking their own popularity and platform and ability to raise money and grafting it onto the Republican Party,” he said. “Democrats didn’t.”

Harrison, who refused to directly criticize Obama to me, repeatedly emphasized that it was Biden who now cared about building the Democratic Party; it was Biden who was, in his favored word of the moment, transformative. “My boss — it is Joe Biden. He is the head of our party. We are doing things in the image of what he wants for this party, and we are very fortunate because he believes in the strength of the party. He believes in the D.N.C.,” he said with typical cheer. “I’m not the final word on where we go as the Democratic Party. I am part of the machinery.”

Like past D.N.C. chairmen, he is subordinate to the president, though reports have suggested he hasn’t always been entirely pleased about it. The de facto boss of the D.N.C. is not simply Biden, but the White House staff members closest to him, those charged with executing his political vision. None of the state party chairs who regularly interact with the D.N.C. had an ill word for Harrison; if they don’t always regard him as a visionary, they at least find him to be an affable power broker with an intimate understanding of the mechanics of party building.

Many state chairs consider, rather, operatives like Anita Dunn, one of Biden’s closest senior advisers, and Jen O’Malley Dillon, a Biden deputy chief of staff, as the top shot-callers; Ron Klain, Biden’s first chief of staff, was part of that cohort before he left the White House. Sam Cornale, the D.N.C.’s executive director, carries out their mandates. And if Biden’s inner circle cares far more than Obama ever did about the fate of a governor, a statehouse majority or even the House elections, they are still, naturally, most focused on 2024, and the small number of states in the Electoral College that will decide the next president. No Biden White House is going to sign off on a very expensive, long-range plan to turn Nebraska or Mississippi blue.

Rhetorically, Howard Dean’s 50-state vision has won out: D.N.C. staff members talk fondly of Dean’s tenure. But many of the largest investments today — the millions of dollars transferred, the sophisticated targeting of voters, the dispatching of seasoned operatives — are reserved for the relatively few states that play host to the prime federal races. Dean himself wishes that the states where the Republicans now dominate got far more attention from the national party. “The reason Democrats don’t win there is because they do not put the work in,” Dean said. “You cannot abandon a state. Otherwise, it’s Rush Limbaugh and Tucker Carlson giving the Democratic message to voters.”

The state party chairs who sing the highest praises for Biden, Harrison and the D.N.C. are naturally in the battlegrounds. Lavora Barnes, the chair of the Michigan Democratic Party, said she speaks with Harrison at least once a month and called him “terrifically helpful.” Michigan was, perhaps, the brightest spot for Democrats last year, with Gov. Gretchen Whitmer winning re-election and Democrats winning full control of the State Legislature for the first time in nearly 40 years. Ben Wikler, the chair of the Democratic Party of Wisconsin, extolled both Harrison and his predecessor, Perez, for recognizing that year-round campaign organizing was required in his state, where Republicans and Democrats are virtually deadlocked. He called the D.N.C. a “godsend” for Wisconsin.

Tina Podlodowski, who until this year served as chair of Washington State’s Democratic Party, has a more conflicted view. “For the folks that believe a national party should be focused in on the presidential race and Washington, D.C., the D.N.C. functions exceedingly well,” Podlodowski said; Washington State reliably votes blue in presidential elections. “I think for people like me who believe there should be more investment in down-ballot races and building state party organizing, the D.N.C. is a disappointment.”

Podlodowski called the D.N.C.’s investment in her state “negligible,” even with Democrats there battling to win a majority in the legislature and flip crucial House seats, pointing enviously to the D.N.C.’s strong support of Wisconsin. “Ben Wikler is a good chair, but honestly Wisconsin has a million less voters than Washington State, and the amount of money that has been spent should have a better return.”

Jane Kleeb, the chair of the Nebraska Democratic Party, said states like hers, which used to send Democrats to the Senate with regularity but now are G.O.P. strongholds, aren’t receiving enough aid. “State parties continue to really be on their own,” she said. “I would love to see us get back to where we were during the 50-state strategy days,” she told me. “There will always be tension, I think, between how national thinks things should be run versus when you’re on the ground. But we really do always have to trust and believe the on-the-ground perspective first.”

Relaying that perspective can be a challenge. D.N.C. members describe tightly choreographed meetings where dissenting resolutions are stifled. And with an incumbent in the White House, even members of pivotal committees, like rules and bylaws, lack tangible clout. “The White House advises they want X, Y, Z,” the member of the rules committee told me, “and then we vote on it.”

In June, the brinkmanship continued, as the D.N.C.’s rules and bylaws committee met again, this time deciding to allow New Hampshire Democrats until Sept. 1 to continue negotiating a plan for their primary. But Georgia’s new status as an early-voting state is also now in doubt: The spokesperson for the Republican secretary of state, Brad Raffensperger, said in a statement that he would not go along with the new Democratic calendar and would keep the established March primary date.

What difference more time will make for New Hampshire is unclear. Democrats there insist that it is their right to go first, ahead of South Carolina. Biden, as of now, plans to be nowhere near the Granite State next winter. In theory, Harrison’s D.N.C. will simply not recognize the New Hampshire primary nor any of the delegates won by Kennedy and Williamson. For national Democrats, the ugliness of it all — a sitting president losing a primary to the incendiary son of a Democratic icon — would be harder to dismiss.

The way Arnesen, the New Hampshire talk-show host, sees it, unless one of the warring factions blinks, Republicans will have free rein in her state for the next half a year as Biden and his surrogates are absent. “If I am going to have to vote in that first presidential primary in New Hampshire, who do I vote for: Marianne or R.F.K.? No Biden on the ballot. What’s my [expletive] choice?”

Harrison, for now at least, is not budging. “The D.N.C. is recognizing South Carolina as the first primary,” he told me firmly. “Regardless of what New Hampshire does or whatever, our D.N.C. has authorized that the first primary we are counting toward the allocation of delegates will be South Carolina.” New Hampshire, he added, will have “plenty of time to come to the table and figure it out, and we’re going to give them as many opportunities as possible.”

Ross Barkan is a contributing writer for the magazine who last wrote about the crises facing the New York State Democratic Party. He is the author of two novels and a nonfiction account of Covid’s impact on New York City. David Williams is a Colorado-based photographer whose work offers a distinct glimpse into the lives, cultures and cuisines that make up society today.

PHOTO: Jaime Harrison, chairman of the Democratic National Committee, in Minneapolis last month. (PHOTOGRAPH BY DAVID WILLIAMS) (MM42-MM43) This article appeared in print on page MM42, MM43, MM44, MM45, MM46, MM47.

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**Body**

For more than a quarter century, the fortunes of the United States and China were fused in a uniquely monumental joint venture.

Americans treated China like the mother of all outlet stores, purchasing staggering quantities of low-priced factory goods. Major brands exploited China as the ultimate means of cutting costs, manufacturing their products in a land where wages are low and unions are banned.

As Chinese industry filled American homes with electronics and furniture, factory jobs lifted hundreds of millions of Chinese from poverty. China's leaders used the proceeds of the export juggernaut to buy trillions of dollars of U.S. government bonds, keeping America's borrowing costs low and allowing its spending bonanza to continue.

Here were two countries separated by the Pacific Ocean, one shaped by freewheeling capitalism, the other ruled by an authoritarian Communist Party, yet conjoined in an enterprise so consequential that the economic historian Niall Ferguson coined a term: Chimerica, shorthand for their ''symbiotic economic relationship.''

No one uses words like symbiotic today. In Washington, two political parties that agree on almost nothing are united in their depictions of China as a geopolitical rival and a mortal threat to middle-class security. In Beijing, leaders accuse the United States of plotting to deny China's rightful place as a superpower. As each country seeks to diminish its dependence on the other, businesses worldwide are adapting their supply chains.

Chimerica has yielded to a trade war, with both sides extending steep tariffs and curbs on critical exports -- from advanced technology to minerals used to make electric vehicles.

American companies are shifting factory production away from China to less politically risky venues. Chinese businesses are focused on trade with allies and neighbors, while seeking domestic suppliers for technology they are barred from buying from American companies.

Decades of American rhetoric that celebrated commerce as a wellspring of democratization in China have given way to resignation that the country's current leadership -- under President Xi Jinping -- is intent on crushing dissent at home and projecting military might abroad.

For Chinese leaders, the once-prevailing faith that economic integration would undergird peaceful relations has been relinquished to a muscular form of nationalism that is challenging a global order still dominated by the United States.

''In a perfect political world, these are two countries that are made in heaven, exactly because they are complementary,'' said Yasheng Huang, an economist at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology Sloan School of Management. ''Essentially, these two countries kind of got married without knowing one another's religions.''

But divorce is not a practical option. The United States and China -- the world's two largest economies -- are intertwined. Chinese manufacturing has evolved from basic areas like footwear and apparel into advanced industries, including those central to efforts to limit the ravages of climate change. The United States remains the paramount consumer marketplace. Even as geopolitical tensions fray their ties, these two countries still depend on each other, their respective roles not easily replaced.

Apple makes most of its iPhones in China, even as it has been shifting some production to India. A Chinese brand, CATL, is the world's largest maker of electric car batteries, and Chinese companies dominate the refining of critical minerals like nickel used in such products. Chinese businesses make up more than three-fourths of the global supply chain for solar energy panels.

China is a leading source of sales for major global brands, from Hollywood studios and multinational automakers to manufacturers of construction equipment like Caterpillar and John Deere. Computer chip-makers like Intel, Micron and Qualcomm derive roughly two-thirds of their revenues from sales and licensing deals in China.

The powerful tug of those commercial entanglements will be in the background of planned discussions on Wednesday between Mr. Xi and President Biden. The meeting, at a global conference in San Francisco, would be their first in a year.

It was never going to last.

Still, the prospect that their political schism will endure is altering global supply chains. In place of relying on China as the factory floor to the world, businesses are increasingly exploring ways to diversify. Mexico and Central America are gaining investment as companies that sell to North America set up factories there.

Some trade and national security experts celebrate these shifts as an overdue adjustment to decades of growth propelled by a perilous codependency between the United States and China.

Beijing's purchases of American debt -- though steadily declining since 2012 -- kept borrowing costs low, but also encouraged investors to seek out greater returns. That led financial speculators to gorge on low-grade mortgages, delivering the global financial crisis of 2008, said Brad Setser, a former U.S. Treasury Department official and now an economist at the Council on Foreign Relations.

''It was certainly a form of interdependence,'' Mr. Setser said. ''But the notion that China saves and the U.S. spends, China lends and the U.S. borrows, and all is good because we are two sides of the same coin, we're complementary, that was never sustainable.''

The pandemic brought home the risks of American reliance on Chinese factories to produce vital goods like masks and medical gowns, to say nothing of exercise bikes and smartphones, all of which became scarce. Chaos at ports and increases in shipping prices exposed the pitfalls of leaning on a single country on the other side of an ocean.

The Biden administration took the disruption and growing rivalry with China as impetus for an industrial policy aimed at encouraging American manufacturing and greater trade with allies -- especially in strategically vital industries like computer chips.

Yet economists caution that even a marginal shifting of factory production from China will entail higher costs for consumers while slowing global economic growth.

The share of American imports from China has dropped 5 percent since 2017. The goods imported from other countries are more expensive -- 10 percent more in the case of Vietnam, and 3 percent higher from Mexico, according to research by Laura Alfaro at Harvard Business School and Davin Chor at Dartmouth's Tuck School of Business.

Though wages have risen in China, no other country possesses the depth and breadth of manufacturing capacity.

That did not happen by accident.

How China came to bet on trade.

Beginning in the late 1970s under the leadership of Deng Xiaoping, the Chinese government sought to rescue the country from its state of poverty and isolation by unleashing a series of market reforms. National wealth would be amassed by making products and selling them to the world. Officials courted foreign investment while building out infrastructure -- highways, ports, power plants.

The culmination came in 2001 when China joined the World Trade Organization, winning global access for its exports in exchange for promising to open its own markets to foreign competitors.

American leaders championed China's inclusion in the global trading system as far more than an effort to sell Big Macs and bulldozers to the world's most populous nation.

''By joining the W.T.O., China is not simply agreeing to import more of our products,'' President Bill Clinton declared on the eve of a key congressional vote in 2000. ''It is agreeing to import one of democracy's most cherished values: economic freedom.''

Yet beneath such high-minded rhetoric, American brands pushed for greater access to China for the simple reason that its factories could turn out goods more cheaply than anywhere else.

''China makes products that working families can afford,'' said Clark A. Johnson, chief executive of the then-prominent chain Pier 1 Imports, as he represented the National Retail Federation during congressional testimony in 1998.

That formulation carried the day.

In the two decades after China became part of the W.T.O., American imports from China multiplied fivefold to $504 billion a year, according to census data.

Walmart, a company ruled by a zeal for low prices, opened a procurement center in the boomtown of Shenzhen. The company would gather hundreds of representatives from surrounding factories. They would sit in wooden chairs, sipping tea out of flimsy plastic cups, as they waited for hours to meet Walmart's buyers. The company could demand rock-bottom prices, aided by the implicit threat that if one factory balked, another could be summoned from inside the same waiting room.

Two years after China entered the W.T.O., Walmart was spending $15 billion on Chinese-made products, a sum that encompassed almost one-eighth of all of China's exports to the United States. A decade later, Walmart was importing $49 billion of Chinese goods into the United States, according to one analysis.

Gaining from this trade was virtually anyone walking into a store. Chinese imports effectively boosted the spending power of the average American household about 2 percent, or $1,500, a year from 2000 and 2007, according to one study. Chinese goods pressed down American prices 0.19 percent a year from 2004 to 2015, another study found.

The people left behind.

Those hurt by Chinese imports were concentrated and conspicuous. Once-thriving American factory towns sank into joblessness and despair, swapping restaurants and hardware stores for food banks and pawnshops.

From 1999 to 2011, a surge of low-priced Chinese imports eliminated nearly one million American manufacturing jobs and two million positions throughout the broader economy, according to a paper by the economists David H. Autor, David Dorn and Gordon H. Hanson.

The resulting anger helped deliver Donald J. Trump to the White House. During his 2016 campaign, he vowed to unleash a trade war.

''We can't continue to allow China to rape our country,'' Mr. Trump said at a rally. ''It's the greatest theft in the history of the world.''

Such inflammatory characterizations collided with the reality that low-priced goods from China were an antidote to the rising cost of living. Still, Mr. Trump's accusations resonated in many ***working-class*** communities.

There was truth to the notion that Chinese industry was breaching the rules of international trade. The government lavished credit on the largest companies via loans from state-owned banks. Chinese industrial ventures could evade environmental and labor laws by sharing a cut of the profits with local officials. The Chinese market remained full of barriers to competition from foreign companies. Those that invested in China suffered brazen theft of intellectual property and rampant counterfeiting of their products.

Yet in many ways, the United States benefited from trade with China. Cheaper goods helped households cope with stagnating incomes while padding corporate coffers. The trouble was that most of the gains flowed to the shareholders of companies making products in China, while Washington failed to cushion those left behind.

A federal program called Trade Adjustment Assistance was supposed to compensate those rendered jobless by cheap imports, offering cash and training for other work. But Congress vastly underfunded the program. Fewer than one-third of those eligible for benefits in 2019 received help, according to an analysis of Department of Labor data.

In a triumph of simple political messaging over the complex accounting of trade, the public increasingly came to believe that Chinese industry was solely a predatory force -- that Americans ''were just taken advantage of,'' said Jessica Chen Weiss, a China expert at Cornell University and a former State Department official in the Biden administration. ''We didn't do a good job of distributing the benefits, but they were nonetheless real.''

Part of the change in American sentiment appeared to reflect bitterness over how engagement with China failed to deliver the promised political transformation.

The Chinese government used its trade winnings to expand its military capabilities, while menacing neighbors like the Philippines. It constructed an Orwellian surveillance apparatus, wielding it against the Uyghurs, an ethnic minority in the western region of Xinjiang.

American trade with China also failed to promote Beijing's promised market reforms. Instead, Mr. Xi's government has amplified the power of state-owned companies, while cracking down on the private sector.

For decades, foreign automakers were forced to team up with state-owned car companies as a way to get a crack at the Chinese market. Now, a fresh crop of Chinese companies is harnessing the know-how gleaned from those ventures to take markets from foreign automakers.

In the end, the engagement policy led to the moment at hand: a messy and bewildering process of disengagement.

The Biden administration argues that, by reducing dependence on Chinese industry, the American economy will become more resilient and less vulnerable to disruption in the face of shocks and conflict.

But many factory goods made in countries like Vietnam contain large volumes of parts and materials produced in China, according to research by Caroline Freund, an international trade expert at the University of California, San Diego.

As Chimerica dissolves, the world could end up with greater complexity in its supply chains -- more factories in more countries -- yet still reliant on critical components made largely in just one.

''You still depend on China, it's just that it takes more steps along the way,'' said Mr. Setser of the Council on Foreign Relations. ''There's more places where things could go wrong.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/14/business/us-china-economy-trade.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/14/business/us-china-economy-trade.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: Shipping containers at P-President Biden with President Xi Jinping of China last year. The two leaders are scheduled to meet this week. (PHOTOGRAPH BY DOUG MILLS/THE NEW YORK TIMES)

Shipping containers at Port of Los Angeles. The share of U.S. imports from China has dropped 5 percent since 2017. (PHOTOGRAPH (Y ADAM AMENGUAL FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

A Walmart store in Zhuhai, China. At one point, almost one-eighth of all China exports to the U.S. were Walmart's. (PHOTOGRAPH BY QILAI SHEN/BLOOMBERG) (B4)

**Load-Date:** November 14, 2023

**End of Document**



[***Playwrights Horizons' New Season***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6556-55F1-DXY4-X4T5-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

April 5, 2022 Tuesday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section C; Column 0; The Arts/Cultural Desk; Pg. 4

**Length:** 563 words

**Byline:** By Rachel Sherman

**Body**

The company has announced five works for its 2022-23 lineup, which will include Agnes Borinsky's ''The Trees,'' directed by Tina Satter.

''Downstate,'' a Bruce Norris play that The New York Times's chief theater critic, Jesse Green, has called a ''squirmy moral-thrill-ride,'' will make its New York premiere in October as part of Playwrights Horizons's new season, the company announced on Monday.

As Adam Greenfield, the artistic director for Playwrights Horizons, put it: ''If theater is here to catch us off guard, to shake our foundations, to make us rethink our values and realize the ways in which we're hypocrites,'' Norris can really point that all out.

''I sometimes think he's like the Molière of our time,'' Greenfield said in a recent Zoom interview.

The 2022-23 season will be Greenfield's first full, in-person season since assuming the role of artistic director in 2020. And the five-show lineup, which features coproductions with Page 73 Productions, MCC Theater and WP Theater, is packed with themes emerging from the pandemic lockdown, including a variety of perspectives on ''normalcy.''

The lineup includes Mia Chung's ''Catch as Catch Can,'' a drama in which two white, ***working-class*** New England families examine what Greenfield called ''the slipperiness of identity and the way identity can fall apart or collapse,'' and the debut of Agnes Borinsky's ''The Trees,'' a parable of two siblings who fall asleep in the park and wake up literally rooted to the landscape.

''Catch as Catch Can,'' which, in 2018, The Times called a ''tender horror story,'' returns in October. This time, it is being staged with an all Asian cast playing the Irish and Italian ***working class*** -- with actors also playing double roles of father and daughter, mothers and sons.

''The Trees,'' which will premiere in February 2023, is special to Greenfield. He knew this Borinsky play was the first work he wanted to program when he became artistic director.

''She sees the world sweetly despite seeing all of the reasons not to,'' he said.

The play, which, Greenfield described as involving two people who turn into trees and the community that forms around them, will be co-produced with the incubator theater company Page 73 Productions (the company's latest work was the spooky political drama, ''Man Cave'').

The earthy Off Broadway production will have plenty of shine from Broadway visionaries. ''The Trees'' will be directed by Tina Satter, whose fall 2021 Broadway docudrama ''Is This a Room'' received critical acclaim. And the last time Playwrights Horizons and Page 73 teamed up, it was to debut ''A Strange Loop,'' which won the 2020 Pulitzer Prize for drama and opens on April 26 for its own Broadway run.

The other shows, slated to debut in March 2023, are the world premiere of Julia Izumi's ''Regretfully, So the Birds Are,'' (a coproduction with WP Theater), described by Greenfield as a surprise-filled ''Swiss Army knife of a play'' with ''a delicious sense of goofy comedy'' centered on three siblings making sense of unreliable parents.

Also in March is John J. Caswell Jr.'s ''Wet Brain'' (co-produced with MCC Theater), a candid drama that follows siblings (also a set of three) struggling to find language for closure and grief -- in outer space. It's a science fiction version of the American family play that, Greenfield said, ''explodes open.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2022/04/04/theater/playwrights-horizon-season.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/04/04/theater/playwrights-horizon-season.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: From left, Francis Guinan, K. Todd Freeman and Tim Hopper in Bruce Norris's ''Downstate,'' which premiered at Steppenwolf Theater in 2018. The play will be part of Playwrights Horizons' 2022-23 season. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Michael Brosilow FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** April 5, 2022

**End of Document**



[***‘Downstate’ and ‘Catch as Catch Can’ in Playwrights Horizons New Season***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6551-GV21-JBG3-61YG-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

April 4, 2022 Monday 22:38 EST

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**Section:** THEATER

**Length:** 595 words

**Byline:** Rachel Sherman

**Highlight:** The company has announced five works for its 2022-23 lineup, which will include Agnes Borinsky’s “The Trees,” directed by Tina Satter.

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PHOTO: From left, Francis Guinan, K. Todd Freeman and Tim Hopper in Bruce Norris’s “Downstate,” which premiered at Steppenwolf Theater in 2018. The play will be part of Playwrights Horizons’ 2022-23 season. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Michael Brosilow FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** April 4, 2022

**End of Document**



[***With Eye on 2024, Biden Slams G.O.P. on Economy***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67DH-NDS1-JBG3-620M-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

January 27, 2023 Friday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section B; Column 0; Business/Financial Desk; Pg. 1

**Length:** 1336 words

**Byline:** By Jim Tankersley

**Body**

The president has found a welcome foil in a new conservative House majority and its tax and spending plans, sharpening a potential re-election message.

WASHINGTON -- President Biden on Thursday assailed House Republicans over their tax and spending plans, including potential changes to popular retirement programs, ahead of what is likely to be a run for re-election.

In a speech in Springfield, Va., Mr. Biden sought to reframe the economic narrative away from the rapid price increases that have dogged much of his first two years in office and toward his stewardship of an economy that has churned out steady growth and strong job gains.

Mr. Biden, speaking to members of a steamfitters union, sought to take credit for the strength of the labor market, moderating inflation and news from the Commerce Department on Thursday morning that the economy had grown at an annualized pace of 2.9 percent at the end of last year. In contrast, he cast House Republicans and their economic policy proposals as roadblocks to continued improvement.

''At the time I was sworn in, the pandemic was raging and the economy was reeling,'' Mr. Biden said before ticking through the actions he had taken to aid the recovery. Those included $1.9 trillion in pandemic and economic aid; a bipartisan bill to repair and upgrade roads, bridges, water pipes and other infrastructure; and a sweeping industrial policy bill to spur domestic investment in advanced manufacturing sectors like semiconductors and speed research and development to seed new industries.

Republicans have accused the Biden administration of fanning inflation by funneling too much federal money into the economy, and have called for deep spending cuts and other fiscal changes.

Mr. Biden denounced those proposals, including a plan to replace federal income taxes with a national sales tax, curb safety net spending and risk a government default by refusing to raise the federal borrowing limit without deep spending cuts. Why, he asked, ''would the Americans give up the progress we've made for the chaos they're suggesting?''

''I will not let anyone use the full faith and credit of the United States as a bargaining chip,'' Mr. Biden said, reiterating his refusal to negotiate over raising the debt limit. ''The United States of America -- we pay our debts.''

But the president also sought to reach out to ***working-class*** voters -- in places like his native Scranton, Pa. -- who have increasingly voted for Republicans in recent elections. Mr. Biden said those voters had been left behind by American economic policy in recent years, and he tried to woo them back by promising that his policies would continue to bring high-paying manufacturing jobs that do not require a college degree to people who feel ''invisible'' in the economy.

''They remember, in my old neighborhoods, why the jobs went away,'' Mr. Biden said, vowing that under his policies ''nobody's left behind.''

The speech built on a pattern for Mr. Biden, who has found the new and narrow Republican majority to be both a political threat and an opportunity.

Republicans in the chamber have begun a series of investigations into Mr. Biden, his family and his administration. They have also demanded deep cuts in federal spending in exchange for raising the borrowing limit, a position that risks an economic catastrophe given the huge sums of money that the United States borrows to pay for its financial obligations.

The president has refused to tie any spending cuts to raising the debt limit and has called on Congress to increase the $31.4 trillion cap so the nation can continue paying its bills and avoid a federal default.

But Mr. Biden, who is facing a divided Congress for the first time in his presidency, is increasingly acting as if the newly empowered conservatives have given him a political opening on economic policy. As he prepares for a likely re-election bid in 2024, he is seizing on the least popular proposals floated by House members to cast himself as a champion of the ***working class***, retirees and economic progress.

Mr. Biden's speech on Thursday waded deep into policy details, including the acreage of western timber burned in fires linked to climate change, the global breakdown of advanced chip production and the average salary of new manufacturing jobs, as he recounted his legislative accomplishments.

House Republicans have not yet released a detailed or unified economic agenda, and they have not made a clear set of demands for raising the debt limit, though they largely agree that Mr. Biden must accept significant spending curbs.

But members and factions of the Republican conference have pushed for votes on a variety of proposals that have little support among voters, including raising the retirement age for Social Security and Medicare and replacing the federal income tax with a national sales tax.

Mr. Biden has sought to brand the entire Republican Party with those proposals, even though it is not clear if the measures have majority support in the conference or will ever come to a vote.

Former President Donald J. Trump, who has already announced his 2024 bid for the White House, has urged Republicans not to touch the safety-net programs. Other party leaders have urged Republicans not to rule out those cuts. ''We should not draw lines in the sand or dismiss any option out of hand, but instead seriously discuss the trade-offs of proposals,'' Senator Michael D. Crapo of Idaho, the top Republican on the Finance Committee, wrote in an opinion piece for Fox News, in which he called for Mr. Biden to negotiate over raising the debt limit.

Representative Kevin Hern, Republican of Oklahoma, who sits on the House Ways and Means Committee, told a tax conference in Washington this week that there are ''lots of problems'' with the plan to replace the income tax with a so-called fair tax on consumption. Those include incentives for policymakers to allow prices to rise rapidly in the economy in order to generate more revenue from the sales tax, he noted.

''Let's just say it's going to be very interesting,'' Mr. Hern said at the D.C. Bar Taxation Community's annual tax conference. ''I haven't found a Ways and Means member that's for it.''

Despite those internal disagreements, Mr. Biden has been happy to pick and choose unpopular Republican ideas and frame them as the true contrast to his economic agenda. He has pointedly refused to cut safety-net programs and threatened to veto such efforts.

''The president is building an economy from the bottom up and the middle out, and protecting Social Security and Medicare,'' Karine Jean-Pierre, the White House press secretary, told reporters this week. ''Republicans want to cut Social Security, want to cut Medicare -- programs Americans have earned, have paid in -- and impose a 30 percent national sales tax that will increase taxes on working families. That is what they have said they want to do, and that is clearly their plan.''

The focus on Republicans has allowed Mr. Biden to divert the economic conversation from inflation, which hit 40-year highs last year but receded in the past several months, though it remains above historical norms. On Thursday, he chided Republicans for a vote to reduce funding for I.R.S. enforcement against wealthy tax cheats -- a move the Congressional Budget Office says would add to the budget deficit, and which Mr. Biden cast as inflationary.

''They campaigned on inflation,'' Mr. Biden said. ''They didn't say if elected, they planned to make it worse.''

Progressive groups see an opportunity for Mr. Biden to score political points and define the economic issue before the 2024 campaign begins in earnest. That is in part because polls suggest Americans have little appetite for Social Security or Medicare cuts, and have far less focus on the national debt than House Republicans do.

''It is a political gift,'' said Lindsay Owens, the executive director of the Groundwork Collaborative, a liberal nonprofit in Washington.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/01/26/us/politics/biden-economy.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/01/26/us/politics/biden-economy.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: Speaking to union members in Springfield, Va., President Biden tried to cast proposals by House Republicans as roadblocks to economic improvement. Mr. Biden is facing a divided Congress for the first time in his presidency (PHOTOGRAPH BY DOUG MILLS/THE NEW YORK TIMES) (B4) This article appeared in print on page B1, B4.

**Load-Date:** January 27, 2023

**End of Document**



[***Y’all: the Most Inclusive of All Pronouns; Letter of Recommendation***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:66N0-TKV1-DXY4-X0PV-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

October 18, 2022 Tuesday 13:37 EST

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**Section:** MAGAZINE

**Length:** 912 words

**Byline:** Maud Newton

**Highlight:** The South’s default collective form of address is the best of the American vernacular.

**Body**

The South’s default collective form of address is the best of the American vernacular.

Growing up in Miami, I dreaded being told that I sounded like a hick. In my teens, a boyfriend pointed out that I tended to say “sow” (as in the female pig) in place of “saw.” But most verbal indicators of my Texas roots fell away in nursery school, after my family moved from Dallas and I took to using the word “toilet” rather than “commode.” The way I began to say “pie” flummoxed my parents. It sounded, to their ears, like “poi.” When my mom joked that I was becoming a Yankee, my father scolded her and taught me “Dixieland.”

Raised in the Mississippi Delta, he was an ardent believer in the Old South who glorified our antebellum ancestors and published letters in Southern newspapers denouncing politicians as scalawags. My father defended slavery, demanded the subservience of women and adhered to “spare the rod and spoil the child.” (When contacted by this magazine, my father broadly disputed my memories of him.) He mostly ignored the changes in my speech, but one thing I said made him clench with fury: “you guys.” The term was “y’all,” he said, tightening his jaw. Little girls were not guys.

I recall having this conversation a couple of times as I moved through kindergarten and into elementary school. But every kid I met in Miami said “you guys.” And so, outside my father’s hearing, I carried on as before. He spanked me once when he overheard me saying it to a couple of playmates, both girls. The belt didn’t make me like “y’all” any better. On the one hand, I associated the South’s default collective form of address with my Texan granny, who was warm and fun and full of ***working-class*** sass. Conversely, “y’all” also seemed to reek of forced cheer and hidden demands that I associated with my father. It was tangled up with his tiresome rules about gender, the same rules that told me I wasn’t allowed to play with Matchbox cars, read “The Hardy Boys” or wear tube socks. It conjured his nostalgia for the Delta of the Jim Crow era, with its poll taxes and whites-only schools. I was at most a Southerner one step removed, and unwilling to claim even that. As I grew older, when Southern family and friends teased me and called me a Yankee, I agreed with relief.

My assumptions about “y’all” were muddled at best. Its origins are mysterious: While the term could have originated with Scottish-Irish immigrants, there are reasons to suspect it derives at least in part from the vernacular of enslaved Black people, whose influence on Southern speech is undeniable but difficult to trace. Though a Southern term, it’s emblematic of the messiness and heterogeneity of American English — a language both inspiringly polyglot and marked by an ugly history.

Of course, I didn’t know any of that. My resistance to “y’all” began to fade only in my mid-20s, when I lived in Tallahassee after law school. My apartment was 17 miles from Florida’s border with Georgia, and I practiced law alongside men who took offense when, after a full day opposing them in depositions, I declined their offers to carry my briefcase. My last name was hyphenated, too: a true “you’re not from around here” demerit. But in grocery stores and coffee shops, on the street and in the library, everyone — Black and white, queer and straight, ***working-class*** and wealthy — used “y’all,” and soon I did, too. I began to enjoy its warmth and inclusivity, the way everyone was equally gathered under its umbrella. I had to admit: It didn’t feel sexist, racist or classist. It felt friendly and — most of the time — genuine.

When eventually I moved to Brooklyn, I was relieved to live in a place where no one tried to carry my bag at the end of a workday, and the Civil War monuments I passed honored the Union rather than the Confederacy. I reverted to the “you guys” of my youth, conforming to dominant New Yawker ways, but it wasn’t the satisfying linguistic homecoming I’d expected. It felt a little brusque, and though it was a betrayal of my 8-year-old self, I had to admit: I didn’t identify as a guy.

Living in the city, meanwhile, upended all my conceptions about what my ancestors’ preferred collective form of address meant. Far from being a niche Southern phrase, it already had a home here. I might not hear it much in the Brooklyn neighborhoods where I’ve lived — Williamsburg, Greenpoint, then Kensington — but it resounded in Bed-Stuy shops, a favorite Ft. Greene barbecue spot (R.I.P.), a street between City College and the A train. “Y’all” had come north in the Great Migration, alongside collards and cornbread. Now it has spread not just to states above the Mason-Dixon line but as far as Australia and near as my current home in Queens. Far from the oppressive ethos I once imagined, “y’all” represents the best of American vernacular.

And so, on a bitterly cold night at my local dog run with some friends, I worked up the nerve to say it. As the word left my mouth, I worried I sounded like a caricature of the South, one I’ve discovered lives in my own head just as it does the heads of Northerners. But my friends took it in stride. True, they haven’t started using “y’all” yet, but I’ll keep evangelizing for this idiom that welcomes anyone who finds a home in it.

Maud Newton is a writer whose first book is “Ancestor Trouble” (Random House, 2022).

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This article appeared in print on page MM16, MM17.

**Load-Date:** October 23, 2022

**End of Document**



[***Covid Silver Lining for Parisian Cafes and Patrons***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:690W-F1D1-JBG3-62NB-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

August 23, 2023 Wednesday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section B; Column 0; Business/Financial Desk; Pg. 1; PARIS DISPATCH

**Length:** 1279 words

**Byline:** By Liz Alderman

**Body**

The neighbors may complain about the noise, but outdoor spaces that bloomed under a pandemic program are now a permanent and vibrant fixture of city life.

The sound of clinking wine glasses floated through the evening air recently as throngs of patrons sipped chilled rosé and nibbled on cheese plates in front of the cafes, restaurants and épiceries bordering Place d'Aligre in the Bastille district of Paris.

Waiters threaded through the crowd, their trays loaded with Aperol spritzes and oysters, as more people hurried in to meet friends. Children played tag and scampered to their parents to grab an occasional French fry. Tourists ordered drinks and posed for Instagram photos sure to inspire envy back home.

The diners were squeezed into hundreds of chairs that had been put out earlier in the afternoon. But time was precious; the entire inviting setup would have to be dismantled by 10 p.m. under strict post-pandemic rules to balance the interests of those enjoying the scene -- and those finding it a nuisance.

Paris has long been renowned for its bustling cafe culture, with 13,000 open-air terraces occupying sidewalks and squares in the years before the pandemic. But thousands of additional outdoor spaces bloomed under an emergency program set up to relieve businesses during Covid lockdowns. They are now permanent, after a 2021 decree by Mayor Anne Hidalgo that allows them to return every year from April through November.

As a result, parts of Paris that used to be vacant or even sketchy have morphed into animated destinations, complete with a mini-economic boom.

The Place d'Aligre is one of them. Mostly empty at night before 2020, a vibrant transformation has unfolded here.

''The scene has changed completely,'' said Laurent Zennadi, a manager at Chez Camille, a family-run cafe that used to cater mostly to a morning and lunchtime crowd from the nearby Marche d'Aligre, a food market founded in 1779. ''Nobody used to come here in the evening. Now they are coming from all over Paris.''

At Salvo Olio e Vino en Vrac, an Italian deli sought out for its truffled hams and wines dispensed from barrels, Salvatore Cantarella, the owner, welcomed a wave of new clients to the Place d'Aligre after receiving a license to open a ''terrace estivale,'' or summer terrace. The extra business kept him from going under. ''I'm so grateful there's a positive outcome,'' he said.

Most of Paris's new summer terraces occupy parking spots, nearly 4,000 of which have been covered in temporary wooden decks. The Seine's banks are also blanketed with pop-up tables, as are rooftops with panoramic views.

With less room for cars now -- and after Covid-era cycling lanes were made permanent -- thousands of people are pedaling to the city's hottest spots.

''It's so lovely here,'' said Claire-Anne Haines, an event organizer who was hemmed behind a tiny table with her friends at a bistro's parking-space terrace on the Rue Condorcet in Montmartre. ''The terrace looked nice while I was biking past, so I told my friends to come,'' she said.

It all plays into a bigger blueprint laid out by Ms. Hidalgo to make Paris a more environmentally friendly metropolis by liberating public space from cars and repurposing it for pedestrians and communal activity.

Not everyone welcomes the changes.

Resident associations have clashed with the city over the noise that the terraces bring and have continued to press the authorities over who should control streets and sidewalks.

Critics accuse Ms. Hidalgo of allowing businesses to privatize the public domain. Drivers rail about lost parking. And a hashtag, #saccageparis -- or ''pillage Paris'' -- has become an outlet for outraged people to post photos of ramshackle terraces that they say are a blot on the beauty of the city.

''The situation is infernal,'' said Eric Durand, a spokesman for Droit au Sommeil, or Right to Sleep, a citizens group with representatives in every section of Paris.

The cacophony has grown exponentially where he lives, near the Rue des Abbesses in Montmartre, he said. Some neighbors have moved away. Those who can't afford to are forced to keep their windows closed or -- a horror to Parisians -- buy air-conditioning units to keep cool on summer nights when the terraces are going full blast.

''We want this invasion of public space to stop,'' Mr. Durand said.

But at City Hall, officials say the summer terraces are here to stay.

''Paris is the city of cafes; they are part of the French art de vivre,'' said Olivia Polski, the deputy mayor of Paris responsible for trade, using a French phrase meaning ''the art of living.''

Today, 4,000 summer terraces are authorized through a paid license, compared with 14,000 that were free to open under emergency Covid policies. The terraces must meet new guidelines for aesthetics and noise, and must shut by 10 p.m. Loud music is forbidden, and owners face ''an arsenal of sanctions and new legislation for infractions,'' Ms. Polski said, including steep fines or the loss of their operating license.

Over 200 were shuttered last year for violations.

In Place de la Réunion, a bucolic square in eastern Paris that is adorned with umbrella pines and an ornamented fountain, cafe operators consulted with local residents to address concerns.

''We listened to neighbors and learned to work things out,'' said Perrine Virey, a manager at Café La Chope, whose summer terrace seats up to 130 people, compared with 40 at the cafe's regular terrace before Covid. Solutions included not throwing bottles away at night and starting to move diners out of the square at 9:45, she said.

With hundreds of people gathered each night, the area feels safer and more convivial, locals said. A village ambience reigned one recent evening as children capered about while their parents lingered at tables. Friends with pink hair sipped orange spritzes before heading to an L.G.B.T.Q. dance club.

In addition to the noise complaints, another downside, some Parisians say, is that the success of the terrace project is speeding gentrification in socially mixed areas. ''It's pushing poorer people out of the spaces that they used to inhabit,'' said Rafael Ludovici, a graduate student.

But in the Place d'Aligre, terrace supporters said the summer diners had revitalized the ***working-class*** neighborhood. At La Grille, a bistro hangout for over 40 years that nearly went bust as Covid hit, a dozen new employees have been hired to tend to the growing crowds.

On the recent evening, after the Aligre food market closed and street cleaners washed the pavement clean, a vintage 1930s Renault truck loaded with La Grille's outdoor tables and chairs rolled up. By 5 p.m., a colorful terrace had sprung seemingly out of nowhere, and an hour later, dozens of patrons had settled in.

''It's completely added to the charm of the place, and creates a connection between people,'' said Omar Hammouche, La Grille's owner, as a stream of habitués stopped to shake his hand.

At Chez Camille, Mr. Zennadi and his family installed new outdoor seating for about 100 people, on top of 400 seats added by other cafes to the square. Last year, the family invested around 15,000 euros, or $16,500, for the terrace license and to upgrade the outdoor furniture, among other improvements.

Recently, the cafe even started its own microbrewery, Mr. Zennadi noted proudly.

''Nobody wanted Covid to happen,'' Mr. Zennadi said as a coterie of friends gathered on the sun-dappled terrace for an aperitif. ''But we can be thankful for the good things that have come out of it.''

Juliette Guéron-Gabrielle contributed reporting.Juliette Guéron-Gabrielle contributed reporting.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/21/world/europe/paris-cafes-summer-terraces.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/21/world/europe/paris-cafes-summer-terraces.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Place d'Aligre in Paris. ''Summer terraces'' have transformed parts of the city that used to be empty at night. (B1)

Nearly 4,000 parking spaces in Paris have been covered in temporary wooden decks, like this one in Place d'Aligre. Bicycling has increased.

The mayor is working to make Paris a more environmentally friendly city by liberating public space from cars and repurposing it. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY DMITRY KOSTYUKOV FOR THE NEW YORK TIME) (B5) This article appeared in print on page B1, B5.

**Load-Date:** August 23, 2023

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[***With His Economic Plan, DeSantis Takes On 'Elites'***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68V6-3191-JBG3-63BP-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

August 1, 2023 Tuesday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; National Desk; Pg. 16

**Length:** 1279 words

**Byline:** By Nicholas Nehamas

**Body**

Gov. Ron DeSantis of Florida introduced a 10-point economic plan geared toward the blue-collar voters with whom he has struggled to resonate.

Attempting to meld his ''anti-woke'' politics with economic policy, Gov. Ron DeSantis on Monday unveiled a plan that he claimed took on corporate interests, business elites, federal government bureaucrats and foreign trade relations -- forces he blamed for derailing the prosperity of American families.

''We will declare our economic independence from the failed elites that have orchestrated American decline,'' Mr. DeSantis said during a speech at a bustling New Hampshire logistics-company warehouse, laying out the economic vision for his presidential campaign. ''We the American people win; they lose.''

The governor linked a decline in U.S. life expectancy to suicides, drug overdoses, alcoholism and the struggles facing the nation's ***working class***. ''This is not normal, this is not acceptable, and yet entrenched politicians in Washington refuse to change course,'' he said.

His populist, anti-corporatist comments seemed intended to lift his standing with non-college-educated voters, a crucial Republican constituency that polling shows is not supporting Mr. DeSantis's candidacy in large numbers. Only 13 percent of Republican voters without a college degree nationwide back Mr. DeSantis, according to the first New York Times/Siena College poll of this election cycle. Former President Donald J. Trump, the race's front-runner, has attacked Mr. DeSantis as a ''globalist'' and a ''RINO,'' or Republican in name only.

Mr. DeSantis's somewhat scattershot 10-point plan also includes goals to achieve energy independence, end President Biden's climate change policies, rein in federal spending, expand vocational education and make colleges responsible for student loans. He also proposes revoking China's preferential trade status, limiting ''unskilled'' immigration and cutting taxes.

In sum, the plan largely repeats standard conservative promises to stoke economic growth by reducing taxes on corporations and investors, and by cutting government regulation -- proposals that are typically cheered by business lobbyists, despite Mr. DeSantis's anti-corporate, ''anti-woke'' rhetoric. He would prioritize fossil fuel development, another longtime conservative plank. And his proposals to further reduce America's economic links with China echo the plans of an emerging populist wing of Republican candidates, including Mr. Trump.

The governor's speech is part of an effort to recalibrate his campaign, which laid off more than a third of its staff this month, as it failed to meet fund-raising goals. National polls show him trailing Mr. Trump badly. Mr. DeSantis has already reshaped the tactics of his campaign in the past week, opening himself up to more questions from voters and the media; holding smaller, less formal events; and condensing his lengthy stump speech. Now, his advisers say he is also resetting his message, with plans to talk more about the policies he would implement as president, as well as about his biography, rather than about his record in Florida.

Mr. DeSantis has already unveiled proposals on immigration and the military. Ahead of the first Republican debate on Aug. 23, he is also expected to introduce his foreign policy plans, using that topic and his economic strategy as the cornerstones of his campaign in the coming weeks.

But Mr. DeSantis, who prides himself as a policy expert, has a tendency to delve deep into details and to use a sometimes bewildering series of acronyms in his stump speeches. His allies say that getting into kitchen-table issues like the economy is a necessary shift.

''The average voter probably needs to be talked to on a higher level, not getting down into the weeds so much,'' said Jason Osborne, the New Hampshire House majority leader who has endorsed Mr. DeSantis. Still, Mr. Osborne said, many party activists appreciated the governor's attention to the finer points of policy.

On Monday, Mr. DeSantis littered his speech with references to the C.C.P. (the Communist Party of China), E.S.G. (environmental, social and governance standards used by corporations), D.E.I. (diversity, equity and inclusion policies) and C.B.D.C. (a central bank digital currency).

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''There's a difference between a free-market economy, which we want, and corporatism, in which the rules are jiggered to be able to help incumbent companies,'' he said, adding that he would ban individual stock trading by members of Congress and executive branch officials.

In addition, Mr. DeSantis derided government bailouts, citing the financial crisis in 2008 and the stimulus signed by Mr. Trump in response to the coronavirus pandemic.

And he pledged to make institutions of higher education, instead of taxpayers, responsible for student debt, a menacing shot at universities that escalates policies he has proposed as governor to overhaul Florida's higher education system.

He also proposed a plan that borrows from traditionally liberal agendas: allowing borrowers to discharge their remaining student loan balances if they declare bankruptcy. While it is now possible for debtors to do that, many have found the process difficult and cumbersome, and liberal groups like the Center for American Progress in Washington have embraced such reforms in the past.

''It's wrong to say that a truck driver should have to pay off the debt of somebody who got a degree in gender studies,'' Mr. DeSantis said. ''At the same time, I have sympathy for some of these students because I think they were sold a bill of goods.''

On the campaign trail, Mr. DeSantis often highlights his economic acumen by pointing to Florida's surging economy, influx of new residents and the formation of new businesses. But the picture has grown less rosy this year, with inflation in Florida's biggest metro areas rising faster than the national average. A troubled property insurance market and an affordable housing crisis have also complicated his message.

In response to a question from a reporter on Monday, Mr. DeSantis defended his record on the state's economy, saying that his landslide re-election had allowed him to pass major legislation addressing the property insurance and housing issues.

''We've been working on this for a number of years,'' he said.

Mr. Trump's campaign has hit Mr. DeSantis repeatedly for his management of the state.

''Ron DeSantis should pack his knapsack and hitchhike his way back home to focus on the serious issues facing the great state of Florida,'' Steven Cheung, a spokesman for Mr. Trump, said in a statement.

Jim Tankersley contributed reporting.Jim Tankersley contributed reporting.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/07/31/us/politics/desantis-economic-proposal.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/07/31/us/politics/desantis-economic-proposal.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: Gov. Ron DeSantis of Florida introduced his 10-point plan for ''economic independence'' in New Hampshire on Monday. (PHOTOGRAPH BY DAVID DEGNER FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A16.

**Load-Date:** August 1, 2023

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[***A Tale of One City***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:694R-TB71-DXY4-X0BV-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

September 10, 2023 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section BR; Column 0; Book Review Desk; Pg. 9; FICTION

**Length:** 1406 words

**Byline:** By Karan Mahajan

**Body**

THE FRAUD, by Zadie Smith

All over the dorm in California glinted pale-orange and tabasco-red and steel-blue copies of Zadie Smith's ''White Teeth,'' with their hard white bright lettering. The year was 2001, and ''White Teeth'' had been assigned as incoming reading for my freshman dorm. I remember loving the sprawling, rude, funny, slapdash narration, the magical way in which Smith brought it all together in the figure of a genetically engineered mouse.

But Smith's age at the time -- 26 -- must have felt positively geriatric to me. It was only when I started publishing in my 20s that I could appreciate what a prodigy Smith was; and throughout my career she has remained a startling (and despair-inducing) beacon of what a writer can achieve at a young age. An undergraduate when she embarked on ''White Teeth,'' she was not yet 30 when she published -- to my mind -- her masterpiece, ''On Beauty,'' a wise, sad and hilarious book about American race relations that would have justly been called a great American social novel had the American literary scene at that time been more attuned to race as a theme.

Now, at the ripe old age of 47, Smith, having long since entered History herself, has written her first historical novel, ''The Fraud.'' It offers a vast, acute panoply of London and the English countryside, and successfully locates the social controversies of an era in a handful of characters.

The ''fraud'' of the title refers to several figures, but primarily to a scamster in 1860s England who claims to be Sir Roger Tichborne, the inheritor of a great title and fortune who was considered dead at sea. Suing to take over the Tichborne estate, the Claimant, as he is called, is clearly a fraud -- he has none of the trappings of an aristocrat and everything about his past suggests that he is an English butcher who has been living in Australia to escape bad debts. But strangely, in his quest for ''justice,'' the Claimant amasses an adoring swarm of fans who believe he is telling the truth and are ready to go to the death to prove that he -- and no one else -- is Sir Roger. The only reason the Claimant is being denied his due, these supporters say, is that the elite -- the gentry, the press, the ''papists'' -- are in conspiracy against him.

The echoes of mindless Trumpism are clear, and it is evidently why Smith was drawn to this trial, which was a cause célèbre in England at the time and was a bottomless well of populist nuttiness. The diverse crowd of the Claimant's supporters at a fund-raiser, Smith writes, consisted of ''clerks and schoolteachers, dissenters of all stripes, shopkeepers and foremen, ladies' maids, cooks, governesses.'' The Claimant was a ''man with no center'' who ''moved as the wind moved,'' a ''fun-loving, beer-swilling, aristocratic man of the people.'' What better way to write about Trump and Trumpism than to avoid flattering Trump with another Trump portrait?

But. This is a novel, and the novelist's intelligence is drawn in idiosyncratic directions. What makes ''The Fraud'' a book by Zadie Smith and not, say, a transcript of the trial is that the central characters are not the jury or the judged, but a 60-ish Scottish widow named Eliza Touchet and an elderly, formerly enslaved Jamaican named Andrew Bogle who is serving as a witness for the Claimant.

Touchet is the most morally intelligent character Smith has written -- a ''spiky,'' questing, watchful, death-haunted individual who is funny without being comic. A housekeeper and editor to her bumbling, graphomaniac novelist cousin (modeled and named after a real writer, William Ainsworth), she spends her days in the countryside protecting Ainsworth's fragile ego -- his reputation is in decline while his opportunistic friend Charles Dickens has been buried in Westminster Abbey -- and arguing about the Tichborne case with Ainsworth's new, much younger, ***working-class***, barely literate, former-maid wife, Sarah, who is as pro-Claimant as one can get.

These mealtime debates about the Tichborne trial, while fun to follow, lack the preternatural precision of the dialogue in Smith's more contemporary novels -- she is working with the past, and can't rely on her superb ear -- and so the novel really takes off when Eliza accompanies Sarah to the Tichborne fund-raiser in London and finds her mind blown by the riotous circumstances and, by contrast, the sobering figure of the white-haired, neatly dressed Andrew Bogle up on the stage.

Many idiots are compelled to defend the Claimant, including an Irish lawyer who appears to be modeled on Rudy Giuliani. But of all his defenders, no one is more believable, cautious or intelligent than Bogle, who knew the Claimant in Australia and has maintained, mysteriously, even in the face of legal blows to the Claimant, that the Claimant is who he says he is. As an abolitionist and student of humanity, Touchet is inexorably drawn to Bogle and begins interviewing him with the hope -- after years of being on the sidelines of literary dinner conversations -- of, heaven forbid, writing her own book.

More so than any other novel Smith has written, this is a book about novelists, and it is in lambasting the egos of male writers that Smith has the most fun. ''God preserve me from that tragic indulgence, that useless vanity, that blindness!'' Touchet thinks, years before she takes the plunge into novel-writing herself. While discussing Dickens with Ainsworth, she exclaims: ''Oh, what does it matter what that man thinks of anything? He's a novelist!'' One of her cousin's orotund historical fictions about the court of Queen Anne is described as being ''almost as dull as the reign of Queen Anne itself.''

More movingly, Smith explains in one passage why Ainsworth became a bad writer of historical fiction after a major controversy around his early, successful, contemporary novel ''Jack Sheppard'' drove him ''off into the distant, storied past -- where he felt safest ... where nothing is real and nothing matters.'' It is less easy, from this point, to see Ainsworth as a buffoon. And it is a way for Smith to signal to us why she, too, may wish to navigate the storms of the present on a raft fashioned from the timber of the past.

Bogle, meanwhile, tells Eliza his harrowing tale of being raised on a brutal Jamaican plantation and making his way to England as a valet. ''My life has had many parts,'' he says, sounding like a Naipaul narrator. It is in this section that the odd structure of the novel, cutting between time periods and characters in very short chapters, has its biggest payoff, with decades racing by in bite-size passages that yield first-rate observations about colonialism like this: ''England was not a real place at all. England was an elaborate alibi.''

More often, though, the book's structure is uneven. One wishes, for instance, that the chapters would signal their time jumps more consistently, so that one wasn't wondering if one was with the Eliza of the 1830s or the 1870s. But these infelicities stop mattering when we are deep into the trial and the book turns into a portrait of people with thwarted ambitions, of people who, like Ainsworth, become frauds without knowing it.

In all of her books Smith has paid attention to a mixed-up London and particularly to Willesden, where she grew up. In this novel, she is quite actively digging into London's history, trying to understand how a person like her, with European and Jamaican ancestry, came to exist here in the first place. What forces deposited Black people on these shores? With her multicultural eye she also gives us a London that is more racially mixed than that found in other novels about the period, a London of Lascar Indians, Africans, Chinese, Turks, ''Black maids-of-all-work and Black cooks and housekeepers'' and ''Carib boys in livery at the threshold of fine houses, got up like Princes of Arabia.''

As always, it is a pleasure to be in Zadie Smith's mind, which, as time goes on, is becoming contiguous with London itself. Dickens may be dead, but Smith, thankfully, is alive.

THE FRAUD | By Zadie Smith | 454 pp. | Penguin Press | $29

Karan Mahajan's most recent novel, ''The Association of Small Bombs,'' was a finalist for the National Book Award.Karan Mahajan is a novelist, essayist, and critic. His second novel, The Association of Small Bombs, was a finalist for the 2016 National Book Award for Fiction. Need approved bio.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/28/books/review/zadie-smith-the-fraud.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/28/books/review/zadie-smith-the-fraud.html)

**Graphic**

This article appeared in print on page BR9.

**Load-Date:** September 10, 2023

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[***Trailing Trump, DeSantis Unveils Economic Plan Slamming ‘Failed Elites’***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68V2-43R1-DXY4-X3T9-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

July 31, 2023 Monday 23:51 EST

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**Section:** US; politics

**Length:** 1300 words

**Byline:** Nicholas Nehamas

**Highlight:** Gov. Ron DeSantis of Florida introduced a 10-point economic plan geared toward the blue-collar voters with whom he has struggled to resonate.

**Body**

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Attempting to meld his “anti-woke” politics with economic policy, Gov. Ron DeSantis on Monday unveiled a plan that he claimed took on corporate interests, business elites, federal government bureaucrats and foreign trade relations — forces he blamed for derailing the prosperity of American families.

“We will declare our economic independence from the failed elites that have orchestrated American decline,” Mr. DeSantis said during a speech at a bustling New Hampshire logistics-company warehouse, laying out the economic vision for his presidential campaign. “We the American people win; they lose.”

The governor linked a [*decline in U.S. life expectancy*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/31/health/life-expectancy-covid-pandemic.html#:~:text=White%20Americans%20saw%20the%20second,seven%2Dtenths%20of%20a%20year.) to suicides, drug overdoses, alcoholism and the struggles facing the nation’s ***working class***. “This is not normal, this is not acceptable, and yet entrenched politicians in Washington refuse to change course,” he said.

His populist, anti-corporatist comments seemed intended to lift his standing with non-college-educated voters, a crucial Republican constituency that polling shows is not supporting Mr. DeSantis’s candidacy in large numbers. Only 13 percent of Republican voters without a college degree nationwide back Mr. DeSantis, [*according to the first New York Times/Siena College poll*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/07/31/us/politics/2024-poll-nyt-siena-trump-republicans.html) of this election cycle. Former President Donald J. Trump, the race’s front-runner, has attacked Mr. DeSantis as a “globalist” and a “RINO,” or Republican in name only.

Mr. DeSantis’s somewhat scattershot 10-point plan also includes goals to achieve energy independence, end President Biden’s climate change policies, rein in federal spending, expand vocational education and make colleges responsible for student loans. He also proposes revoking China’s preferential trade status, limiting “unskilled” immigration and cutting taxes.

In sum, the plan largely repeats standard conservative promises to stoke economic growth by reducing taxes on corporations and investors, and by cutting government regulation — proposals that are typically cheered by business lobbyists, despite Mr. DeSantis’s anti-corporate, “anti-woke” rhetoric. He would prioritize fossil fuel development, another longtime conservative plank. And his proposals to further reduce America’s economic links with China [*echo*](https://www.axios.com/2023/03/05/trump-china-confrontation-trade) the plans of an emerging populist wing of Republican candidates, including Mr. Trump.

The governor’s speech is part of an effort to recalibrate his campaign, which [*laid off more than a third of its staff*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/07/16/us/politics/desantis-staff-campaign-shakeup.html) this month, as it failed to meet fund-raising goals. National polls show him [*trailing Mr. Trump badly*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/07/31/us/politics/2024-poll-nyt-siena-trump-republicans.html). Mr. DeSantis has already reshaped the tactics of his campaign in the past week, opening himself up to more questions from voters and the media; holding smaller, less formal events; and condensing his lengthy stump speech. Now, his advisers say he is also resetting his message, with plans to talk more about the policies he would implement as president, as well as about his biography, rather than about his record in Florida.

Mr. DeSantis has already unveiled proposals on [*immigration*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/26/us/politics/ron-desantis-border-drug-traffickers.html) and the military. Ahead of the first Republican debate on Aug. 23, he is also expected to introduce his foreign policy plans, using that topic and his economic strategy as the cornerstones of his campaign in the coming weeks.

But Mr. DeSantis, who prides himself as a policy expert, has a tendency to [*delve deep into details*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/22/us/politics/desantis-trump-older-voters-prescription-drugs.html#:~:text=DeSantis%20said%20as%20he%20signed,providing%20value%20to%20the%20system.%E2%80%9D) and to use a sometimes bewildering series of acronyms in his stump speeches. His allies say that getting into kitchen-table issues like the economy is a necessary shift.

“The average voter probably needs to be talked to on a higher level, not getting down into the weeds so much,” said Jason Osborne, the New Hampshire House majority leader who has endorsed Mr. DeSantis. Still, Mr. Osborne said, many party activists appreciated the governor’s attention to the finer points of policy.

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Those comments reflected Mr. DeSantis’s embrace of the New Right, which argues that leftists have taken over many boardrooms and that conservatives must overcome their historical aversion to limited government interference in corporate matters and fight back. The governor has attacked those he calls “Chamber of Commerce Republicans,” meaning those more traditional members of the party who have criticized his [*ongoing feud with Disney*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/05/business/disney-ron-desantis.html).

”There’s a difference between a free-market economy, which we want, and corporatism, in which the rules are jiggered to be able to help incumbent companies,” he said, adding that he would ban individual stock trading by members of Congress and executive branch officials.

In addition, Mr. DeSantis derided government bailouts, citing the financial crisis in 2008 and the stimulus signed by Mr. Trump in response to the coronavirus pandemic.

And he pledged to make institutions of higher education, instead of taxpayers, responsible for student debt, a menacing shot at universities that escalates policies he has proposed as governor to [*overhaul Florida’s higher education system*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/01/31/us/governor-desantis-higher-education-chris-rufo.html).

He also proposed a plan that borrows from traditionally liberal agendas: allowing borrowers to discharge their remaining student loan balances if they declare bankruptcy. While it is now possible for debtors to do that, many have found the process [*difficult and cumbersome*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/11/17/your-money/bankruptcy-student-loans.html), and liberal groups like the [*Center for American Progress*](https://www.americanprogress.org/article/addressing-1-5-trillion-federal-student-loan-debt/) in Washington have embraced such reforms in the past.

“It’s wrong to say that a truck driver should have to pay off the debt of somebody who got a degree in gender studies,” Mr. DeSantis said. “At the same time, I have sympathy for some of these students because I think they were sold a bill of goods.”

On the campaign trail, Mr. DeSantis often highlights his economic acumen by pointing to Florida’s surging economy, influx of new residents and the formation of new businesses. But the picture has grown less rosy this year, [*with inflation*](https://www.miamiherald.com/news/politics-government/state-politics/article277295933.html) in Florida’s biggest metro areas rising faster than the national average. A [*troubled property insurance market*](https://www.washingtonpost.com/climate-environment/2023/07/12/farmers-insurance-leaves-florida/) and an [*affordable housing crisis*](https://www.tampabay.com/news/florida-politics/2023/03/24/affordable-housing-passidomo-crisis-rent-units-control/) have also complicated his message.

In response to a question from a reporter on Monday, Mr. DeSantis defended his record on the state’s economy, saying that his landslide re-election had allowed him to pass major legislation addressing the property insurance and housing issues.

“We’ve been working on this for a number of years,” he said.

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“Ron DeSantis should pack his knapsack and hitchhike his way back home to focus on the serious issues facing the great state of Florida,” Steven Cheung, a spokesman for Mr. Trump, said in a statement.

Jim Tankersley contributed reporting.

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PHOTO: Gov. Ron DeSantis of Florida introduced his 10-point plan for “economic independence” in New Hampshire on Monday. (PHOTOGRAPH BY DAVID DEGNER FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A16.

**Load-Date:** August 1, 2023

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[***Can There Be Too Many Cafes in Paris?; Paris Dispatch***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:690F-W1P1-JBG3-61RG-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

August 21, 2023 Monday 11:16 EST

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**Section:** WORLD; europe

**Length:** 1345 words

**Byline:** Liz Alderman

**Highlight:** The neighbors may complain about the noise, but outdoor spaces that bloomed under a pandemic program are now a permanent and vibrant fixture of city life.

**Body**

The neighbors may complain about the noise, but outdoor spaces that bloomed under a pandemic program are now a permanent and vibrant fixture of city life.

The sound of clinking wine glasses floated through the evening air recently as throngs of patrons sipped chilled rosé and nibbled on cheese plates in front of the cafes, restaurants and épiceries bordering Place d’Aligre in the Bastille district of Paris.

Waiters threaded through the crowd, their trays loaded with Aperol spritzes and oysters, as more people hurried in to meet friends. Children played tag and scampered to their parents to grab an occasional French fry. Tourists ordered drinks and posed for Instagram photos sure to inspire envy back home.

The diners were squeezed into hundreds of chairs that had been put out earlier in the afternoon. But time was precious; the entire inviting setup would have to be dismantled by 10 p.m. under strict post-pandemic rules to balance the interests of those enjoying the scene — and those finding it a nuisance.

Paris has long been renowned for its bustling cafe culture, with 13,000 open-air terraces occupying sidewalks and squares in the years before the pandemic. But thousands of additional outdoor spaces bloomed under an emergency program set up to relieve businesses during Covid lockdowns. They are now permanent, after a 2021 [*decree*](https://mairie08.paris.fr/pages/les-terrasses-ephemeres-deviennent-des-terrasses-estivales-18010) by Mayor Anne Hidalgo that allows them to return every year from April through November.

As a result, parts of Paris that used to be vacant or even sketchy have morphed into animated destinations, complete with a mini-economic boom.

The Place d’Aligre is one of them. Mostly empty at night before 2020, a vibrant transformation has unfolded here.

“The scene has changed completely,” said Laurent Zennadi, a manager at [*Chez Camille*](https://www.reserverbarparis.fr/bar/chez-camille/), a family-run cafe that used to cater mostly to a morning and lunchtime crowd from the nearby [*Marche d’Aligre*](https://www.parisinsidersguide.com/aligre-market.html), a food market founded in 1779. “Nobody used to come here in the evening. Now they are coming from all over Paris.”

At [*Salvo Olio e Vino en Vrac*](https://salvo-olioevino-envrac.eatbu.com/?lang=fr), an Italian deli sought out for its truffled hams and wines dispensed from barrels, Salvatore Cantarella, the owner, welcomed a wave of new clients to the Place d’Aligre after receiving a license to open a “terrace estivale,” or summer terrace. The extra business kept him from going under. “I’m so grateful there’s a positive outcome,” he said.

Most of Paris’s new summer terraces occupy parking spots, nearly 4,000 of which have been covered in temporary wooden decks. The Seine’s banks are also blanketed with pop-up tables, as are rooftops with panoramic views.

With less room for cars now — and after [*Covid-era cycling lanes*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/12/business/paris-bicycles-commute-coronavirus.html?searchResultPosition=1) were [*made permanent*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/10/02/world/europe/paris-bicyles-france.html?searchResultPosition=4) — thousands of people are pedaling to the city’s hottest spots.

“It’s so lovely here,” said Claire-Anne Haines, an event organizer who was hemmed behind a tiny table with her friends at a bistro’s parking-space terrace on the Rue Condorcet in Montmartre. “The terrace looked nice while I was biking past, so I told my friends to come,” she said.

It all plays into a bigger blueprint laid out by Ms. Hidalgo to make Paris a more environmentally friendly metropolis by [*liberating public space from cars*](https://www.paris.fr/pages/paris-cree-une-zone-apaisee-dans-le-centre-de-la-capitale-20426) and repurposing it for pedestrians and communal activity.

Not everyone welcomes the changes.

Resident associations have clashed with the city over the noise that the terraces bring and have continued to press the authorities over who should control streets and sidewalks.

Critics accuse Ms. Hidalgo of allowing businesses to privatize the public domain. Drivers rail about lost parking. And a hashtag, [*#saccageparis*](https://twitter.com/saccageparis?lang=en) — or “pillage Paris” — has become an outlet for outraged people to post photos of ramshackle terraces that they say are a blot on the beauty of the city.

“The situation is infernal,” said Eric Durand, a spokesman for [*Droit au Sommeil*](https://droitausommeil.fr/), or Right to Sleep, a citizens group with representatives in every section of Paris.

The cacophony has grown exponentially where he lives, near the Rue des Abbesses in Montmartre, he said. Some neighbors have moved away. Those who can’t afford to are forced to keep their windows closed or — a horror to Parisians — buy air-conditioning units to keep cool on summer nights when the terraces are going full blast.

“We want this invasion of public space to stop,” Mr. Durand said.

But at City Hall, officials say the summer terraces are here to stay.

“Paris is the city of cafes; they are part of the French art de vivre,” said Olivia Polski, the deputy mayor of Paris responsible for trade, using a French phrase meaning “the art of living.”

Today, 4,000 summer terraces are authorized through a paid license, compared with 14,000 that were free to open under emergency Covid policies. The terraces must meet new guidelines for aesthetics and noise, and must shut by 10 p.m. Loud music is forbidden, and owners face “an arsenal of sanctions and new legislation for infractions,” Ms. Polski said, including steep fines or the loss of their operating license.

Over 200 were shuttered last year for violations.

In Place de la Réunion, a bucolic square in eastern Paris that is adorned with [*umbrella pines*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/13/world/europe/rome-umbrella-pines-imperiled.html) and an ornamented fountain, cafe operators consulted with local residents to address concerns.

“We listened to neighbors and learned to work things out,” said Perrine Virey, a manager at [*Café La Chope*](https://www.lachopedu20eme.com/), whose summer terrace seats up to 130 people, compared with 40 at the cafe’s regular terrace before Covid. Solutions included not throwing bottles away at night and starting to move diners out of the square at 9:45, she said.

With hundreds of people gathered each night, the area feels safer and more convivial, locals said. A village ambience reigned one recent evening as children capered about while their parents lingered at tables. Friends with pink hair sipped orange spritzes before heading to an L.G.B.T.Q. dance club.

In addition to the noise complaints, another downside, some Parisians say, is that the success of the terrace project is speeding gentrification in socially mixed areas. “It’s pushing poorer people out of the spaces that they used to inhabit,” said Rafael Ludovici, a graduate student.

But in the Place d’Aligre, terrace supporters said the summer diners had revitalized the ***working-class*** neighborhood. At [*La Grille*](https://www.facebook.com/LaGrille.Aligre), a bistro hangout for over 40 years that nearly went bust as Covid hit, a dozen new employees have been hired to tend to the growing crowds.

On the recent evening, after the Aligre food market closed and street cleaners washed the pavement clean, a vintage 1930s Renault truck loaded with La Grille’s outdoor tables and chairs rolled up. By 5 p.m., a colorful terrace had sprung seemingly out of nowhere, and an hour later, dozens of patrons had settled in.

“It’s completely added to the charm of the place, and creates a connection between people,” said Omar Hammouche, La Grille’s owner, as a stream of habitués stopped to shake his hand.

At Chez Camille, Mr. Zennadi and his family installed new outdoor seating for about 100 people, on top of 400 seats added by other cafes to the square. Last year, the family invested around 15,000 euros, or $16,500, for the terrace license and to upgrade the outdoor furniture, among other improvements.

Recently, the cafe even started its own microbrewery, Mr. Zennadi noted proudly.

“Nobody wanted Covid to happen,” Mr. Zennadi said as a coterie of friends gathered on the sun-dappled terrace for an aperitif. “But we can be thankful for the good things that have come out of it.”

Juliette Guéron-Gabrielle contributed reporting.

Juliette Guéron-Gabrielle contributed reporting.

PHOTOS: Place d’Aligre in Paris. “Summer terraces” have transformed parts of the city that used to be empty at night. (B1); Nearly 4,000 parking spaces in Paris have been covered in temporary wooden decks, like this one in Place d’Aligre. Bicycling has increased.; The mayor is working to make Paris a more environmentally friendly city by liberating public space from cars and repurposing it. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY DMITRY KOSTYUKOV FOR THE NEW YORK TIME) (B5) This article appeared in print on page B1, B5.

**Load-Date:** August 25, 2023

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[***Jackie on My Mind; Maureen Dowd***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68CM-GP01-JBG3-6201-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

June 3, 2023 Saturday 13:29 EST

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 849 words

**Byline:** Maureen Dowd

**Highlight:** Before she was an iconic first lady, Jackie was a clever Camera Girl.

**Body**

WASHINGTON — I think about Jackie Kennedy several times a day.

I have no choice.

Tour groups come by my house in Georgetown to see John Kennedy’s bachelor pad, where he was living when he met Jacqueline Bouvier at a dinner party.

I eavesdropped at the window once and heard a tour guide spin the romantic yarn about how the handsome senator met the beautiful debutante and they decided to live happily ever after. Somewhere else. “Jackie told Jack he needed to get out of this dump,” the guide said. “By the time he was elected president, they were living in a beautiful house down the block, which we’ll go see now.”

As a tonic to the coarseness of Donald Trump and Ron DeSantis, I have been escaping to the cultured world of Jacqueline Bouvier in the period when Jack was diffidently courting her. (Never a Heathcliff type, Jack sometimes treated her, as Jackie once told Gore Vidal, as though she were a campaign asset, like Rhode Island.)

Carl Sferrazza Anthony’s new biography, “Camera Girl,” offers a lovely snapshot of Jackie’s single years in D.C., working at The Washington Times-Herald.

In 1951, Jackie, who had just graduated from George Washington University with a degree in French literature, joined the paper as a gofer, answering the phone and fetching coffee. Her wealthy stepfather was friends with Arthur Krock, the Washington bureau chief of The New York Times. Krock called Frank Waldrop, the executive editor of The Washington Times-Herald, and asked “Are you still hiring little girls?” because he knew a “round-eyed, clever” one.

Waldrop would recount the story many times after Jackie became an icon. When she came to meet him, he bluntly asked her, “Do you really want to go into journalism, or do you want to hang around here until you get married?” Jackie, who fantasized about being a famous writer, replied, “No, sir, I want to make a career.”

He emphasized that his paper was not a waiting room for aspiring brides. “I’d seen her type,” he would later say. “Little society girls with dreams of writing the great American novel, who drop it the minute they find the great American husband.”

As Anthony recounts, Jackie was so charming, witty and eager that eventually Waldrop gave her the “Inquiring Photographer” column, which none of the men wanted. Paying $25 a week, it was a six-days-a-week column where she would ask people a question and snap their pictures with a bulky Graflex camera. She drove a black Mercury convertible with a red interior that she “stole” from her dashing dad, Black Jack Bouvier. She called it Zelda — because, like Zelda Fitzgerald, “she was an unreliable beauty.”

Jackie was guarded — “simultaneously overt and covert,” as Anthony put it. It was hard for her to approach strangers. Sunglasses and a big camera were her shields.

She had moxie. At the door of the Washington Senators’ locker room, she asked players about their hitting slump. Then they snapped their losing streak, and Jackie was hailed as a good-luck mascot.

J.F.K. once called her fey, defined by the Oxford English Dictionary as “displaying magical, fairylike, or unearthly qualities,” as if you’d had breakfast with a leprechaun.

The format suited her. She could display that whimsical side and even draw cartoons for the column. Waldrop gave her a byline and renamed the column “Inquiring Camera Girl.” John Husted, her fiancé for three months in 1952, dismissed it as “an insipid little job,” but Jackie would later say she “loved every minute.”

She won over gruff male colleagues who had been skeptical of her finishing school ways. One reporter was so impressed, he offered to take her to an execution. She relished provocative questions: “Would you rather have men respect or whistle at you?” “What would you talk about if you had a date with Marilyn Monroe?”

She asked truck drivers, shouting to them when they stopped for a red light, “What do you think of Dior’s spring fashion line?” At times, Anthony said, questions reflected anxieties about Jack: “The Irish author, Sean O’Faolain, claims that the Irish are deficient in the art of love. Do you agree?”

She did not hesitate to ask esoteric questions — “In ‘The Doctor’s Dilemma,’ George Bernard Shaw asks if it’s better to save the life of a great artist who is a scoundrel, or a commonplace, honest family man. What do you think?” And she did not talk down to ***working-class*** subjects, recalling that she sought out “salty” characters.

That’s probably how she found my larger-than-life dad, who was a D.C. police detective in charge of Senate security.

One night he came home and told the family that The Herald’s Inquiring Camera Girl had approached him in the Capitol but he had been called to his office and couldn’t answer her question.

Her name, he said, was Jacqueline Bouvier.

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This article appeared in print on page SR3.

**Load-Date:** June 5, 2023

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[***Soaring Rents Are Burdening Lower Incomes***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69VJ-C0B1-JBG3-61WP-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; National Desk; Pg. 1

**Length:** 2546 words

**Byline:** By Jason DeParle

**Body**

To understand how rising rents punish families of modest means, look no further than the queen-size bed that Jessica Jones and her three children share in her mother's living room, where each night brings a squirming, turning tussle for space in a house with no privacy.

Ms. Jones and her daughter Katelen, 14, anchor the sides like human bed rails, with two younger girls tucked in between. Joy is a 4-year-old featherweight, but Destaney, at 6, kicks so much that Ms. Jones binds her in a mermaid blanket. The day's tensions lie beside them, and midnight sneezes are shared events.

After two years of doubling up, Ms. Jones longs for a place of her own. But even though she works full time for the state government, a modest apartment would consume more than half of her income, a burden most landlords find disqualifying and one she could not sustain.

With $41,000 a year in earnings and child support, she is, by government definition, not poor -- just homeless.

''My anxiety is through the roof,'' she said. ''I feel almost hopeless.''

Unaffordable rents are changing low-income life, blighting the prospects of not only the poor but also growing shares of the lower middle class after decades in which rent increases have outpaced income growth.

Nearly two-thirds of households in the bottom 20 percent of incomes face ''severe cost burdens,'' meaning they pay more than half of their income for rent and utilities, according to the Harvard Joint Center for Housing Studies.

Among ***working-class*** renters -- the 20 percent of people in the next level up the income scale -- the share with severe burdens has nearly tripled in two decades to 17 percent.

For both groups, the proportion with severe cost burdens has reached record highs.

''More people, higher up the ladder, are facing impossible trade-offs,'' said Whitney Airgood-Obrycki, a researcher at the Harvard Center.

The federal government deems shelter affordable if it takes 30 percent or less of household income, a goal that only about half of the nation's 44 million renter households meet.

In consuming half or more of a family's income, severe rent burdens steal from essential needs like food and medicine. They destroy the ability to save. They force frequent, destabilizing moves, unsettling parents at work and children in school. They flood fragile households with stress.

''Housing insecurity ripples through every domain of family life,'' said Stefanie DeLuca, a sociologist at Johns Hopkins University. ''It's this constant mental and emotional tax.''

The growing burdens coincide with the declining reach of federal housing aid. Since 2004, the number of households served by the main programs for the poorest renters -- public housing, Section 8 and Housing Choice Vouchers -- has fallen by 6 percent, the Harvard analysis found, while the number eligible has soared.

Ms. Jones, who moved in with her mother after her landlord did not renew the lease on a subsidized apartment, said the displacement had wreaked family havoc. Her mother complains that rambunctious children fill the house with noise. Katelen's moods darkened and her grades dived. Sleepless and anxious, Ms. Jones took a medical leave, then passed out and suffered a concussion.

''I felt like I was going to die, I was so stressed out,'' she said.

Similar stories abound in Charleston, which illustrates the forces that have raised housing costs nationwide. The problem is not that poverty has grown but that prosperity has spread in unequal fashion, bidding up rents and leaving behind families of modest means as federal aid declined. Jacqueline Drayton, a longtime Verizon worker, skipped meals to rent a suburban house that exhausted more than 60 percent of her income, then got laid off. Latoyia Cruz-Rivas thought she could handle an apartment that consumed more than half her income as a school bus driver. After an eviction proved her wrong, she lived in her car with her son and their dog.

As the Joneses' crisis stretches into its third year, Katelen's singing has become a source of daily conflict. As a performer at church and an arts charter school, she considers singing her greatest joy, but her grandmother calls it noise. As doors slam and tempers flare, the housing crisis spills into the driveway, where her big voice fills a parked car and she forgets how long her family has waited for shelter it can afford.

''I feel so stuck,'' she said. ''But singing helps me feel free.''

No Buffer

People who spend half their income for shelter have no room for error. A few canceled work shifts or an unexpected car repair can leave them short. That poses special peril in South Carolina, where landlords can evict any tenant who pays even a single month's rent more than five days late.

Ms. Cruz-Rivas discovered the risk.

A school bus driver from Greensboro, N.C., Ms. Cruz-Rivas, 42, moved to Charleston during the coronavirus pandemic, drawn by significantly higher wages and a desire to distance her teenage sons, Jevon and Amon, from troublemaking friends. She did not realize that rents were higher, too. With utilities, her apartment took more than half of her income, but, she said, ''I figured, 'I'll make it work.'''

For a while she did, if barely. But her hours shrank as more drivers returned to work after the pandemic, and Jevon's job at Pizza Hut did not fill the gap. Federal pandemic aid staved off one eviction threat. Then came the kind of cascading misfortune that can put tenants on the street.

Her sons totaled her car. The state suspended her commercial driver's license. In the weeks it took to reinstate it, she lacked an income, and her landlord moved to evict her.

Amon moved in with his girlfriend. A school social worker who serves homeless families, Sonya Jones, arranged motel stays and a donated car. When the motel money ran out, Ms. Cruz-Rivas and Jevon began living in the car with their dog, Koffi.

Ms. Cruz-Rivas, who takes pride in her lack of self-pity, faced the ordeal with odd cheerfulness. ''There's people in worse situations than us,'' she said. They slept in a parking lot and used the restroom at the all-night convenience store where Jevon found a job.

Having survived childhood sexual abuse, she added, ''I can train my mind to accept anything.''

Reclining in the car one night this fall, Ms. Cruz-Rivas scrolled through social media while Jevon watched football on his phone with Koffi at his feet.

''We just lay back and chill,'' Ms. Cruz-Rivas said.

''We talk, laugh, joke,'' Jevon said.

Their matching tattoos read ''family first.'' It would have made a homey scene if home wasn't an old Toyota.

Ms. Cruz-Rivas switched jobs to a limousine service, where her clientele of businesswomen and bachelorettes had no idea their upbeat driver slept in her car.

An eviction record makes Ms. Cruz-Rivas a pariah in the rental market, but Jevon, now 20, joined a waiting list for subsidized housing. After months of homelessness, he landed an apartment where they can sleep without hitting the steering wheel.

'Rent Has an Effect on Your Mental Health'

Thirty miles from the parking lot where Ms. Cruz-Rivas slept, Jacqueline Drayton has a four-bedroom house in suburban Summerville, where traffic stops for geese crossings and residents car-pool in golf carts.

But she grapples with the same affordability crisis. With shelter costs consuming most of her income, Ms. Drayton, the former Verizon worker, said the burden depresses everything from her food budget to her psychological health.

''It's nerve-racking,'' she said. ''Sometimes I don't know if I'm going to make it.''

The shortage of affordable housing may seem perennial, but the problem has changed. In 1960, shelter took 28 percent of the average renter's income (though some was so bad it lacked indoor plumbing). Now it takes 41 percent of income -- and for poor renters, 75 percent.

Ms. Drayton's father, James Earl Drayton, was one of nine firefighters honored as heroes after their deaths in a 2007 fire. But she notes that he gave his life for a city with little housing she can afford.

Concerned about violence, Ms. Drayton left the city eight years ago when she was married and two incomes covered suburban rent. Divorce changed the math. With earnings of about $42,000 and little child support, she moved with four children to a house that consumed roughly two-thirds of her income.

Suddenly everything revolved around rent. She skipped meals to pay it. She used tax refunds to pay it in advance. She felt anxious before she paid the rent and depleted afterward. Her post-divorce depression deepened.

''Rent definitely took over everything,'' she said. ''Rent has an effect on your mental health.''

Needing back surgery this year, Ms. Drayton scheduled an unpaid leave around her tax refund, but recovery took longer than planned. She deferred other bills, borrowed from her sister and tapped retirement funds, but still fell behind.

Among the forces that may be raising rents nationwide is the emergence of large corporate landlords. Ms. Drayton rented from AMH, a public company with 60,000 homes that asked a court to put her out. Most tenants in housing court lack attorneys, but a pro bono lawyer negotiated a deal to let her move without an eviction on her record. Yet her next rental was even more expensive and owned by Cerberus Capital Management, a private equity giant, through its property company, FirstKey Homes.

After 18 years at Verizon, she was laid off amid the move, with seven months of severance pay.

Ms. Drayton's daughter, a high school freshman, wanted to join cheerleading this fall, but the $650 fee ended the conversation. It was not a close call.

''To be honest, I go without food sometimes -- just having milk and cereal,'' Ms. Drayton said. ''Sometimes I couldn't even get that.''

A Consequence of Poverty, and a Cause

As a midsize city in a low-cost state, Charleston may not seem like a place with impossible housing math. But it has long drawn new residents with big housing budgets attracted to its beaches, history and food, and a surge of manufacturing jobs has swelled their ranks.

Higher housing prices at the top mean higher prices below as land values rise and gentrification quickens. Mount Pleasant, an affluent suburb, compounded the shortage of affordable shelter by banning new apartments.

''Charleston County has become a victim of its own success,'' the county's housing plan warns.

Even after adjusting for inflation, the cost of a basic two-bedroom apartment rose by a third over the past decade, according to federal estimates called fair-market rents, taking $4,600 a year from tenants of modest means.

Civic pride suffered a blow in 2018 when Princeton researchers found the city of North Charleston had the country's highest eviction rate, a product of high rents and weak tenant-protection laws.

''Most of them are working, but it just takes one unfortunate event -- 'I was sick' or 'my car broke down,''' said Taylor Rumble, a lawyer with Charleston Legal Access, a nonprofit law firm that expanded its tenant work. ''It's heartbreaking, but 'heartbreaking' isn't a legal defense.''

The county set aside $20 million in federal stimulus funds for affordable housing. But that is only 4 percent of the investment the plan said is needed.

Budget-busting rents are not just an urban problem. Three-quarters of Charleston's low-income households (those in the bottom fifth) pay more than half their income for shelter. But the same holds true in tiny Bladen County, N.C. (population 29,000), where low rent is offset by low pay. The share of low-income households with severe rent burdens ranges from 73 percent in big cities to 50 percent in rural areas.

Standard measures, used by the government and scholars, modestly overstate the problem because the Census Bureau's definition of income omits some forms of aid, including food stamps and tax credits. At the request of The New York Times, Danielle Wilson and Christopher Wimer of Columbia University and Ms. Airgood-Obrycki of Harvard re-estimated rent burdens counting that aid.

For 2019, that lowered the share of households in the bottom quintile who are paying half or more of their income for shelter to 52 percent, from 60 percent. ''You still have more than half the low-income population with severe burdens,'' Ms. Wilson said.

Housing burdens are a consequence of poverty but also a cause. Research has shown that high rent burdens can harm cognitive development, increase delinquent behavior and reduce spending on health care and food, while evictions worsen mental and physical health and force families into worse neighborhoods.

Hope Harvey, a University of Kentucky sociologist, emphasized how much ''cognitive bandwidth'' housing instability consumes. ''It permeates every aspect of family life,'' she said. ''There's little left for anything else.''

'A House for the Family'

It certainly permeates the life of Ms. Jones, the state worker who shares a bed with three children in her mother's packed home. She finds it impossible to honor her mother's demands for quiet without leaving her children feeling caged.

''It's like walking on eggshells,'' she said. ''I feel like I've failed my kids.''

A former beautician, Ms. Jones has spent four years doing community outreach for the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children, or WIC. ''I love, love, love my job,'' she said.

But even with child support and occasional hairdressing jobs, her $41,000 income offers few options to house a family of four in Charleston.

A four-bedroom home, at fair-market rents, would deplete 70 percent of her income. Three bedrooms would take 56 percent and two bedrooms 45 percent. She does not think she can pay even the least of those sums, and her low credit score decreases the odds a landlord would take the chance.

Ms. Jones reached an emotional breaking point last year after she and the children caught Covid and Destaney was hospitalized. Ms. Jones took a medical leave, developed migraines and got a concussion from passing out. She is taking medication for anxiety, which she blames on the overcrowding.

''I've not been able to sleep -- at all,'' she said.

Mature beyond her 14 years, Katelen, the singer, is a co-parent of sorts, a patient caretaker of her younger siblings. But she is also an adolescent who lost her privacy at an age when it is especially prized. And the fights with her grandmother over her singing leave her both furious and tinged with self-reproach.

''I'm trying not to lash out at her because I know it's disrespectful,'' she said.

On a recent evening she escaped to the car and conjured a song of longing from ''The Little Mermaid,'' then switched to a gospel romp about the transformative power of the Holy Spirit.

I feel your Spirit

All over me

It's in my hands, in my soul, down in my feet

From the back seat, Destaney supplied hand claps, backup vocals and nodding affirmation that she felt the Spirit, too. Then she fished a drawing from her first-grade backpack. It captured on paper what had eluded her in life: a house with four people and four beds.

''A house for the family,'' she said.

Kitty Bennett contributed research.Kitty Bennett contributed research.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/11/us/politics/rent-burdens-low-income-life.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/11/us/politics/rent-burdens-low-income-life.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: FOUR TO A BED: Jessica Jones, below right with her daughters, all of whom share a queen-size bed in the living room of Ms. Jones's mother. Ms. Jones in her office at a state agency, left

a modest apartment would consume more than half of her income. Her daughter Katelen, below, singing at church

around the crowded home, her singing is a source of conflict. (A18)

FAMILY FIRST: Latoyia Cruz-Rivas, left, lost an apartment that took more than half of her income and lived in her car with her son Jevon and their dog. She and her children have tattoos that read ''Family first.'' Ms. Cruz-Rivas and Jevon washing clothes at a laundry, above right. (A18-A19)

STRUGGLING TO KEEP UP: Jacqueline Drayton, above left, skipped meals to pay rent on a suburban home that took more than 60 percent of her income, before being laid off. She said her father had died fighting a fire, giving his life for a city with little housing she could afford. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY ELIZABETH BICK FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A19) This article appeared in print on page A1, A18, A19.

**Load-Date:** December 12, 2023

**End of Document**



[***Los Angeles School Workers Are on Strike, and Parents Say They Get It***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67V2-T581-DXY4-X054-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

March 22, 2023 Wednesday 16:36 EST

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**Section:** US

**Length:** 1486 words

**Byline:** Kurtis Lee and Jill Cowan

**Highlight:** Both parents and the striking school district employees are on the same side of the economic divide in one of the nation’s most expensive cities.

**Body**

Both parents and the striking school district employees are on the same side of the economic divide in one of the nation’s most expensive cities.

LOS ANGELES — Since Tuesday, Diana Cruz has juggled her stay-at-home job as an executive assistant with the care of her children after [*the Los Angeles school strike*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2023/03/21/us/los-angeles-schools-strike?smid=url-share#lausd-strike-los-angeles-schools) forced their classes to be canceled for three days.

Ms. Cruz earns $36,000 a year and is raising her two daughters and teenage son in a two-bedroom apartment in Los Angeles, where she splits the $1,700 rent with her mother.

A few miles away, Yolanda Mims Reed makes about $24 an hour as a part-time special education assistant at Hamilton High School. She supplements her income by caring for an older woman and by doing hair.

Parents like Ms. Cruz may be flustered by the strike, but few are angry with the strikers like Ms. Reed.

The parents see their lives mirrored in the struggles of the bus drivers, cafeteria workers and classroom aides walking the picket lines — ***working-class*** residents who take on multiple jobs to survive in Southern California.

“If you’re not making massive six-figure salaries, then, yeah, it’s hard,” Ms. Cruz, 33, said. “How can you not support their cause?”

The strike has sharply illustrated the economic divide in modern Los Angeles, where low-wage workers can barely scrap together rent while affluent professionals blocks away are willing to pay $13 for a coconut smoothie. In this case, the school district’s ***working-class*** parents and school workers are on the same side of the divide.

The Los Angeles Unified School District, the nation’s second-largest, relies on tens of thousands of staff members who are struggling to keep up with rising costs in a state that lacks enough housing. Most of the families they serve are in the same boat, with 89 percent of the district’s households qualifying as economically disadvantaged, according to district data.

Housing is the biggest expense for people living in the Los Angeles area, according to the latest Bureau of Labor Statistics data. Residents devote 38 percent of their yearly spending to housing, compared with the national average of roughly 34 percent, according to the agency.

“The high cost of living in Los Angeles permeates every aspect of life and often forces low-income residents into impossible choices between basic needs like housing, safety, health care and food,” said Kyla Thomas, a sociologist at the University of Southern California Dornsife Center for Economic and Social Research. “Many in L.A. live on the brink of crisis.”

LABarometer, a [*survey*](https://cesr.usc.edu/labarometer/overview) that the Dornsife Center conducts to track social conditions and attitudes in the region, found that about 60 percent of local tenants were “rent-burdened,” meaning that they spend more than 30 percent of their household income on housing.

Griselda Perez, 51, said that her family stretched to afford their $2,000 rent for a two-bedroom apartment in the Boyle Heights neighborhood. Her eldest son, 20, shares a room with his two younger brothers, 11 and 9, who attend district schools. Every day, she said, the family feels the squeeze of gentrification, as more people with higher incomes move east from downtown.

Ms. Perez said she tried to explain the strike to her sons by likening their situation — they cannot afford birthday parties and trips to Disneyland — to the challenges faced by the people who work at their schools.

“When I see the cafeteria workers, when I see the lady at the front door, when I see the lady working at the parent center, we talk mom to mom,” she said. “The struggles that they have are the same struggles that we have.”

The walkout continued on Wednesday with picket lines at schools and campus facilities, including at district headquarters in downtown Los Angeles. School support employees have been joined by the district’s 35,000 teachers in the work stoppage. The strike is expected to end on Thursday.

The Local 99 branch of the Service Employees International Union, which represents 30,000 support workers in Los Angeles Unified, said that half of its members who responded to a 2022 internal survey said they worked a second job.

The union also said that its members earned an average of $25,000 a year — a figure that Los Angeles Unified officials said included both part- and full-time employees. The full-time salary average was unclear.

The union noted that 64 percent of its members were Latino and 20 percent were Black. The families they serve are likewise overwhelmingly Latino, some 74 percent, an outgrowth of broad migration and population trends.

Austin Beutner, who served as the district’s superintendent during the coronavirus pandemic, said that a vast majority of parents understood the plight of the Local 99 members because they lived in the same neighborhoods. He said the half-dozen school principals he spoke to on Tuesday said they were seeing overwhelming support from parents for the staff members.

“The intersection of school staff and the community is tight and close,” Mr. Beutner said. “They are the community. So many of them have family members in schools or neighbors in schools.”

Local 99 has leaned on that support and tried to frame its contract battle as a fight for low-wage workers across Los Angeles. And parental backing — for now — could help the union at the negotiating table.

Workers are seeking a 30 percent overall raise, as well as an additional $2-an-hour increase for the lowest-paid employees. The union’s members have been working without a contract since 2020.

Alberto M. Carvalho, the current district superintendent, acknowledged “historic inequities” that workers had faced, in a statement on Tuesday.

“I understand our employees’ frustration that has been brewing, not just for a couple years but probably for decades,” Mr. Carvalho said.

School districts cannot raise revenues as quickly as private-sector businesses might through price increases during an inflationary period. The Los Angeles district relies on funds that are determined at the state level, and, after years of growth, California is projected to face a deficit in the coming fiscal year. The school district also continues to lose students each year, which means it receives less money because funding is based on enrollment.

The district has countered with a 23 percent wage increase, spread across several years, and a 3 percent onetime bonus. Mr. Carvalho said that the latest proposal sought to address the union’s needs “while also remaining fiscally responsible and keeping the district in a financially stable position.”

At a time when [*public support for organized labor is high*](https://news.gallup.com/poll/354455/approval-labor-unions-highest-point-1965.aspx), strikes by teachers and education workers have become increasingly common. Faced with rapid inflation and the prospect of higher pay in the private sector, public employees have been feeling a need for drastic change.

“Everybody else gets raises. What about us?” Jovita Padilla, a 40-year-old bus driver, said on Tuesday.

In a high-poverty district like Los Angeles Unified, school closures not only cut off class instruction but also crucial school meals. The district offers free breakfast and lunch for all of them, regardless of income, and many children rely on those meals during the school week. With negotiations at a standstill, the district set up [*supervision sites*](https://achieve.lausd.net/schoolupdates/supervision) where working parents could drop off children, as well as locations where families could pick up three days’ worth of [*breakfasts and lunches*](https://achieve.lausd.net/schoolupdates/food).

Gabriela Cruz, a district parent who is not related to Diana Cruz, dropped by one of the distribution sites this week and picked up a box of food, which she said was a big help. “My kids need to eat everyday, and the free food is good for us because we spend a lot on groceries,” she said.

Ms. Cruz, 44, said working as a receptionist at a real estate office on the first day of the strike was not easy. She had to take her young daughter and son to work.

“The truth is that it was difficult to work,” she said.

Her family of five depends on her part-time job that pays her $15 an hour. She works 30 hours a week. Her husband works full time in a restaurant and is paid the minimum wage.

“Everything is so expensive,” she said.

Reporting was contributed by Shawn Hubler from Sacramento, and Corina Knoll and Ana Facio-Krajcer from Los Angeles. Susan C. Beachy contributed research.

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PHOTOS: Service union members and teachers picketed at Panorama High School in Los Angeles on Day 2 of a planned three-day strike. (PHOTOGRAPH BY RICHARD VOGEL/ASSOCIATED PRESS) (A1); Outside a Los Angeles school district office on Wednesday. School support employees are seeking a 30 percent overall raise, as well as an additional $2-an-hour increase for the lowest-paid workers. (PHOTOGRAPH BY MARIO TAMA/GETTY IMAGES) (A19) This article appeared in print on page A1, A19.

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[***‘Elites Are Making Choices That Are Not Good News’; Guest Essay***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:66S6-CGF1-JBG3-61MF-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 2964 words

**Byline:** Thomas B. Edsall

**Highlight:** White ***working-class*** support for right-wing populism is hardening.

**Body**

Even as the economic pressures that drove millions of white ***working-class*** voters to the right are moderating, the hostility this key segment of the electorate feels toward the Democratic Party has deepened and is less and less amenable to change.

“You cannot really understand the ***working-class*** rightward shift without discussing what the Democratic Party is doing,” [*Daron Acemoglu,*](https://economics.mit.edu/people/faculty/daron-acemoglu) an economist at M.I.T., wrote by email:

Many of the trends that negatively impacted workers, especially non-college workers, including rapid automation and trade with China, were advocated and supported by Democratic politicians. Perhaps worse from a political point of view, when these politicians were advocating such policies, they were also viewed as adopting a tone of indifference to the plight of non-college workers.

Poll data suggest that Democratic struggles with the white ***working class*** are worsening. In “[*Elections and Demography*](https://www.aei.org/politics-and-public-opinion/elections-and-demography-democrats-lose-ground-need-strong-turnout/): Democrats Lose Ground, Need Strong Turnout,” an Oct. 22 American Enterprise institute report by [*Ruy Teixeira*](https://www.aei.org/profile/ruy-teixeira/), [*Karlyn Bowman*](https://www.aei.org/profile/karlyn-bowman/) and [*Nate Moore*](https://www.aei.org/profile/nate-moore/) write:

The gap between non-college and college whites continues to grow. For the first time this cycle, the difference in margin between the two has surpassed an astounding 40 points, well above the 33-point gap in 2020’s presidential contest. Republicans trail with white college voters by 13.6 points but lead with non-college whites by more than 27 points. Democrats appear stuck in the low 30s with non-college whites — no poll this month has them above 34 percent — so a repeat of Biden’s 37 percent mark appears unlikely.

[*David Autor*](https://economics.mit.edu/people/faculty/david-h-autor), an economist at M.I.T. who has written on the role of the trade shocks that have driven white ***working-class*** voters into the arms of the Republican Party, described his assessment of the current mood of these voters in an email:

The class and cultural resentments that were inflamed by the China trade shock (alongside other technological, cultural, and political forces) are now so burned-in that I strongly suspect that they are self-perpetuating. Like a forest fire, these resentments and frustrations create their own wind that carries them forward. While the economic forces that initially fanned those flames might have abated for now, there is plenty of fuel left to consume.

“The pandemic,” Autor noted, “has actually compressed earnings inequality sharply over the last two years. This potentially reduces some of the political pressure accompanying the decline of manufacturing and erosion of non-college wages.”

While this trend would seem to favor Democrats, Autor pointed out:

Inflation has risen so fast that the fall in inequality has not actually meant earnings growth for almost anyone; rather, middle- and upper-income workers have seen larger falls in earnings power than low-income workers. It’s unfortunately cold comfort to discover that your star is rising relative to the rich because their star is falling faster than yours.

In a 2020 study, “[*The Work of the Future*](https://workofthefuture.mit.edu/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/2020-Final-Report4.pdf): Building Better Jobs in an Age of Intelligent Machines,” Autor, [*David Mindell*](https://sts-program.mit.edu/people/sts-faculty/david-a-mindell/), professor of the history of engineering and manufacturing at M.I.T., and [*Elisabeth Reynolds*](https://ipc.mit.edu/people/elisabeth-b-reynolds), executive director of the M.I.T. Industrial Performance Center, contend that the United States is unique among developed countries in failing to counter the negative effects of technological change on workers:

What sets the United States apart are U.S.-specific institutional changes and policy choices that failed to blunt, and in some cases magnified, the consequences of these pressures on the U.S. labor market. The United States has allowed traditional channels of worker voice to atrophy without fostering new institutions or buttressing existing ones. It has permitted the federal minimum wage to recede to near-irrelevance, lowering the floor under the labor market for low-paid workers. It has embraced a policy-driven expansion of free trade with the developing world, Mexico and China in particular, yet failed to direct the gains toward redressing the employment losses and retraining needs of workers.

Acemoglu sounded a pessimistic note in his email: “Elites are making choices that are not good news for non-college workers. In fact, they are bad news for most workers.”

He also predicted that “robots and artificial intelligence — and especially A.I. — will continue to automate a broad range of jobs, and their main impact will be to destroy ‘good’ or ‘medium-quality’ jobs for non-college workers, as well as increasingly perhaps for workers with college degrees but without postgraduate degrees. They will tend to increase inequality.”

Robots will continue to spread throughout U.S. industry, Acemoglu continued, “but there are fewer and fewer non-college jobs in this sector, so perhaps robots will not be the main issue for non-college workers.” Instead, he argued,

Artificial intelligence and other digital technologies are likely to have a bigger impact. This is both via automation and worker surveillance. Digital technologies are being increasingly used to monitor workers closely and impose worse working arrangements on them.

In a September 2022 paper, “[*Tasks, Automation and The Rise In U.S. Wage Inequality*](https://economics.mit.edu/sites/default/files/2022-10/Tasks%20Automation%20and%20the%20Rise%20in%20US%20Wage%20Inequality.pdf),” Acemoglu and [*Pascual Restrepo*](http://pascual.scripts.mit.edu/), an economist at Boston University, found that automation “accounts for 50 percent of the changes in the wage structure” from 1980 and 2016, reducing “the real wage of high-school dropout men by 8.8 percent and high-school dropout women by 2.3 percent.”

Task displacement — the replacement of workers with machines — has wide-ranging adverse impacts, they write: “A 10 percentage point higher task displacement is associated with a 4.4 percentage point decline in employment between 1980 and 2016, and a similar 3.5 percentage point increase in nonparticipation (in the work force).”

[*Dani Rodrik*](https://drodrik.scholar.harvard.edu/), an economist at Harvard’s Kennedy School, emailed me to say that “it is extremely unlikely that we will create an employment miracle in manufacturing.” Even if the [*CHIPS and Science Act*](https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2022/08/09/fact-sheet-chips-and-science-act-will-lower-costs-create-jobs-strengthen-supply-chains-and-counter-china/), which President Biden signed in August, is “successful in reshoring some manufacturing,” he argued,

I am afraid that will do very little to create good jobs for U.S. workers without college or advanced degrees. Semiconductors and advanced manufacturing are among the most capital- and skill-intensive sectors in the economy and ramping up investment in them — as worthwhile as it may be on geopolitical grounds — is one of the least effective ways of increasing demand for labor where it is most needed.

In addition, Rodrik wrote:

Many of America’s competitors have successfully increased the share of manufacturing in G.D.P., including Taiwan and South Korea. But in none of these cases has the employment share of manufacturing bounced back up. In fact, to my knowledge, there has never been a case of sustained reversal in the downward trend of the manufacturing employment among advanced economies.

There is, Rodrik observed,

broad and compelling evidence, from Europe as well the United States, that globalization-fueled shocks in labor markets have played an important role in driving up support for right-wing populist movements. This literature shows that these economic shocks often work through culture and identity. That is, voters who experience economic insecurity are prone to feel greater aversion to outsider groups, deepening cultural and identity divisions in society and enabling right-wing candidates to inflame (and appeal to) nativist sentiment.

In an April 2021 paper, “[*Why Does Globalization Fuel Populism?*](https://drodrik.scholar.harvard.edu/files/dani-rodrik/files/why_does_globalization_fuel_populism.pdf) Economics, Culture, and the Rise of Right-Wing Populism,” Rodrik wrote that he studied

the characteristics of “switchers” in the 2016 presidential election — voters who switched to Trump in 2016 after having voted for Obama in 2012. While Republican voters were in general better off and associated themselves with higher social status, the switchers were different: they were worried about their economic circumstances and did not identify themselves with the upper social classes. Switchers viewed their economic and social status very differently from, and as much more precarious than, run-of-the-mill Republican voters for Trump. In addition to expressing concern about economic insecurity, switchers were also hostile to all aspects of globalization — trade, immigration, finance.

I asked [*Gordon Hanson*](https://www.hks.harvard.edu/faculty/gordon-hanson), a professor of urban policy at Harvard’s Kennedy School, whether there was any reason for these adverse economic trends to abate. “I see none,” he said, “at least in the medium run.”

The Democrats, he continued, “have come to be seen as the party of free trade, given President Clinton pushing through both NAFTA and China’s entry to the W.T.O. and President Obama championing the Trans-Pacific Partnership — they are seen as the engineers of manufacturing job loss.”

The strongest rightward push for the non-college educated, Hanson wrote,

came during the period of major manufacturing job loss of the early 2000s, which is when we document increasing support for the right wing of the G.O.P. The absence of recovery in the 2010s in regions hurt by this job loss means that forces luring non-college workers back to the Democrats were weak. We’ve not seen new shocks that would push more of the non-college educated to the G.O.P. But nor have we seen significant recovery in manufacturing that would help them make up for lost ground. Reshoring in the aggregate looks to have been quite small.

In 2024, Hanson predicted, “the G.O.P. will be in position to restate its 2016 message. And, at least in places hurt by globalization, Democrats will not have obvious arguments to make in their defense.”

In a July 2022 paper, “[*The Labor Market Impacts of Technological Change*](https://www.nber.org/system/files/working_papers/w30074/w30074.pdf): From Unbridled Enthusiasm to Qualified Optimism to Vast Uncertainty,” Autor describes how artificial intelligence radically enlarges the potential of robotics and automation to replace workers not only performing routine tasks but more complex procedures: “What makes a task routine is that it follows an explicit, fully specified set of rules and procedures. Tasks fitting this description can in many cases be codified in computer software and executed by machines.”

Conversely, Autor goes on to say, tasks that rely on “tacit knowledge (e.g., riding a bicycle, telling a clever joke) have historically been challenging to program because the explicit steps for accomplishing these tasks are often not formally known.”

“Artificial intelligence,” Autor writes, “overturns the second piece of the task framework — specifically, the stipulation that computers can accomplish only explicitly understood (i.e., ‘routine’) tasks. A.I. tools surmount this longstanding constraint because they can be used to infer tacit relationships that are not fully specified by underlying software.”

Autor uses the manufacture of a chair to explain the power of A.I.:

It is extraordinarily challenging to explicitly define what makes a chair a chair: must it have legs, and if so, how many; must it have a back; what range of heights is acceptable; must it be comfortable; and what makes a chair comfortable, anyway? Writing the rules for this problem is maddening. If written too narrowly, they will exclude stools and rocking chairs. If written too broadly, they will include tables and countertops.

A.I. cuts through the problem of computerizing the manufacture of a chair, according to Autor, by learning

the solution inductively by training on examples. Given a suitable database of tagged images and sufficient processing power, A.I. can infer what image attributes are statistically associated with the label “chair” and can then use that information to classify untagged images of chairs with a high degree of accuracy What rules does A.I. use for this classification? In general, we do not know because the rules remain tacit. Nowhere in the learning process does A.I. formally codify or reveal the underlying features (i.e., rules) that constitute “chair-ness.” Rather, the classification decision emerges from layers of learned statistical associations with no human interpretable window into that decision-making process.

In comparison with the non-college workers hurt by earlier levels of automation, the impact of artificial intelligence will be on better-educated, more upscale employees, in Autor’s view:

A.I. will likely eat into a lot of management and decision-making jobs that formerly required college-educated workers or even workers with graduate credentials, such as lawyers. Hence, A.I. is not “more of the same.” While the last four decades of computerization have been very good for professional, managerial workers, and not at all good for blue-collar production and white-collar office/clerical/admin workers, the A.I. era may erode the college premium that has been either high or rising since 1980.

In addition, Autor writes,

A.I. will reduce the number of person-to-person jobs in sales, food service, general customer service and tech support. The jobs that are least likely to be adversely affected at present are the lowest-wage jobs in personal services (cleaning, home health aides, groundskeeping). These jobs are still cheap to accomplish with humans and still hard and expensive to accomplish with machines. On the positive side, A.I. will surely complement the most skilled and creative people in the labor market. The question is how narrow or broad that set will be. I’m worried that it may be narrow.

Autor joined Acemoglu in arguing that policymakers can influence the direction that artificial intelligence takes:

A.I. is a general-purpose technology and could be put to many invaluable purposes: improving the quality and accessibility of health care while reducing its cost; making education more accessible, engaging, and affordable; providing real-time guidance to workers who are engaged in construction, maintenance, repair, etc.; advancing medical innovation to eradicate the worldwide disease load; improving agriculture; finding efficiencies to reduce CO₂ emissions.

There is, however, another side to the potential of A.I., Autor wrote:

It could also be used for counterproductive purposes, for example, building history’s greatest surveillance states — whether that surveillance is done by the government (e.g., China) or by the private sector (e.g., the U.S.). None of these capabilities is intrinsic to A.I. But we will develop those A.I. capabilities if that’s where we put our money. At present, U.S. investments in A.I. seem heavily directed at (1) selling advertising; and (2) replacing workers. If that’s where we put our money, I’m confident we’ll achieve those ends. That’s worse than a missed opportunity.

In his May 2022 essay “[*The Turing Trap*](https://digitaleconomy.stanford.edu/news/the-turing-trap-the-promise-peril-of-human-like-artificial-intelligence/): The Promise &amp; Peril of Human-Like Artificial Intelligence,” [*Erik Brynjolfsson*](https://www.brynjolfsson.com/), a professor at Stanford’s Institute for Human-Centered Artificial Intelligence, warns that “an excessive focus on developing and deploying Human-Like Artificial Intelligence can lead us into a trap. As machines become better substitutes for human labor, workers lose economic and political bargaining power and become increasingly dependent on those who control the technology.”

There is, Brynjolfsson argues, an alternative: “When A.I. is focused on augmenting humans rather than mimicking them, humans retain the power to insist on a share of the value created. What is more, augmentation creates new capabilities and new products and services, ultimately generating far more value than merely humanlike A.I.”

But, he adds, “While both types of A.I. can be enormously beneficial, there are currently excess incentives for automation rather than augmentation among technologists, business executives, and policymakers.”

The appeal to the technological elite “of a greater concentration of technological and economic power to beget a greater concentration of political power risks trapping a powerless majority into an unhappy equilibrium” and threatens a repeat of “the backlash against free trade” that blossomed with the election of Donald Trump.

“As the economic winners gained power,” Brynjolfsson writes, they left “many workers worse off than before,” fueling

a populist backlash that led to import tariffs and other barriers to free trade. Some of the same dynamics are already underway with A.I. More and more Americans, and indeed workers around the world, believe that while the technology may be creating a new billionaire class, it is not working for them. The more technology is used to replace rather than augment labor, the worse the disparity may become, and the greater the resentments that feed destructive political instincts and actions.

Brynjolfsson is not alone in the [*economic community*](https://economics.mit.edu/sites/default/files/2022-10/Tasks%20Automation%20and%20the%20Rise%20in%20US%20Wage%20Inequality.pdf) — in fact, he has [*widespread support*](https://workofthefuture.mit.edu/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/2020-Final-Report4.pdf) — for his argument that a “moral imperative of treating people as ends, and not merely as means, calls for everyone to share in the gains of automation. The solution is not to slow down technology, but rather to eliminate or reverse the excess incentives for automation over augmentation.”

At the moment, calls for policies to institute a moral imperative like this are limited to the universe of artificial intelligence and automation technologies, with little or no momentum in the political community. Worse yet, the bitter divisions throughout our political system suggest that the development of this momentum will be a long time coming.

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PHOTO: Waiting for Donald Trump in Robstown, Texas. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Jordan Vonderhaar for The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

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**Body**

The pair behind the boutique Desert Vintage have made a home in an 1860s adobe-brick bungalow in Tucson, Ariz.

THOUGH SALIMA BOUFELFEL and Roberto Cowan are known in the fashion world as the owners of the influential vintage clothing boutique Desert Vintage, they're historians at heart. Tucson natives, they met as college students while working at an outpost of the used clothing chain Buffalo Exchange across the street from the University of Arizona. Boufelfel, 36, grew up in a family of artists and academics and developed an affinity for styling while costuming school plays; Cowan, 33, comes from a long line of seamstresses and taught himself to sew around age 13. Both knew early on that they wanted to work with historical fashion so, in 2012, after the owner of a Tucson vintage boutique that Boufelfel frequented put the business up for sale, they took it over, keeping the name and stocking it with pieces not only obscure (Jean Varon and Michael Vollbracht evening gowns; an '80s jumpsuit from a label called Workers for Freedom) but also rare (Fortuny Delphos dresses, a Victorian-era matador jacket). Eleven years later, their collection of some 5,000 items -- spanning Edwardian London to Y2K Tokyo -- has drawn a global following of designers and stylists, who turn to Desert Vintage both to inform their work and to fill their personal wardrobes.

Yet even as they've traveled the world to source stock from dealers, archives and private collectors -- they opened a second storefront on New York's Lower East Side last year -- Boufelfel and Cowan have remained in their hometown. For many years, they were romantically involved but are now best friends, professional partners and housemates, sharing an 1860s Territorial Style adobe-brick bungalow built using millenniums-old techniques. Situated just south of downtown Tucson in Barrio Viejo, one of the city's oldest neighborhoods, the two-bedroom structure functions as a source of inspiration for the pair. ''It's like living inside a piece of folk art,'' Boufelfel says.

The two have rented the 2,000-square-foot house for the past five years from friends, the interior designers Gary Patch and Darren Clark, who bought and restored the place in the 1990s. It sits just a few blocks away from a similar home that had been owned, until 2011, by Cowan's grandfather's family since the late 1800s. Developed in the latter half of the 19th century, Barrio Viejo has been home to successive waves of new Americans -- ***working-class*** Mexicans, Chinese railway workers and European farmers and craftspeople. But in the years since Boufelfel and Cowan moved in, the neighborhood has seen an influx of gentrifiers. Even though Cowan didn't grow up in Barrio Viejo himself, he felt it was important to remain there in the face of rising prices and a proliferation of Airbnbs. ''I'm holding it down for my family,'' he says.

When it came to furnishing the single-story house, Boufelfel and Cowan took a restrained approach. The 14-foot-tall ceilings are traversed by rough pine structural beams called vigas, which were likely harvested from nearby Madera Canyon and then overlaid with tightly packed rows of unfinished latillas, dried saguaro cactus ribs with variegated textures. (The adobe-specific technique dates back to an era before railroads, which enabled the import of cheaper materials.) Instead of decorations, there are richly patinated plaster-coated walls, original molded fireplaces and inset display niches that they often fill with simple beeswax candles.

THE HOUSE'S FLOOR plan unfolds in a spiral pattern, with a series of spaces arranged around a central pathway paved with herringbone brick. Boufelfel likens the layout to a meditation labyrinth. ''To be able to just walk through the house in a circular way is really important, energy-wise,'' she says. The smaller of the two bedrooms is walled off from the main living space by a series of raw pine shelves filled with books. On the other side of that room, an interior window opens onto the dining area, a vestige of the original footprint; large bundles of olive and eucalyptus branches gathered from the property serve as a natural curtain.

The living and dining areas and the mottled yellow plaster-walled primary bedroom are outfitted sparingly with mostly 20th-century and contemporary furniture, including a '70s Milo Baughman shearling sofa and a simple, wood-framed daybed made by a friend. Many of the artworks and textiles were gifts or trades, such as tapestries by Boufelfel's sibling Kam's label, Community Handweaving, and a patchwork bunny made by their friend Emily Adams Bode Aujla, the designer of the upcycled fashion brand Bode. Throughout the house are antique objects that double as found sculptures: A 13-foot-tall, tufted spire leaning in a living room corner is actually an old Mexican cobweb duster, while the rough-hewn iron cones arranged in a vignette on the dining-area mantel are antique Laotian rice-farming tools.

The house's lone bathroom was carved out of the original kitchen by the owners, with small, eye-shaped windows and a shower floor covered with Mexican beach pebbles. (''They massage your feet,'' Cowan says.) The claw-foot tub was relegated to the large cactus garden out back, where it sits beneath a chinaberry tree. During the milder months, Boufelfel and Cowan often work and host alfresco dinner parties there, accompanied by their cat, Cléo, and, until two years ago, a pet tortoise, Flora, who came with the place. (She moved in with another tortoise across town.) When the heat gets too intense, Boufelfel and Cowan retreat to the narrow study, where art and design books are stacked on a 1920s burl wood table, and inspirational garments, such as a smocked silk dress and a caftan embroidered with Venetian glass beads, hang overhead like mobiles. It was there that they dreamed up their recently launched clothing collection, Ténéré, a series of seasonless, everyday pieces inspired by beloved early 20th-century favorites in their own wardrobes, including an Edwardian sailor blouse and a slouchy 1920s silk suit.

For all its visual appeal, though, the most notable feature of the house is the way it feels: The two-foot-thick mud walls keep the air cool, while providing a rare, almost churchlike silence. ''People stay here and say, 'I had the best night of sleep of my life,''' Boufelfel says. Hushed and still, the house, she adds, ''is like an extension of us and how we live our lives, in a quieter way.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/09/t-magazine/salima-boufelfel-roberto-cowan-tucson-home.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/09/t-magazine/salima-boufelfel-roberto-cowan-tucson-home.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: In the primary bedroom of the vintage clothing dealers Roberto Cowan and Salima Boufelfel's Tucson, Ariz., home, the walls are original plaster, the bedside tables are vintage record holders and the painting and wooden snake sculpture are by the artist Ishi Glinsky. Opposite: the back door leads to a cactus-filled garden. From left: in the kitchen, a collection of cast-iron pans and a white metal basket by Ishi Glinsky

in the living room, a Charlotte Perriand daybed, an Art Deco club chair, a long-handled duster from Oaxaca, Mexico, and Cléo, their cat. The 1970s shearling-covered couch is by Milo Baughman and the glass coffee table is by Ludwig Mies van der Rohe. The Moroccan rug was a gift from the set designer Scott Pask. From left: in the study, an Art Deco burl wood table and an aluminum chair sourced from local shops, and a stuffed green pony from the designer Emily Adams Bode Aujla on an antique love seat upholstered in silk moiré

a door hidden in the double-sided bookshelf leads to one of the bedrooms. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY DEAN KAUFMAN

PRODUCED BY COLIN KING) This article appeared in print on page M2154, M2155, M2156, M2157, M2158, M2159.

**Load-Date:** August 20, 2023

**End of Document**



[***Jodie Comer Hitting Broadway in 'Prima Facie'***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65PB-35D1-JBG3-64K2-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

June 15, 2022 Wednesday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section C; Column 0; The Arts/Cultural Desk; Pg. 3

**Length:** 261 words

**Byline:** By Nicole Herrington

**Body**

The ''Killing Eve'' star will reprise her role in Suzie Miller's solo show, which is wrapping up a run in London.

Jodie Comer, known for playing the charismatic assassin Villanelle on ''Killing Eve,'' has received glowing reviews for her West End stage debut in the one-woman play ''Prima Facie.'' Now she's setting her sights on Broadway.

Next spring, Comer will reprise her role, as a lawyer named Tessa who discovers the limitations of the law after being sexually assaulted, when the show arrives on Broadway at a yet-to-be-announced Shubert theater. This will be her Broadway debut.

The play, written by Suzie Miller, is currently in the final weeks of its run in London's West End. Critics praised Comer for her breakneck performance in an emotionally demanding role that, under Justin Martin's busy staging, is quite physical. It calls for her to leap onto furniture, endure a brief onstage rainstorm and more as she tells the story of working her way up from ***working-class*** origins and later being assaulted by a colleague whom she brings to trial.

''There's no denying the visceral power of an evening that owes its sellout status to a theatrical neophyte who possesses the know-how of a seasoned pro,'' Matt Wolf wrote in his review for The New York Times.

The play originally premiered in 2019 in Miller's native Australia. The playwright is a former human rights and children's rights lawyer.

No dates have been announced for the Broadway production, which will be directed by Martin. The lead producer is Empire Street Productions, led by James Bierman.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2022/06/09/theater/jodie-comer-broadway-prima-facie.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/06/09/theater/jodie-comer-broadway-prima-facie.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: Jodie Comer in ''Prima Facie.''

**Load-Date:** June 15, 2022

**End of Document**



[***Dreams From My Father***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68KT-VHB1-JBG3-64G4-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

July 2, 2023 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

Copyright 2023 The New York Times Company

**Section:** Section BR; Column 0; Book Review Desk; Pg. 8; FICTION

**Length:** 1090 words

**Byline:** By Christopher Sorrentino

**Body**

Domenico Starnone's novel ''The House on Via Gemito'' is a searching work of autofiction about a family in postwar Naples.

THE HOUSE ON VIA GEMITO, by Domenico Starnone. Translated by Oonagh Stransky.

''Marriage,'' wrote Cyril Connolly in 1938, ''can succeed for an artist only where there is enough money to save him from taking on uncongenial work and a wife who is intelligent and unselfish enough to understand and respect the working of the unfriendly cycle of the creative imagination. ... There is no more somber enemy of good art than the pram in the hall.''

No doubt Federico Starnone would agree. Federì, the central figure in Domenico Starnone's searching and sorrowful work of autofiction, ''The House on Via Gemito,'' feels bedeviled by pram, day job and money worries. He's a ''born painter'' living in Naples in the years after World War II, and his problem, as far as he's concerned, is that he can't catch a break.

As far as his eldest son, Mimì, is concerned, however, Federì is a crude, bumptious man with a volcanic temper, prone to battering his spouse, bullying and embarrassing his children, and alienating even the most supportive of associates. Federì's disputatiousness is so ingrained that Mimì, our narrator, describes him as provoking arguments with his long-suffering wife, Rusinè, ''as if for company.''

A career employee with Italy's state railway, Federì is convinced that he's financially exploited by his in-laws, stuck with a woman who is ''not good enough,'' and above all snubbed by a clubby art establishment, which he's convinced is disdainful of his ***working-class*** status and envious of his talent.

Whatever else he may be, Federì is neither delusional about his gifts nor a casual dabbler. (The book's dust jacket reproduces ''The Drinkers,'' an impressive painting whose exacting creation by the author's real-life father is recounted in the text.) It isn't hard to identify with Federì's frustration as he's insulted by critics and peers, excluded from exhibitions, deprived of prizes and ultimately forgotten, his paintings moldering for years on municipal-office walls where they barely register with the bored civil servants working beneath them.

As much a born fabulist as he is a born painter, Federì imparts multiple versions of his life and hard times to his son over the course of decades of harangues. However fantastic these may be, however inconsistent, whatever victories or disappointments they relate, they all lead inevitably to the stifling job, the artistic neglect, the crowded apartment on Via Gemito. Only the attribution of blame changes.

Mainly, though, the blame is placed on Rusinè. An outgoing and lively woman (she is easily more popular than the argumentative Federì), she rouses the anger of her husband when she attracts the attentions of others -- men in particular -- at the gatherings to which he reluctantly brings her, an anger that as often as not is discharged violently. She is held responsible for everything from household illnesses to the lack of money to the children's perceived genetic imperfections, and pays the cost in bruises and blood.

Ultimately she surrenders, retreating deeply into herself, ''her eyes ... full of carefully protected ideas and thoughts,'' and into the lingering, misdiagnosed illness that finally kills her in her mid-40s. Looking back on her suffering, Mimì laments that ''for a long time I carried -- I still carry -- the regret that I didn't realize it, that I had trained myself not to realize it.''

This isn't a recriminatory book, however; it doesn't demand that we sit in judgment. While Mimì the son faces lifelong frustration in attempting to solve the enigma of his father's life and identity, crossing and recrossing the territory of the past like a baffled veteran searching for traces of war on a long-deserted battlefield, Starnone the novelist succeeds beautifully in exploiting Federì's self-contradictions and the unreliability of memory to create what is both a complex family narrative and a masterpiece on the elusive nature of truth. The treachery of memory is mirrored by the deceptive reality of postwar Naples, where recent history has been papered over by silence and lies concerning the (mis)behavior of ordinary citizens throughout Mussolini's reign and the years of occupation.

Amid its repeated shifts in time and constant questioning of what may or may not have happened, ''The House on Via Gemito'' is stabilized by its three sections, each anchoring the narrative to a decisive episode that provides a central focus, and by its explicit emphasis on its own artificiality. Starnone intrudes frequently upon the narrative to mull over one choice or another, making his case that it is the novelist's selectivity that creates the illusion of life and depth in a work of fiction, even at the granular level of tense, grammar and syntax.

For its first appearance in English, ''The House on Via Gemito'' (which won Italy's prestigious Strega Prize in 2001) has been well served by the translator Oonagh Stransky, whose rendering is as vivid as it is lucid, managing to place elegantly descriptive passages side by side on the page with elaborately pungent Neapolitan insults, reproducing many of the latter in dialect, allowing the long compound words to convey their hostility and contempt on their own.

Even Starnone's bitterest memories are coextensive with a humane empathy for Federì, and a recognition of their affinity. Starnone recalls his childish wonder at discovering that the makeshift studio where his irascible father paints is filled with the same scent he has noticed in rooms where children have been at play, ''the aura of a labored and joyful excitement'' : For the novelist, the painter's consuming dedication to ''the power of forgetting one world in order to build another'' resonates deeply.

The unsuccessful yet dogged father is finally the source of a kind of exasperated pride. At the end of the novel, as Federì nears death, Starnone notes that ''he did it all on his own, with words and deeds, thanks to his obsession with his talent, thanks to his stubbornness, because of his unshakable desire to persist.'' It's a good epitaph, and an honest one.

Christopher Sorrentino's most recent book is the memoir ''Now Beacon, Now Sea.''

THE HOUSE ON VIA GEMITO | By Domenico Starnone | Translated by Oonagh Stransky | 451 pp. | Europa Editions | $27Christopher Sorrentino needs a bio. tkt kt tkt kt tkt kt kt kt kt tk tk tkt kt ktkt tkt kt tk tkt kt tk tkt kt tktktkt

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/27/books/review/domenico-starnone-house-on-via-gemito.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/27/books/review/domenico-starnone-house-on-via-gemito.html)

**Graphic**

This article appeared in print on page BR8.

**Load-Date:** July 2, 2023

**End of Document**



[***The Irony in the ‘Rich Men North of Richmond’; Jamelle Bouie***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6902-Y9N1-DXY4-X1M8-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

August 19, 2023 Saturday 11:27 EST

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 1290 words

**Byline:** Jamelle Bouie

**Highlight:** On the Readjuster movement and resentment.

**Body**

You may have heard about Oliver Anthony, a Virginia-based folk singer who has become a conservative folk hero on account of his populist anthem, “Rich Men North of Richmond.”

But Anthony’s populism is, [*as Eric Levitz details for New York magazine*](https://nymag.com/intelligencer/2023/08/oliver-anthony-and-the-incoherence-of-right-wing-populism.html), decidedly right-wing.

Resentment of inequality and the precariousness of ***working-class*** life pervades the rest of the song too. But Anthony persistently channels these resentments away from the bosses and shareholders who profited off his ill-compensated labor and onto targets sanctioned by conservative orthodoxy: tax-hiking politicians, pedophilic cabals, and obese welfare moochers.

I don’t have any particular interest in either Anthony or the song in question (although Levitz’s piece is good and you should read it). But as an almost lifelong Virginian myself, I do think it is interesting that this musical spokesman for conservative populism comes from Farmville, Va. — a town of historical significance in the fight for civil rights — which is a little more than an hour west of Petersburg, once the political home of the “Readjuster” movement of the late 19th century.

One of the most common misconceptions about Jim Crow is that it came directly out of the defeat of Reconstruction. But Jim Crow — a system of white supremacist class rule — wasn’t a response to Reconstruction as much as it was a response to the aftermath of Reconstruction, when biracial coalitions of laboring men and their allies continued to vie for power and influence throughout the states of the former Confederacy.

In Virginia, this took the form of the Readjuster movement, named for its call to partially repudiate, or “readjust,” the state’s debt in order to maintain the social services, and, crucially, the public schools, that conservative elites hoped to dismantle in the name of “economy, retrenchment and self sacrifice.”

An independent coalition of (mostly) Black Republicans and white Democrats led by the former Confederate general and railroad magnate William Mahone, [*the Readjusters*](https://encyclopediavirginia.org/entries/readjuster-party-the/) governed Virginia from 1879 to 1883, electing most of the state’s legislature as well as a majority of its delegation to Congress. The Readjusters were, the historian Jane Dailey writes in “[*Before Jim Crow*](https://www.google.com/books/edition/Before_Jim_Crow/56x_uS92JL8C?hl=en&amp;gbpv=0): The Politics of Race in Postemancipation Virginia,” “the most successful interracial political alliance in the postemancipation South.”

A Black-majority party, the Readjusters legitimated and promoted African American citizenship and political power by supporting black suffrage, office-holding, and jury service. To a degree previously unseen in Virginia and unmatched elsewhere in the nineteenth-century South, the Readjusters became an institutional force for the protection and advancement of Black rights and interests.

With their support for policies that favored debtors over creditors and working men over the wealthy, the Readjusters and other similar independent parties represented an effort to find threads of “common interest that emphasized class status and civil rights and downplayed race.”

As fraught and tenuous as it was, the Readjuster movement still represents a moment of possibility in the history of the American South — one that would be eclipsed by a relentless “[*counterrevolution of property*](https://archive.org/details/counter-revolution-of-property)” that, in its success, cemented relations of domination, across lines of race and class, for most of the next century.

Compared with some of the signature moments of Virginia history — whether the settlement of Jamestown or Bacon’s Rebellion or the Battle of Yorktown or the surrender at Appomattox — the rise and fall of the Readjusters is obscure, if not outright unknown to everyone other than those with a serious interest in the American past.

For my part, I can’t help but think there’s something ironic about the fact that, despite sitting close to this history, the latest populist voice to come out of the commonwealth has chosen, in the end, to give comfort to those with the boot on his neck and scorn to those who might try to help lift it.

What I Wrote

[*My Tuesday column*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/15/opinion/abortion-republicans-ohio-idaho.html) was on the anti-democracy inclinations of the anti-abortion movement.

This is why the war on abortion rights is properly seen as a war on bodily autonomy and why the attacks on reproductive freedom have moved hand in hand with renewed attacks on the gay, queer and transgender community. It’s all part of the same tapestry of reaction. And this reactionary impulse extends to the means of the anti-abortion political project as well as its ends.

[*My Friday column*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/18/opinion/rudy-giuliani-trump-authoritarianism.html) was on the past and present Rudy Giuliani.

With clear eyes, it is easy to see that the two men are of a type. They share the same demagogic instincts, the same boundless resentment, the same authoritarian manner — it is not for nothing that Giuliani reportedly tried to get the 2001 mayoral election canceled so that he could stay in office beyond the limit on his term — and the same willingness to indulge in racism and use it for their own political purposes.

Elsewhere, I joined my friend Amanda Smith on [*the Disaster Girls podcast*](https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/the-core-w-jamelle-bouie/id1476503497?i=1000624677715) to talk about the 2003 film “The Core.” And on [*the latest episode*](https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/dead-presidents/id1592411580?i=1000624877432) of my podcast with John Ganz, we discussed the 1995 crime thriller “Dead Presidents,” directed by the Hughes brothers.

Now Reading

[*Justin Chang*](https://www.latimes.com/entertainment-arts/movies/story/2023-08-11/oppenheimer-atomic-bomb-hiroshima-nagasaki-christopher-nolan) on Christopher Nolan’s “Oppenheimer” for the Los Angeles Times. (I don’t normally comment on the material in this section of the newsletter but I think this is the best piece yet on the film.)

[*Colin Bradley*](https://aeon.co/essays/what-can-we-learn-from-john-rawlss-critique-of-capitalism) on John Rawls’s critique of capitalism for Aeon.

[*Jane Hu*](https://www.dissentmagazine.org/online_articles/plastic-people/) on “Barbie” for Dissent.

[*Grace Lavery*](https://lareviewofbooks.org/article/gender-criticism-versus-gender-abolition-on-three-recent-books-about-gender/) on women and gender for The Los Angeles Review of Books.

[*David Scott*](https://www.bostonreview.net/articles/c-l-r-jamess-radical-vision-of-common-humanity/) on C.L.R. James for Boston Review.

Photo of the Week

I was biking around town just to pass the time and I saw this orange couch against a bright green background. I snapped a picture and here is the result. I like it!

Now Eating: Brownies with Rye Flour

I made with these my five-year-old Friday afternoon — it was a mostly-successful lesson in cracking eggs and learning some addition, subtraction and fractions — and they came out beautifully, as you can see from the picture above. As always with brownies, be sure to use the highest quality chocolate and cocoa powder you can get your hands on — it makes all the difference. [*Recipe from New York Times Cooking*](https://cooking.nytimes.com/recipes/1017852-violet-bakery-rye-brownies?action=click&amp;module=RecipeBox&amp;pgType=recipebox-page&amp;region=recently-viewed&amp;rank=2).

Ingredients

* 11 tablespoons/156 grams unsalted butter, cut into \xC2-inch cubes, more for greasing pan

1. 10 \xC2 ounces/300 grams bittersweet chocolate (60 to 70 percent cocoa), chopped
2. 1 \xC2 cups/200 grams whole grain rye flour
3. \xC2 cup/50 grams unsweetened Dutch-process cocoa powder
4. \xC2 teaspoon/3 grams baking powder
5. 1 teaspoon/5 grams fine sea salt
6. 4 large eggs
7. 1 cup/200 grams granulated sugar
8. 1 cup/200 grams light brown sugar
9. 1 tablespoon/15 milliliters vanilla extract
10. 1 teaspoon/5 grams flaky sea salt, such as Maldon, for sprinkling on top

Directions

Heat oven to 350 degrees. Butter a 9-by-13-inch baking pan.

Using a double boiler, or in a metal bowl set over a saucepan containing an inch of simmering water (do not let bottom of bowl touch the water), melt the butter and chocolate, stirring with a heatproof rubber spatula. Let cool.

In a separate bowl, whisk together rye flour, cocoa, baking powder and sea salt.

Using an electric mixer, beat eggs, granulated and brown sugars and vanilla until light and fluffy, about 2 minutes. Beat in melted chocolate mixture until smooth. Beat in flour mixture.

Pour batter into prepared pan and smooth the top. Sprinkle lightly with flaky salt and bake until brownies are mostly firm, but with a very slight wobble in the center, about 25 minutes.

Let cool completely before cutting into squares. Eat with ice cream or, as I did, with a nice petite syrah.

PHOTO: Oliver Anthony. (PHOTOGRAPH BY @radiowv, via YouTube FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** August 19, 2023

**End of Document**



[***Home Is Where the Heart of Hip-Hop Is***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69V5-9NP1-JBG3-6031-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

December 10, 2023 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section RE; Column 0; Real Estate Desk; Pg. 10

**Length:** 1981 words

**Byline:** By Anna Kodé

**Body**

Hip-hop got its start in a Bronx apartment building 50 years ago. The concept of home has been at the center of the genre ever since.

From the beginning, the lyrics and culture of hip-hop have been entangled with home, in every sense of the word -- the physical, emotional, visceral, aspirational and existential.

An area code becomes an identity. ''7-1-3, 2-8-1, 8-3-2,'' Megan Thee Stallion shouts out in the chorus of ''Last Week in H Tx.'' ''Still got love for the streets, reppin' 2-1-3,'' Dr. Dre boasts in his 1999 hit ''Still D.R.E.'', featuring Snoop Dogg.

A city becomes a living being, a guardian. ''I met this girl when I was 3 years old / And what I loved most she had so much soul,'' Kanye West says of his hometown, Chicago, in ''Homecoming.'' With ''Hello Brooklyn 2.0,'' Jay-Z pays tribute to his borough: ''Like a mama you birthed me / Brooklyn you nursed me.''

''There's an importance to home for hip-hop artists because you want your point of view, you want your neighborhood, your community, your city represented,'' said Killer Mike, the rapper and Atlanta-based activist, in an interview. ''And you want to do it with the braggadocio and pride that you think it deserves.''

Since its start in a Bronx apartment building 50 years ago, hip-hop has transformed the music industry, fashion, politics, the English language and more. On the surface, there's the flash -- fancy cars, designer watches -- but it always goes back home.

The Rec Room

As disco rose from underground nightlife and into sleek clubs, hip-hop began in spaces accessible to the New York City teenagers living in low-income, ***working-class*** neighborhoods.

At 1520 Sedgwick Avenue, an unassuming high-rise apartment building in the Bronx, DJ Kool Herc spun tunes at a party in the first-floor rec room on Aug. 11, 1973. Herc was just 18 at the time, and the event was hosted by his sister, Cindy Campbell, to raise money to buy new clothes for school. But that night would come to be known as the birth of hip-hop.

''All of it came from here,'' Herc told The Times in 2007. ''From this building. It should be respected.''

Growing up in East Flatbush, the sounds heard through her apartment walls shaped MC Lyte's early musical instincts. The family that owned the building played reggae music, which influenced her own work. Over time, she made many songs in honor of her home borough -- ''I actually have so many songs called 'Brooklyn,' I can't even keep up,'' she said.

Eventually -- stretching far from rec rooms and train platforms -- projecting an envy-inducing, lavish lifestyle would become central for many hip-hop artists, with palatial abodes shown off through music videos and ''MTV Cribs.'' One noted exception was Redman's 2001 ''Cribs'' appearance, in which the rapper welcomed cameras into his modest Staten Island duplex, showing his television set propped on top of a cardboard box and the boxed fish fillets in his freezer.

Putting Your City on the Map

By the 1980s, the paradigm of plugging one's home -- a city, a borough, sometimes down to a street name -- in lyrics was taking off. In 1986, MC Shan and Marley Marl, both in their 20s, released ''The Bridge,'' an ode to the Queensbridge housing projects, where they grew up. A number of other groundbreaking hip-hop artists also came out of Queensbridge, including Roxanne Shante and Dimples D, who are name-dropped in the track. The chorus repeats, ''The Bridge, Queensbridge.'' One verse in particular caught the attention of Boogie Down Productions, a hip-hop group from the Bronx -- ''You love to hear the story again and again / Of how it all got started way back when / The monument is right in your face /Sit and listen for a while to the name of the place.''

This would launch a battle between boroughs over the origin of hip-hop.

In direct response, Boogie Down Productions released their anthem, ''South Bronx,'' which went, ''So you think that hip-hop had its start out in Queensbridge? / If you pop that junk up in the Bronx you might not live / 'cause you're in,'' going into the chorus, ''South Bronx, the South-South Bronx.''

The song was recorded in just two hours -- studio time was $25 an hour, which was at the time a ''lot of money,'' KRS-One, a member of the group, said in the 2003 documentary ''Beef.'' Seemingly as quickly as it was made, ''South Bronx'' became a hit. ''I found myself representing the Bronx,'' KRS-One said in the documentary. ''The Bronx was alive again.''

The battle ''started this tradition of shouting out where you're from,'' said Bakari Kitwana, the founder of the lecture series ''Rap Sessions'' and the author of ''The Hip-Hop Generation.'' ''As hip-hop starts to expand beyond New York City, then it becomes almost a competition to be the first one from your city to put your city on the hip-hop map.''

Perhaps no rivalry was more intense than the East Coast versus the West Coast in the 1990s, with Notorious B.I.G. and Tupac serving as the ill-fated faces of the beef.

The cartography continued west through songs like ''Tell Me When to Go'' and ''Yay Area,'' in which E-40 helped give the Bay Area its cool in the 2000s. ''I was responsible for putting our city on the map -- no ifs, ands or buts,'' said E-40, who is 56. ''I'd always noticed that the Bay Area never gets its shine. When it's underrated, you rep hard.''

The map didn't remain coastal. In 2002, the release of the film ''8 Mile,'' which starred Eminem and was loosely based on some of his life events, brought national attention to Detroit. 8 Mile Road, the divider separating the predominantly Black inner-city from the white suburbs, momentarily became ''the most famous road in America,'' The Chicago Tribune reported at the time.

Contemporary artists too have noticed the impact that centering home in their music can have on their communities.

When Hurricane Katrina hit New Orleans in 2005, the R&B artist Ambré was just 9 years old. Hearing Lil Wayne's ''Georgia... Bush'' -- in which the rapper criticizes President George W. Bush's response to the flooding -- helped give her hope, she said. ''Wayne putting that out was like, 'OK, maybe the government's not there to help us, but I'm here for y'all, I'm still from New Orleans,''' she said.

Through his lyrics, Anik Khan, a rapper and immigrant from Bangladesh, documents quotidian snippets of domestic life specific to his upbringing in Queens. ''I'm 27 still sleeping on a bunk bed,'' he says in ''Tides''; in ''The Borough,'' a love letter to Queens, he chronicles, ''My nephew causing mischief, my mama up in the kitchen / Probably cooking for her only son, you know, that curry chicken.''

Grandma's House

Tied to home, of course, is family. Many artists' early notions surrounding the art form were informed by the records in their family members' collections.

''People like Dr. Dre and Grandmaster Flash, they'll talk about their mom's, dad's, uncle's, aunt's record collections, that they sometimes were forbidden to touch, but they did anyway,'' said Murray Forman, a media and screen studies professor at Northeastern University and the author of ''The 'Hood Comes First: Race, Space and Place in Rap and Hip-Hop.'' ''The familial record collection is a super important aspect of the formation of hip-hop DJs.''

Killer Mike, who is almost synonymous with Atlanta through his music and advocacy, grew up in his grandmother's house -- a 1,000 square foot home she bought at the age of 20, in the predominantly Black neighborhood of Collier Heights.

''That's the house where I fell in love with gospel and soul and funk,'' Mike said. ''Standing on that porch -- that was my first stage. And that yard was where I pretended thousands of people were watching me.''

And the idea of holding onto home is still just as present in his music. On his album ''Michael,'' released this summer, ''EXIT 9'' refers to the turn off the interstate to Atlanta's Martin Luther King Jr. Drive. ''When you pass Exit 9, I want to let you know that's where Killer Mike grew up, that's where our mayor grew up,'' he said.

There's a duality present across the genre about what types of homes are depicted. On one hand, there's elaborate displays of wealth and desire, but there's also a focus on abject poverty and class struggle. In his 2013 song ''Picasso Baby,'' Jay-Z raps about wanting a Picasso ''in my casa, no, my castle,'' while also letting us know, in his 2017 song ''Marcy Me,'' ''I'm from Marcy Houses, where the boys die by the thousand.''

''What does it mean to live in a socially circumscribed area, known as the ghetto or the 'hood? And that's where your home is -- a disparaged, dismissed, marginalized environment, where in fact that's where your family is, that's where your friends are,'' said Mr. Forman, the scholar. ''Home then becomes almost a discursive and ideological struggle against other kinds of impositions -- how is home looked at from outside?''

So artists, Mr. Forman continued, ''want to take the definition for themselves. They don't want a world outside, once more, writing over them and defining them without their input.'' Take, for instance, Nas's 1994 album ''Illmatic,'' in which the rapper paints a vivid portrait of his life growing up in the Queensbridge Houses.

Sitting on the porch of his mother's house in Chicago, Vic Mensa would take in the surroundings -- the Section Eight housing across the street, a mosque and his own presence -- that he'd turn into lyrics. In ''$outhside Story,'' on his album ''Victor'' released this September, ''I'm describing the view from my mother's house,'' he said.

''Happening within a 200 foot radius, here's me in a nice home with nice parents, across the street are kids -- probably my same age -- selling cocaine and across the street are people worshiping,'' he said. ''In the lyrics, I'm illustrating the dichotomy of experience of the South Side of Chicago.''

Saving Home

Artists have frequently returned home and poured resources back into real estate. When the Bronx apartments that birthed hip-hop fell into disrepair following new ownership and the 2008 housing market crash, the storied community room closed. DJ Kool Herc, his sister and residents rallied to save the housing complex, which was taken over in 2011 by an affordable housing developer, with the help of a loan from the city.

In Newark, Queen Latifah has invested in a development project to build market-rate and affordable housing -- ''I grew up around here playing in West Side Park, a block away,'' she said last year. ''I saw what was needed on this block, houses that weren't lived in.'' Similarly, Nipsey Hussle had purchased a Los Angeles strip mall he grew up down the road from, with plans to erect a residential building, but in 2019, he was gunned down at the same site.

Growing up in the Calliope Projects in New Orleans, Master P viewed his music as a way to raise awareness and bring change to the community. ''New Orleans was the murder capital of the world and was going through all this poverty,'' he said. ''It was tough, a tough place to live in, and I wanted to express that in my music.''

Following Hurricane Katrina, Calliope was demolished. What's there now is Marrero Commons, developed with funding from the Department of Housing and Urban Development; the brighter townhouse apartments come with walk-in closets, large porches and a shared fitness center. A five-minute drive from there, Master P, 53, has been working to revamp Guste Homes, a senior living facility, where he helped open a grocery store in 2021.

A version of Calliope is forever memorialized through ''Hoody Hooo,'' a 1999 song by Master P and two of his brothers.

''I can't change where I come from. That is a part of myself -- I'm a little kid that was raised and born in poverty, in the ghetto,'' Master P said. ''But I also could show kids how to dream.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/07/realestate/home-is-where-the-heart-of-hip-hop-is.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/12/07/realestate/home-is-where-the-heart-of-hip-hop-is.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: In 1973, hip-hop originated when DJ Kool Herc performed at a party in the rec room of a Bronx apartment building. Herc and others rallied to save the complex after the 2008 housing crash. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY TYLER HICKS/THE NEW YORK TIMES)

BROOKLYN: MC Lyte's early musical instincts were shaped by the sounds she heard while growing up in East Flatbush. She has made many songs to honor the borough. ''I actually have so many songs called 'Brooklyn,' I can't even keep up,'' she said. (PHOTOGRAPH BY PHILIP CHEUNG FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

THE BAY AREA: E-40 saluted the region with songs like ''Tell Me When to Go'' and ''Yay Area,'' in the 2000s. ''I was responsible for putting our city on the map -- no ifs, ands or buts,'' he said. ''I'd always noticed that the Bay Area never gets its shine. When it's underrated, you rep hard.'' (PHOTOGRAPH BY JIM WILSON/THE NEW YORK TIMES)

QUEENS: Anik Khan, an immigrant from Bangladesh, documents snippets of domestic life at the apartment where he grew up, above center, in songs like ''The Borough'' and lyrics like ''My nephew causing mischief, my mama up in the kitchen / Probably cooking for her only son, you know, that curry chicken.'' (PHOTOGRAPHS BY CLARK HODGIN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (RE10)

Above left, if the genre began in the Bronx, the battle between boroughs over the origin of hip-hop started at the Queensbridge housing project. Above right, Queen Latifah has invested in bringing new housing to her hometown, Newark. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY TIMOTHY MULCARE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

MICHAEL KARAS/NORTHJ)

NEW ORLEANS: The R&B artist Ambré was 9 years old when Hurricane Katrina devastated New Orleans in 2005, but she found hope in Lil Wayne's ''Georgia . . . Bush,'' in which the rapper criticizes President George W. Bush's response to the disaster. ''Wayne putting that out was like, 'OK, maybe the government's not there to help us, but I'm here for y'all, I'm still from New Orleans,''' she said. (PHOTOGRAPH BY CEDRIC ANGELES FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

ATLANTA: Killer Mike grew up at his grandmother's house, left, a 1,000-square-foot home in the predominantly Black neighborhood of Collier Heights. ''That's the house where I fell in love with gospel and soul and funk,'' Mike said. ''Standing on that porch -- that was my first stage. And that yard was where I pretended thousands of people were watching me.'' (PHOTOGRAPH BY WULF BRADLEY FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

CHICAGO: Vic Mensa had a strong family upbringing at his mother's house, left. But across the street there were drug deals at the Section 8 housing and prayer at the neighborhood mosque. In ''$outhside Story,'' he said, ''I'm illustrating the dichotomy of experience of the South Side of Chicago.'' (PHOTOGRAPH BY NOLIS ANDERSON FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (RE11) This article appeared in print on page RE10, RE11.

**Load-Date:** December 10, 2023

**End of Document**



[***‘We Are Sleepwalking to Climate Catastrophe’; letters***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:652N-YBH1-DXY4-X083-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

March 24, 2022 Thursday 01:46 EST

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**Section:** OPINION; letters

**Length:** 975 words

**Highlight:** Readers respond to a dire climate warning from the U.N. secretary general. Also: Factors in college success; a signing in the N.F.L.; Botox follies.

**Body**

To the Editor:

Re “[*Warning of a ‘Catastrophe’ With the Use of Fossil Fuels*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/03/21/climate/united-nations-fossil-fuels-climate-crisis.html)” (news article, March 22):

Since the climate crisis is a global problem, the U.N. secretary general, António Guterres, is uniquely positioned to understand the big picture. From his perspective “we are sleepwalking to climate catastrophe.”

Despite dire warnings from scientists, we continue our addiction to these life-destroying fuels. Nations are reneging on promises to reduce emissions. Russia’s war on Ukraine exposes the grave geopolitical consequences of dependence on fossil fuels that are largely controlled by authoritarian governments.

Fossil fuel interests and their political allies are pushing for “all of the above” energy strategies rather than using this crisis to double down on a rapid transition to clean energy.

Mr. Guterres’s call to phase out coal, end fossil fuel subsidies and halt further exploration are good first steps, but [*economists agree*](https://clcouncil.org/economists-statement/) that the best way to speed the transition is to make the polluting industry pay an increasing fee on their carbon pollution.

The obvious way to achieve energy independence is through renewable energy, since no nation owns the sun or the wind. The technology is available; only political will is needed.

Caroline Kerr Taylor

Montecito, Calif.

To the Editor:

The decades-old climate story has evolved. It was called “global warming” at first, followed by “climate change.” More recently, “the climate crisis” described our situation. But the U.N. secretary general, António Guterres, is spot on with the term “climate catastrophe”!

With so many people, talk of our disrupted climate is met with a sigh or a shrug. Another large group of people are climate deniers whose misinformation is often broadcast loudly. Climate activists who wisely speak of renewables and sustainability are often viewed as odd.

We need a multilevel transformation. Many people desperately need an attitude adjustment, and the environment is screaming for a dramatic shift away from fossil fuels. We need to realign agricultural practices and plant millions of native trees.

With the glow of Glasgow starting to wane, we need to listen to the U.N. leader’s startling message.

Sally Courtright

Fairfax, Va.

The writer is a retired science teacher.

Religion, Social Class and Achievement in College

To the Editor:

I write to highlight the importance of “[*For* ***Working-Class*** *Boys, Religion May Be the Key to College Success*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/03/15/opinion/religion-school-success.html?searchResultPosition=1),” by Ilana M. Horwitz (Opinion guest essay, March 16).

Among my crowd of San Francisco progressives, religion is considered seriously down-market, with religious belief belittled. Perhaps this essay will help elites understand that for non-college-educated people of all races, churches often provide the kind of hopefulness, future orientation, impulse control and social safety net that college-educated elites get from their career potential, their therapists and their bank accounts.

Social class is expressed through cultural differences; elites’ failure to understand this enables the far right to sculpt the resulting class anger into economic populism.

Joan C. Williams

San Francisco

The writer, a professor at the University of California Hastings College of the Law, is the author of “White ***Working Class***: Overcoming Class Cluelessness in America.”

To the Editor:

While Ilana M. Horwitz points to religion as a key factor contributing to higher rates of college completion for ***working-class*** males, the research she cites suggests a broader takeaway. It’s that young people, especially those who lack access to the social ties and support systems available to their more affluent counterparts, need to feel a sense of belonging to thrive.

Indeed, my work with young people over the past 35 years has demonstrated just how vital it is to student success to create school environments where everyone feels supported, cared for and connected to one another.

Religion may well be a valuable source of fostering connection, but I’ve seen time and time again that there is much that schools can do to build and maintain the kind of supportive communities that help young people realize that earning a college degree, along with other life aspirations, is within their reach.

Richard Stopol

New York

The writer is president emeritus and senior adviser, NYC Outward Bound Schools.

Shame on the N.F.L.

To the Editor:

Re “[*For $230 Million, Browns Get Watson and Their Image Pays a Price*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/03/21/sports/football/deshaun-watson-cleveland-browns-sexual-misconduct.html),” by Kurt Streeter (Sports of The Times column, March 21):

It speaks volumes about the N.F.L.’s values that at least four teams were desperate to sign Deshaun Watson, a man accused by 22 women of sexual assault or other sexual misconduct and the Browns rewarded him with the largest guaranteed contract in N.F.L. history, but no team has been willing to consider signing [*Colin Kaepernick,*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/25/sports/football/kaepernick-kneeling-protests-super-bowl.html) a quarterback who led his team to the Super Bowl, for the apparently egregious crime of peacefully protesting the undeniable inequities in the criminal justice system.

Shame on the Browns and the N.F.L.

Matthew E. Fishbein

Brooklyn

The writer is a former chief assistant U.S. attorney in the Southern District of New York and the Eastern District of New York.

‘I Am 77 and Appropriately Wrinkled. I Am Supposed to Look Old.’

To the Editor:

Re “Q: Will Botox injections in my 20s or 30s mean smoother skin and fewer wrinkles down the line?” ([*Ask Well*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/03/22/well/live/preventative-botox-wrinkles.html), Science Times, March 22):

Let me get this right: Some young women are willing to spend thousands of dollars to maybe prevent skin wrinkles when they’re older, while muting their facial expressions now. Does anyone else think this is crazy?

I am 77 and appropriately wrinkled. I am supposed to look old.

Barbara Gold

Philadelphia

The writer is a pediatrician.

PHOTO: António Guterres, the U.N. secretary general, at the organization’s headquarters in New York City this month. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Andrew Kelly/Reuters FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** March 25, 2022

**End of Document**



[***Fight With Harvard Is Political Winner and Policy 'Band-Aid'***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68T4-85C1-DXY4-X26Y-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

July 27, 2023 Thursday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; National Desk; Pg. 19; POLITICAL MEMO

**Length:** 1213 words

**Byline:** By Reid J. Epstein

**Body**

After an affirmative action ruling, legacy admissions are a ripe target. Still, skyrocketing tuition costs and mountains of debt remain far greater worries for many Americans.

In the final month of his 2020 presidential campaign, Joe Biden stood before a drive-in crowd in Toledo, Ohio, and announced he had ''a chip on my shoulder'' about people with fancy college degrees.

He would, Mr. Biden said, be the first president in ''80 or 90 years'' without an Ivy League degree -- an exaggerated biographical detail that spoke to the image he sought to convey as the blue-collar, workingman's candidate.

''I went to the University of Delaware, I was proud of it,'' Mr. Biden said. ''Hard to get there, hard to get through in terms of money. But folks, since when can someone who went to a state university not be qualified to be president?''

Mr. Biden -- the first president without an Ivy League degree since Ronald Reagan, a Eureka College alumnus who left the White House 32 years before Mr. Biden entered it -- has now set his administration on a collision course with Harvard, one of the Ivy League's flagship universities.

His administration's fight, in the form of a civil rights investigation into Harvard's legacy admissions process by the Education Department, gives Mr. Biden an opportunity to show himself opposed to the country's elites as he ramps up a presidential campaign in which he will need support from ***working-class*** voters culturally far afield from the Ivy League.

The inquiry serves as an early bank shot for Mr. Biden to show voters that his administration is trying to do something to respond to the Supreme Court's ruling last month gutting affirmative action in higher education -- a decision that led Mr. Biden to declare, ''This is not a normal court.'' The department's Office of Civil Rights has significant enforcement authority and Mr. Biden, should he choose to use it, has the White House bully pulpit to negotiate a settlement with Harvard.

This week, the Education Department is hosting a ''national summit on equal opportunity'' in Washington. Mr. Biden has asked the department to produce a report by September with proposals of what the government should do in response to the court's decision and singled out legacy admissions as an issue of concern.

But while the Biden administration's investigation into legacy admissions will surely grab attention among a political and media class overrepresented by Ivy League alumni, it is far less likely to address enduring roadblocks to higher education like skyrocketing tuition costs and mountains of debt incurred by students.

''It's a Band-Aid,'' said Melissa Byrne, a Democratic activist who has spent years campaigning to make public undergraduate schools free and for the federal government to waive student debt. ''The hindrance to higher education isn't legacy admission, it's a paywall that makes education a gift from parents to children or a debt sentence.''

People involved in the campaign to make higher education more equitable and accessible described the question of legacy admissions as limited to a few applicants to elite universities. Even at Harvard, according to court documents, legacies make up less than 5 percent of applicants, though about 30 percent of them are admitted each year -- an acceptance rate more than seven times as high as that of the general applicant pool.

At less competitive schools, often state universities, legacy students are recruited and celebrated. Mr. Biden's undergraduate alma mater, the University of Delaware, offers scholarships of up to $2,000 to children of the school's alumni to help ''enrich their education.'' In 2018, a university publication wrote glowingly about an incoming student related to the school's ''legendary football coach'' who said ''it feels like U.D. is in my blood.''

Liz King, the senior program director for education at the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, said the Education Department's civil rights office had been obligated to begin an inquiry about Harvard's legacy admissions process after receiving a complaint about it. She said she hoped the Biden administration would not limit its higher education investigation to legacy admissions, but instead look broadly at a system she described as discriminatory for students and applicants of color.

''We cannot look at the binary question of a legacy check box as an opportunity to wash our hands of the negative, the real threat posed by the Supreme Court decision,'' said Ms. King, whose alma mater, Wesleyan University, ended legacy preferences in admissions last week. ''What we need is equal access in higher education.''

The country's elite universities will soon face growing public pressure to reveal more about what have long been an opaque admissions practices, said Art Coleman, who led the Education Department's civil rights office during the Clinton administration and now serves as a consultant to universities and other nonprofit organizations.

''In this universe of total distrust of systems, including institutions of higher education, there is a notion of this mysterious black box that no one understands and few people trust,'' Mr. Coleman said. ''My hope is we'll seize the moment now and it will lead to better transparency around well-developed practices.''

Going after elite schools' legacy admission policies would seem to be a bipartisan political winner.

After the Supreme Court's decision, Senator Tim Scott of South Carolina, a Republican running for president, called for Harvard to end its legacy admission policies. On Wednesday, Senator Jeff Merkley of Oregon and Representative Jamaal Bowman of New York, both Democrats, introduced legislation to stop universities from giving preferential treatment to children of alumni and donors. (Their bill, however, did not have any Republican co-sponsors.)

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''I hear that often from people that they want a fair, level playing field where everyone has the same opportunity from the start,'' Mr. Turco said. ''They want it based on an individual's merit and hard work and based on somebody's need versus these legacy traditions, which have created a lot of the social economic inequities that we see in so many areas of society.''

The idea of legacy admissions is also far easier to comprehend than other more insidious obstructions to higher education. Standardized tests, substandard high schools and wealth inequality all serve as more significant factors in education equity efforts, said David Hinojosa, the director of the Educational Opportunities Project at the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law.

''From the public's perspective, they can grasp more easily the inherent inequities with legacy admissions and how those are entrenched with privilege but no merit,'' Mr. Hinojosa said. ''People don't understand the history of standardized tests.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/07/27/us/politics/biden-legacy-admissions-harvard.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/07/27/us/politics/biden-legacy-admissions-harvard.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: Legacy admissions are a concern, but rising tuition costs and student debt remain far greater worries for many Americans. (PHOTOGRAPH BY KAYANA SZYMCZAK FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A19.

**Load-Date:** July 27, 2023

**End of Document**



[***Biden’s Fight With Harvard Is a Political Winner and Policy ‘Band-Aid’; Political Memo***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68T4-72W1-JBG3-64C7-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

July 27, 2023 Thursday 15:22 EST

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**Section:** US; politics

**Length:** 1237 words

**Byline:** Reid J. Epstein

**Highlight:** After an affirmative action ruling, legacy admissions are a ripe target. Still, skyrocketing tuition costs and mountains of debt remain far greater worries for many Americans.

**Body**

After an affirmative action ruling, legacy admissions are a ripe target. Still, skyrocketing tuition costs and mountains of debt remain far greater worries for many Americans.

In the final month of his 2020 presidential campaign, Joe Biden [*stood before a drive-in crowd in Toledo, Ohio*](https://factba.se/biden/transcript/joe-biden-remarks-toledo-ohio-october-12-2020), and announced he had “a chip on my shoulder” about people with fancy college degrees.

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His administration’s fight, in the form of [*a civil rights investigation into Harvard’s legacy admissions process*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/07/25/us/politics/harvard-admissions-civil-rights-inquiry.html#:~:) by the Education Department, gives Mr. Biden an opportunity to show himself opposed to the country’s elites as he ramps up a presidential campaign in which he will need support from ***working-class*** voters culturally far afield from the Ivy League.

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But while the Biden administration’s investigation into legacy admissions will surely grab attention among a political and media class overrepresented by Ivy League alumni, it is far less likely to address enduring roadblocks to higher education like skyrocketing tuition costs and mountains of debt incurred by students.

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“We cannot look at the binary question of a legacy check box as an opportunity to wash our hands of the negative, the real threat posed by the Supreme Court decision,” said Ms. King, whose alma mater, Wesleyan University, [*ended legacy preferences in admissions last week*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/07/19/us/wesleyan-university-ends-legacy-admissions.html). “What we need is equal access in higher education.”

The country’s elite universities will soon face growing public pressure to reveal more about what have long been an opaque admissions practices, said Art Coleman, who led the Education Department’s civil rights office during the Clinton administration and now serves as a consultant to universities and other nonprofit organizations.

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PHOTO: Legacy admissions are a concern, but rising tuition costs and student debt remain far greater worries for many Americans. (PHOTOGRAPH BY KAYANA SZYMCZAK FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A19.

**Load-Date:** November 2, 2023

**End of Document**



[***Books to Help Understand Sudan***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:682G-8NW1-DXY4-X4WC-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

April 21, 2023 Friday 11:24 EST

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**Section:** WORLD; africa

**Length:** 785 words

**Byline:** Amanda Taub

**Highlight:** For a deeper understanding of what’s going on, here’s what to read.

**Body**

For a deeper understanding of what’s going on, here’s what to read.

The situation in Sudan remains violent and unpredictable. Fighting [*intensified yesterday*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/04/20/world/africa/sudan-us-evacuation-marines.html) as warplanes bombarded the center of the capital, Khartoum. It remains unclear who, if anyone, is in control of Africa’s third-largest country.

[*This morning*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/04/21/world/africa/sudan-fighting-cease-fire-eid.html), the army commander, Gen. Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, who was Sudan’s de facto leader and one of the two rival generals whose factions have been fighting since last weekend, said that he is committed to a peaceful transition to civilian rule. But repeated attempts at cease-fires have broken down, and there is no sign that his faction would commit to talks with its rivals, the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces.

Meanwhile, the Pentagon is moving troops into position in Djibouti so that they can help with a [*possible evacuation of the U.S. Embassy*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/04/20/world/africa/sudan-us-evacuation-marines.html) in Khartoum. However, a State Department official said that it is currently not safe to begin an evacuation because of the severe fighting at the Khartoum airport.

For the news, obviously, [*you know where to go*](https://www.nytimes.com/topic/destination/sudan?name=styln-sudan-fighting&amp;region=TOP_BANNER&amp;block=storyline_menu_recirc&amp;action=click&amp;pgtype=Article&amp;variant=undefined).

But for a deeper understanding of what’s going on, you could start with the two books about coups that I mentioned in Wednesday’s column: “[*Seizing Power: the Strategic Logic of Military Coups*](https://www.press.jhu.edu/books/title/10989/seizing-power),” by Naunihal Singh, and “[*How to Prevent Coups D’État: Counterbalancing and Regime Survival*](https://www.cornellpress.cornell.edu/book/9781501751912/how-to-prevent-coups-d-tat/),” by Erica De Bruin.

Having those frameworks in mind will be useful as you read “[*Sudan’s Unfinished Democracy: The Promise and Betrayal of a People’s Revolution*](https://www.hurstpublishers.com/book/sudans-unfinished-democracy/),” by Willow Berridge, Justin Lynch, Raga Makawi, and Alex de Waal, which tells the story of the 2019 uprising that Sudan’s ousted longtime dictator, Omar al-Bashir. The book details the historical events that led up to the revolution and the troubled, fragile regime that followed — and later gave way to a 2021 military coup and the violence that erupted this week.

And for a fair-minded but critical look at the foreign response to the catastrophic war in Darfur at the beginning of this century, I recommend “[*Fighting for Darfur: Public Action and the Struggle to Stop Genocide*](https://us.macmillan.com/books/9780230112407/fightingfordarfur),” by Rebecca Hamilton. She skillfully reported from refugee camps and political negotiations where Sudanese citizens struggled to stop a war that posed an existential threat to many of their communities.

The book juxtaposes those efforts against the foreign grass-roots campaigns in which activists, well-intentioned but often blind to realities on the ground — and always safely insulated from the consequences of their actions — tried to pressure the international community into halting the violence.

Reader responses: Books that comfort, surprise, or enlighten you

Kristen, a reader in Los Angeles, recommends “[*Surrender*](https://www.penguin.co.uk/books/437898/surrender-by-bono/9781529151787)” by Bono, the U2 frontman. (A particularly timely suggestion given Bono’s history of activism against the war in Darfur):

I listened to Bono read his book and not only did it enlighten me about the band, the meanings of their songs, and his own dedication to a variety of causes, it surprised me his commitment to faith and family. A true rock star and activist with traditional values and humble reflections. Inspiring and refreshing. One to return to many times.

John Toren, a reader in Minneapolis, recommends “[*The Serpent Coiled in Naples*](https://www.hauspublishing.com/product/the-serpent-coiled-in-naples/)” by Marius Kociejowski:

Kociejowski describes various aspects of a city he seems to know quite well, including the ***working-class*** neighborhood where he lives, the history of the city, the lives of famous (and less famous) inhabitants, the street music, the changing role of the Mafia (locally known as “the System”), the looming presence of Vesuvius, the lingering significance of Greek and Roman habits and institutions, the food, and much more. The author himself is quite a character, and he digresses often, but the narrative remains lively and free of academic pretensions.

What are you reading?

Thank you to everyone who wrote in to tell me about what you’re reading. Please keep the submissions coming!

I want to hear about things you have read (or watched or listened to) that inspired, comforted, or surprised you.

If you’d like to participate, [*you can fill out this form*](https://nl.nytimes.com/f/a/-wOcfgiAlD2U0j9-rgyHuw~~/AAAAAQA~/RgRkjyC9P4SkAmh0dHBzOi8vbmwubnl0aW1lcy5jb20vZi9uZXdzbGV0dGVyL28ydmJaZTlZaWxTMHpnUzhPLTkwdXd-~). I may publish your response in a future newsletter.

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PHOTO: Smoke billowing this week over Sudan’s capital, Khartoum. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Abdelmoneim Sayed/Agence France-Presse — Getty Images FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** April 21, 2023

**End of Document**



[***Johnson-Sunak Feud Injures House of Lords, Both Men and Their Party***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68G5-FDF1-JBG3-63BB-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

June 15, 2023 Thursday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; Foreign Desk; Pg. 9

**Length:** 916 words

**Byline:** By Stephen Castle

**Body**

The former prime minister tried to elevate some lawmakers, as British leaders do when they leave office. But three didn't make the cut, and now he's fighting with Rishi Sunak.

Famous for its gilded furnishings, ceremonial gowns and archaic procedures, Britain's House of Lords holds the dubious distinction of being the world's largest legislature outside China.

Now, the unelected second chamber of the British Parliament has found itself at the center of an acrimonious rift over efforts by former Prime Minister Boris Johnson to add his friends and allies to its already swollen ranks.

Like all departing prime ministers, Mr. Johnson was entitled to nominate candidates for ''resignation honors,'' which also include knighthoods. But when three people on his nominees list did not make the final cut, he accused the current prime minister, Rishi Sunak, of blocking them.

One of those disappointed -- Nadine Dorries, a former cabinet minister -- claimed she was obstructed by ''posh boys'' because of her ***working-class*** background. And when Mr. Sunak said in public that Mr. Johnson had lobbied him to overturn the way nominees were vetted and approved, Mr. Johnson retorted that this was ''rubbish.''

While the debacle revealed for the first time in public the depth of the animosity between Mr. Sunak and Mr. Johnson, it also delivered a fresh blow to the already shaky reputation of the House of Lords.

''The extraordinary thing about this is the damage it is doing to the Conservative Party and to our public institutions,'' said Catherine Haddon, program director at the Institute for Government, a research group specializing governance, noting the questions it raised about the resignation honors system.

''The fact that this is so transparently one of Johnson overtly rewarding those around him just shows what a problem it is.''

The controversy over the House of Lords may seem esoteric, but membership comes with benefits in addition to a fancy title. Known as peers, Lords members can claim up to 342 pounds (about $433) as a daily allowance when they attend sessions. They hold their seats for a lifetime and don't have to stand for election. Their role is to shape and revise laws after they are debated in the House of Commons.

But the House of Lords now has 777 members and a chamber too small to accommodate all at the same time. Most of its (predominantly male) members are at the end of their careers, with an average age of 71.

Among those honored by Mr. Johnson are Charlotte Owen, an adviser to him who becomes the youngest member of the House of Lords at 29; and his spokesman Ross Kempsell, 31. In addition to nominating peers, Mr. Johnson secured lesser honors for other allies, including Kelly Jo Dodge, his parliamentary hairdresser.

He is also widely reported to have pressed, unsuccessfully, for a knighthood for his father, Stanley Johnson, while several of those embroiled in the scandal of lockdown-breaking parties in Downing Street during the Covid-19 pandemic were also honored.

The biggest political difficulty centers on members of the House of Commons who were nominated by Mr. Johnson for elevation to the House of Lords. They had to promise to relinquish their seats in the Commons, but three -- including Ms. Dorries -- were under the impression that they could remain in the Commons until the next general election, effectively delaying their peerages.

That would have avoided elections in each of their constituencies, contests that Conservatives could have lost.

The issue was discussed at a meeting between Mr. Sunak and Mr. Johnson, but both came away with different understandings of what was agreed.

Asked about the rift on Monday, Mr. Sunak suggested that Mr. Johnson had wanted him to bend the rules for the approval of nominations or -- as he put it -- ''to do something I wasn't prepared to do.''

Ms. Dorries angrily accused Mr. Sunak and his political aide James Forsyth of blocking her deliberately. It was, she told Talk TV, a story ''about a girl from Liverpool'' having something taken away from her by ''two privileged posh boys,'' she said, referring Mr. Sunak and Mr. Forsyth.

Ms. Haddon, of the Institute for Government, said that Downing Street could have been more proactive in keeping Ms. Dorries informed, but that it was up to Mr. Johnson to keep her abreast.

''Nadine Dorries should have been aware that this was a problem, and if it was Johnson that was giving her assurances, that goes to questions that have been raised in many forums about Johnson's behavior when it comes to telling the truth and being open and honest with people,'' she added.

One of the three nominees who failed to make the final list resigned his seat in the House of Commons anyway, meaning it is up for grabs and may be hard for Conservatives to hold. There will also be a contest for the seat that Mr. Johnson held until he quit Parliament on Friday, after seeing draft conclusions of an investigation into whether he had misled lawmakers over the lockdown-breaking parties in Downing Street. Publication of that document is expected on Thursday.

Having said she was quitting the Commons, however, Ms. Dorries has yet to do so formally, keeping the prime minister waiting on her next move.

But for Mr. Sunak, the bad news is that the furor over honors may not be over.

Mr. Johnson was succeeded briefly in Downing Street last year by Liz Truss, who was prime minister just for 44 days. Her resignation honors list is still to come.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/14/world/europe/boris-johnson-rishi-sunak-house-of-lords.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/14/world/europe/boris-johnson-rishi-sunak-house-of-lords.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: Former Prime Minister Boris Johnson, above, and the incumbent, Rushi Sunak, a fellow Conservative, dispute the handling of Mr. Johnson's nominees for the House of Lords and other honors. (PHOTOGRAPH BY DANIEL LEAL/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE -- GETTY IMAGES) This article appeared in print on page A9.

**Load-Date:** June 15, 2023

**End of Document**



[***To Leslie***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:66JM-S8W1-DXY4-X1K5-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

October 7, 2022 Friday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section C; Column 0; Movies, Performing Arts/Weekend Desk; Pg. 8

**Length:** 365 words

**Byline:** By Beandrea July

**Body**

The small-budget indie is a complex portrait of the ways that trauma and addiction haunt an alcoholic mother, and her family, in the South.

In gritty detail, ''To Leslie'' traces the fall of a one-time lottery winner who, years later, has lost everything she holds dear. The British actress Andrea Riseborough (''Nancy'') gives a deft performance as Leslie, an alcoholic mother in West Texas barreling toward rock bottom in this deceptively simple yet heart-wrenching character study.

Allison Janney, Marc Maron, Owen Teague and Andre Royo fill out the solid ensemble cast in this small-budget indie, which accomplishes what its bigger-budget peer ''Hillbilly Elegy'' wanted to, but couldn't pull off: a complex portrait of the ways in which trauma and addiction haunt a ***working-class*** white family in the South.

[Video: Watch on YouTube.]

The director, Michael Morris, knows from the start what movie he's making: one that robs us of our easy assumptions about who Leslie is. She's unbearably flawed, and the screenwriter Ryan Binaco explains why without forcing long beats of exposition upon the viewer. And he does so while still leaving room for surprise. Leslie doesn't tank her sobriety when we think she will, yet her recovery is free of narrative subterfuge.

The cinematography by Larkin Seiple (''Everything Everywhere All At Once'') is a real feat of visual character development: The camera movement is both protective of Leslie and unflinching in its raw portrayal of her vulnerability. Some of the most affecting shots take place at the bar, like one close-up where Leslie spars with the guy who wants to bed her -- ''Tell me I'm good.'' It's shot with a depth of field that keeps Leslie's face in focus, while the rest of the frame is blurred.

''To Leslie'' probably could have left 15 more minutes on the cutting room floor. But its intermittent lags don't diminish the overall satisfaction one feels in the film's final act, when Leslie's rocky road settles into something believably triumphant.

To LeslieRated R for explicit language and violence. Running time: 1 hour 59 minutes. Rent or buy on Apple TV, Google Play and other streaming platforms and pay TV operators.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/06/movies/review-to-leslie.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/06/movies/review-to-leslie.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: Andrea Riseborough as the title character, an alcoholic mother in West Texas, in ''To Leslie.'' Michael Morris's direction leaves room for surprise. (PHOTOGRAPH BY MOMENTUM PICTURES)

**Load-Date:** October 7, 2022

**End of Document**



[***The True Uniform of Los Angeles, According to Angelenos***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69DV-5RH1-DXY4-X0RG-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

October 18, 2023 Wednesday 15:25 EST

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**Section:** STYLE

**Length:** 1718 words

**Byline:** Frank Rojas

**Highlight:** It’s more than a Dodgers hat and jeans.

**Body**

It’s more than a Dodgers hat and jeans.

In the mythology of the West, Los Angeles is equal parts grit and glamour. The reality isn’t far-off: Impossibly pink bougainvillea blooms feet away from gray highways choked with round-the-clock traffic. Look to your left at a stoplight and you may see a bored Uber driver, tooling around for fares, or a young starlet going incognito with sunglasses leaving her local coffee shop.

Perhaps unsurprisingly for a city that is, among many other things, a showbiz town, Los Angeles is defined by its imagery: the Hollywood sign, palm trees and beaches, of course, but also lowriders, Art Deco buildings and street vendors. For Angelenos themselves, those visuals can take the form of one’s personal aesthetic. Fred Segal shirt, or Lakers jersey? Gleaming Nike Cortezes, or worn-out flip-flops?

Ahead of [*L.A. Fashion Week*](https://lafw.net/), which runs from Wednesday through Sunday, The New York Times asked West Coasters for their ideas of the quintessential Los Angeles uniform.

She Likes Her Skirts Long and Her Shirts Soft

Bethany Cosentino, 36, singer-songwriter and Best Coast vocalist

Many people from Los Angeles wouldn’t consider Bethany Cosentino a valley girl, but her 818 area code has entered the chat. Ms. Cosentino, a singer-songwriter best known for her work in the indie rock duo Best Coast — even the group’s name is a declaration of West Coast supremacy — grew up in La Crescenta, an unincorporated part of Los Angeles County that borders Glendale, where she lives now.

Ms. Cosentino’s look has transformed from the leather of her early rocker-chick days to a looser aesthetic filled with linens and lacelike fabrics. She often completes the look with Birkenstock’s Boston clogs, rounding off what she said felt “like the uniform of a lot of my friends and L.A. women in their mid-30s.”

Her favorite pieces from her closet are a 1970s Linda Ronstadt T-shirt and a 1976 Joni Mitchell jacket that her mother gave her as a 25th-birthday present.

Most of her clothing is from thrift stores, she said, adding that she has been going to [*Squaresville*](https://www.instagram.com/squaresvillevintage/), a vintage store in Los Feliz, since she was 16. She also makes the occasional 30-to-40-minute trek through the valley to hit up the nearest Savers thrift store.

“When I go thrifting, I’m mostly on the hunt for long skirts,” Ms. Cosentino said, “something that I can pair with a loosefitting crop top. I’m looking for the softest vintage cotton T-shirt.”

Conductor Chic: A Suit, a Bow Tie and Converse Sneakers

Gustavo Dudamel, 42, music director of the Los Angeles Philharmonic

If you’ve ever seen a live outdoor orchestra on a summer evening at the Hollywood Bowl, chances are you’ve seen Gustavo Dudamel, the music and artistic director of the Los Angeles Philharmonic, dressed for the starriest of what he referred to as “the different seasons of music making.”

“Nothing feels more like summer to me than wearing my white suit and black bow tie onstage at the Hollywood Bowl, sharing music with thousands of Angelenos each night in our legendary open-air home,” he wrote in an email.

In the fall, he trades his breezy summer suit for a black suit jacket and bow tie, which he wears to performances at the Walt Disney Concert Hall.

But for as much as Mr. Dudamel, who prizes looking sharp and elegant onstage, offstage, he’s a man who loves a good pair of Converse sneakers and a simple T-shirt.

“Converse is such an iconic brand, and their sneakers represent that unique combination of style, function and rock ’n’ roll energy that is at the heart of Los Angeles,” he said.

His YOLA (Youth Orchestra of L.A.) T-shirt holds sentimental value in his closet, and he said that watching the music education program expand across the city has been one of the proudest moments of his career. No doubt the keepsake will make the move east with him when he becomes the [*next music and artistic director of the New York Philharmonic*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/02/07/arts/music/new-york-philharmonic-gustavo-dudamel.html) (beginning in 2026).

The Fashion Plate in City Hall? Not Exactly.

Karen Bass, 70, mayor of Los Angeles

Growing up in the Venice and Fairfax neighborhoods of Los Angeles, Karen Bass wasn’t what you would call a clotheshorse. “Frankly,” she wrote in an email, “I was never one to pay attention to the trending fashion looks.”

Her style has since evolved, from her days in scrubs at White Memorial Hospital to the neat pantsuits she typically wears when conducting the business of Los Angeles. Still, Ms. Bass, the city’s first female mayor, has a few personal items that she never leaves the house without, including a wedding ring and necklace that once belonged to her daughter, who died in a car accident in 2006.

“Here in Los Angeles, we wear our love,” she said, “whether it’s for our city, our communities, our neighborhoods or our families.”

Amplifying the ‘Background Noise’ of the City

Joey Barba, 34, and Javier Bandera, 36, founders of Paisaboys

A look that’s all in the details: a charro pattern on a pair of Levi’s 501s and a classic blue Dodgers hat with the same detailed print on the brim. An oversize black T-shirt that reads “LA THE HARD WAY, WE DO WHAT YOU WON’T” alongside a list of occupations — cook, landscaper, construction worker, nanny, farmer, custodian.

The details aren’t subtle, but neither is a paisa — Spanish slang for a Mexican American who is unabashedly proud of his heritage.

For Joey Barba and Javier Bandera, friends turned business partners from Venice and Culver City, [*Paisaboys*](https://www.instagram.com/paisaboys/) is much more than a brand; to them, it’s a way to honor their Mexican roots and celebrate Los Angeles’s ***working class***. Both grew up [*doing manual labor alongside their immigrant fathers*](https://www.latimes.com/lifestyle/image/story/2021-09-16/if-you-wear-paisaboys-you-might-be-in-on-l-a-streetwears-biggest-inside-joke) — Mr. Barba working as a gardener and Mr. Bandera washing cars. With Paisaboys, they wanted a uniform that embodied all aspects of who they are.

“Every paisa is a star,” Mr. Barba said. “We want to shine a light on everybody that feels like they’re not represented, or feels invisible. When you’re gardening or washing cars, you feel like background noise in this city.”

Low-Key Since Her Swap-Meet Days

Syd, 31, singer-songwriter and former vocalist of indie R&amp;B group the Internet

Sydney Bennett, a singer-songwriter known professionally as Syd, defines her style as casual. She said her current look was a white Uniqlo T-shirt, some shorts and a hat. (Her barber was on vacation at the time.)

Her favorite piece from her closet, however, is a pair of Maison Margiela jeans. They’re heavy and baggy, she said, but still “aesthetically pleasing.”

Growing up in Mid City, she was able to tap into Los Angeles’s diaspora of neighborhoods and cultures. It’s also where she would go to the heart of the city’s fashion scene.

“I used to go to the 10th Avenue swap meet with my mom,” recalled Ms. Bennett, a writer of Beyoncé’s Grammy Award-winning “Plastic Off the Sofa.” “I would get my hats embroidered there and I remember going as a kid and feeling clean and fresh. I guess you never really think about how L.A. that is until you start seeing the rest of the world.”

Style Inspiration, Courtesy of the 6 A.M. Crowd

Daniel Buezo, 35, and Weleh Dennis, 37, founders of Kids of Immigrants

Muted colors, embroidered floral vests and a simple message: That’s how Daniel Buezo and Weleh Dennis would describe not just their personal aesthetics, but also their clothing brand, [*Kids of Immigrants*](https://www.instagram.com/kidsofimmigrants/). The two were inspired by the culture clash they saw when living in Pico Union, a neighborhood that abuts Downtown, South Los Angeles, Koreatown and Westlake.

While their clothing brand is based in Los Angeles, it tells a story that reaches far beyond the city limits.

“We would take these walks down MacArthur Park, like, at 6 in the morning,” said Mr. Buezo, who is originally from New York. “It’s a full hustle and bustle, from the people who are commuting, to foreigners and street vendors. They are the real L.A. uniform.”

Their personal style is about mixing different worlds together. Mr. Buezo usually incorporates streetwear with vintage pieces — typically a T-shirt from Kids of Immigrants or another local brand paired with loosefitting jeans from a thrift store. Mr. Dennis, a Sacramento native, is all about subtle jewelry, usually complementing a distressed T-shirt and a pair of Dickies.

The Gender Chameleons of Echo Park

Ashley S.P., 31, and Jennifer Zapata, 34, shop owners of Género Neutral

Ashley S.P. and Jennifer Zapata may not be able to call Los Angeles their hometown, but the two friends share a mutual love of the city. They own [*Género Neutral*](https://generoneutral.la/), an Echo Park boutique featuring streetwear “in an ungendered presentation.”

The shop sells screen-printed T-shirts of its own design alongside wares from other local brands. The selection is of a piece with its mission to be a community hub for the city’s creative types.

For Ms. S.P. and Ms. Zapata, there are no rules when it comes to their style. Both like to play with gender expression, presenting more feminine one day, more masculine the next. Ms. S.P.’s signature look includes her botas, or cowboy boots, which she wears almost every day. Ms. Zapata loves a simple pair of tabi boots or thick Nike sneakers. It’s all in the duality.

“In L.A., you can kind of be a chameleon in comfort and gender expression,” Ms. S.P. said. “There isn’t a very strict expectation of you wearing all designer or a friend’s brand. You can play in a really approachable way.”

Get Your Name on a Gold-Plated Necklace

Yesika Salgado, 39, poet

For the poet Yesika Salgado, Los Angeles is not just a place to call home; it’s her muse. The two-time National Poetry Slam finalist grew up near Dodger Stadium, and her work explores the complexity of love and her relationship with the city. In “[*Casamiento*](https://www.instagram.com/reel/CiHCtJujxiP/),” which she wrote during a freezing winter in New York City, she tells Los Angeles: “I choose you in this life, in my parents’ lives and in the lives they left to bring me to you.”

Ms. Salgado’s go-to look rests on four staples: crop tops, hoop earrings, red lipstick and long acrylic nails. Her most prized possession is a gold-plated name necklace that was a birthday present from a friend.

“Almost anytime I’m ever photographed anywhere, I’m wearing it,” Ms. Salgado said.

“Because I feel like it’s like I graduated into like a fly girl, you know?”

PHOTO: In a city of 3.9 million people, it’s hard to agree on a dress code. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Maggie Shannon for The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** October 18, 2023

**End of Document**



[***Rising Separatism, and a Killing, at a Sikh Temple in Canada***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6974-MSB1-DXY4-X05S-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

September 21, 2023 Thursday 19:55 EST

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**Section:** WORLD; canada

**Length:** 1535 words

**Byline:** Norimitsu Onishi

**Highlight:** Hardeep Singh Nijjar, the Sikh leader whose killing has ignited tensions between Canada and India, increased calls for an independent homeland in India.

**Body**

Hardeep Singh Nijjar, the Sikh leader whose killing has ignited tensions between Canada and India, increased calls for an independent homeland in India.

The markers of separatism are everywhere at the temple. Dozens of yellow flags of Khalistan — a homeland that Sikh separatists want to create in the Punjab region of India — fly in and around the grounds of the Guru Nanak Sikh Gurdwara temple near Vancouver.

In a ground-floor hall, where the faithful were socializing and eating, the walls are lined with scores of framed photographs of slain separatist leaders. Now, a portrait of Hardeep Singh Nijjar, holding the symbolic curved sword of devout men, has been added to a wall with four pushpins, still unframed.

Mr. Nijjar was gunned down outside the temple in June, a killing that Canada has accused India of orchestrating, starting a diplomatic skirmish that has culminated in a war of words between the two countries.

Mr. Nijjar had taken over leadership of the temple in 2019, and his ascension steered the temple in a far more strident and political direction, most likely rousing the suspicion of India, which labeled him a terrorist the following year.

On Monday, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said that [*agents of the Indian government had carried out Mr. Nijjar’s execution*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/18/world/canada/canada-india-sikh-killing.html) on Canadian soil. The Indian government, which has long accused Canada of harboring Sikh extremists, strongly denied the accusation. Mr. Trudeau’s allegation, made so far without the presentation of evidence, led to tit-for-tat [*expulsions of senior diplomats*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/19/world/canada/trudeau-india-canada-assassination.html).

Mr. Trudeau, who was in New York on Thursday for the United Nations General Assembly, told editors and reporters of The New York Times that he could not talk about the evidence behind his accusations.

“We’re not trying to provoke,” he said. “But when we have credible reasons to believe that this happened, you can’t shrug it off.”

The temple is the oldest, largest and most influential in Surrey, the city in British Columbia that is an epicenter of Canada’s large [*Sikh diaspora*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/20/world/canada/hardeep-singh-nijjar-killed.html). At one time, when its leaders were friendly with India, it was a regular stop for visiting Indian officials.

Separatists gained control of the temple’s leadership in 2008, but they remained largely quiet about the most fraught aspect of Sikh separatism: criticism of the Indian state.

That changed under Mr. Nijjar’s leadership.

“The difference was how blunt Mr. Nijjar was in calling out the Indian state,” said Gurkeerat Singh, 30, a close associate of Mr. Nijjar and a lifelong temple member. “He was very blunt, unapologetic. Every single week, he would come on the stage and make this the main issue about what’s happening to our youth in Punjab and what the Indian state has committed against us.”

The temple, occupying several blocks, is one of the most visible focal points of Sikh life in Surrey, along with a sprawling outdoor mall, Payal Business Center, a couple of miles away.

How it became an outspoken advocate of separatism reflects the evolution of the Sikh community in Canada — the largest outside India — and the political emergence of second-generation immigrants, the children of Sikhs who fled to Canada after violence in India in the 1980s, experts said.

It is difficult to gauge what share of the Canadian Sikh population supports the separatism that Mr. Nijjar championed and that fueled his rise, experts said, but signs of this separatism are expressed more conspicuously than in the past — for example, in the referendum for an independent state of Khalistan that Mr. Nijjar and other leaders have been organizing in Sikh diaspora communities worldwide.

“There is now more visible, physical, tangible support for Khalistan,” said Indira Prahst, a sociologist at [*Langara College*](https://langara.ca/) in Vancouver. “It’s more overt.”

No matter the breadth of the movement, the Indian government considered Mr. Nijjar a threat. It [*declared*](https://www.mha.gov.in/sites/default/files/Individual_Terrorists/SL%20NO%2005%20TO%2013_WADHWA%20SINGH%20BABBAR%20TO%20PARAMJIT%20SINGH%20PAMMA.PDF) him a terrorist in 2020, accusing him of plotting an attack in India and of leading a terrorist group.

For Mr. Nijjar’s supporters, the charges were simply a way to discredit an inspirational figure who was rallying Sikhs around the goal of self-determination and fighting for their rights.

[*Mr. Nijjar, who was 45 when he was killed*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/19/world/canada/who-is-hardeep-singh-nijjar-india.html), was a teenager when he arrived in Canada in 1997 after years of deadly violence between Sikhs and the Indian government.

In 1984, Indian soldiers occupied one of the holiest Sikh places of worship in India, the [*Golden Temple*](https://www.hrw.org/news/2014/10/29/india-no-justice-1984-anti-sikh-bloodshed), to remove militants after Sikh separatists had committed massacres of Hindus in Punjab, the state where Sikhs are a majority. Hundreds of Sikhs were killed, and thousands more were also killed after the prime minister at the time, [*Indira Gandhi, was assassinated*](https://www.nytimes.com/1984/10/31/world/indira-gandhi-assassinated-by-gunmen-police-seal-off-2-areas-as-crowds-gather.html) by her two Sikh bodyguards.

Mr. Nijjar told his family about Sikh men who, fearing being targeted, had to take off their turbans and of friends who disappeared, his son Balraj Singh Nijjar, 21, said in an interview.

“He mentioned to me as well how he had been tortured in India in his teenage years and how that left him with a pain to this day,” the son said.

By the time Mr. Nijjar arrived in 1997, the Guru Nanak Sikh Gurdwara temple had existed for about two decades. First established in a house in Delta, a city about 10 miles southwest of Surrey, it was built in its current location in the late 1970s by the small Sikh community of mostly ***working-class*** immigrants who had immigrated to Canada in the preceding decades, said [*Shinder Purewal*](https://www.kpu.ca/arts/political-science/faculty/shinder-purewal), an expert on Sikh nationalism at Kwantlen Polytechnic University in Surrey.

“Most of them were moderate Sikhs, who were not much practicing and who were rather integrated in Canadian society,” said Mr. Purewal, who has been going to the temple ever since it was first housed in a home. “Secular types who went to temple more for cultural rather than religious reasons.”

But the mass arrival of Sikhs after the violence of the 1980s changed the dynamics at this temple and others that opened in the region, pitting older arrivals who tended to foster friendly ties with the Indian consulate and newcomers who saw the Indian government as their sworn enemy.

“In the 1990s and 2000s, there were many skirmishes in temples between what you would call moderates and fundamentalists,” [*Satwinder Bains*](https://www.ufv.ca/scms/faculty-staff/bains-satwinder.htm), an expert on the Sikh community at the University of the Fraser Valley, said, adding that temple leaders were elected regularly by members.

In 2008, separatists advocating the homeland of Khalistan took over the Guru Nanak Sikh Gurdwara temple. Today, in Surrey, where more than [*a quarter of the city’s population*](https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/dp-pd/prof/details/page.cfm?LANG=E&amp;GENDERlist=1,2,3&amp;STATISTIClist=1,4&amp;DGUIDlist=2021A00055915004&amp;HEADERlist=32&amp;SearchText=surrey) identifies as Sikh, three out of a dozen temples are outwardly separatist, with the rest remaining mostly neutral, Mr. Purewal said.

The separatist movement has become more visible with the emergence of second-generation Canadian Sikhs who have heard stories of the violence in the 1980s from parents and grandparents, said Ms. Prahst, the sociologist.

“Members of the second generation are now hearing more about what happened in 1984 in India, and that’s striking a very deep chord in their hearts, their psyche and their identity,” Ms. Prahst said.

Mr. Singh, the 30-year-old who was close to Mr. Nijjar, was born and grew up in British Columbia. He became politically aware after listening to stories from his grandparents, he said.

“Our parents are first-generation, and they made us financially stable,” Mr. Singh said. “So we’re able to come out and speak about these issues.”

Critics say that the separatist movement is largely a product of diaspora communities and now has little resonance among Sikhs in India. Separatists say that Sikhs in India are simply too afraid to speak.

At the Guru Nanak Sikh Gurdwara temple, worshipers, including newcomers, expressed a variety of opinions about the separatist movement.

Prabhjot Kaur, 30, who arrived in Surrey a few months ago to study business management and planned to return to India to work, said she came to the temple several times a week for religious reasons and did not believe an independent Sikh state was viable.

“Who will invest in such a state?” Ms. Kaur said, but she added that the killing of Mr. Nijjar was unacceptable.

A memorial has been erected in the temple’s parking lot, where Mr. Nijjar was shot dead by two heavyset men while driving his pickup truck last June. A sign describes him as the first martyr of the Khalistan movement in Canada.

Mr. Nijjar was on his way home from the temple, where he had told congregants of his fears of being targeted by India. In his pickup, he called his wife, who put him on speakerphone, recalled his son Balraj.

“What’s for dinner?” asked Mr. Nijjar who, depending on the answer, sometimes ordered takeout, his son said.

But it was Father’s Day, and his favorites, including a sweet dessert called seviyan, were waiting for him at home.

“He got even happier,” the son said, “and he told us, ‘Keep that warm. I’m coming right now.’”

Mihika Agarwal contributed reporting.

Mihika Agarwal contributed reporting.

PHOTO: A memorial for Hardeep Singh Nijjar on the grounds of the Guru Nanak Sikh Gurdwara temple in Surrey, British Columbia, on Wednesday. Mr. Nijjar was gunned down outside the temple in June. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Jackie Dives for The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** September 21, 2023

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[***A Trump-Biden Rematch That Many Dread***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68SP-8RT1-DXY4-X408-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

July 25, 2023 Tuesday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; Editorial Desk; Pg. 19; LETTERS

**Length:** 1195 words

**Body**

To the Editor:

Re ''The Presidential Rematch Nobody Wants,'' by Pamela Paul (column, July 21):

Ms. Paul asks, ''Have you met anyone truly excited about Joe Biden running for re-election?''

I am wildly enthusiastic about President Biden, who is the best president in my lifetime. His legislation to repair America's infrastructure and bring back chip manufacturing are both huge accomplishments. Mr. Biden has done more to combat climate change, the existential issue of the day, than all the presidents who have gone before him.

Mr. Biden extracted us from the endless morass of Afghanistan. He has marshaled the free peoples of the world to stop the Russian takeover of Ukraine, giving dictators around the world pause.

Mr. Biden is the first president in a generation to really believe in unions and to emphasize the issues of working people, understanding how much jobs matter.

I might wish he were 20 years younger. I wish I were 20 years younger.

Most important, Joe Biden is an honorable man at a time when his biggest rivals do not know the meaning of the word. Being honorable is the essential virtue, without which youth or glibness do not matter.

I support his re-election with all my heart and soul.

Gregg CoodleyPortland, Ore.

To the Editor:

We endured (barely) four years of Donald Trump. Now we have Joe Biden, whose time has come and gone, and third party disrupters who know they cannot win but are looking for publicity.

Mr. Biden had his turn, and is exceedingly arrogant to believe that he is our best hope. His good sense and moral values won't help if Donald Trump wins against him, which is eminently possible. The Democratic Party must nominate a powerfully charismatic candidate.

Mitchell ZuckermanNew Hope, Pa.

To the Editor:

I think Pamela Paul misses the point entirely. No, Biden supporters are not jumping up and down in a crazed frenzy like Trump supporters. That is actually a good thing. People like me who fully support President Biden's re-election are sick and tired of the nonstop insanity that is Donald Trump. I'm very happy to have a sound, calm, upstanding president who actually gets things done for middle- and ***working-class*** Americans.

Excitement isn't the answer to solving America's problems. A president who gets things done is -- like Joe Biden!

Sue EverettChattanooga, Tenn.

To the Editor:

Pamela Paul is spot on in her diagnosis of the depressing likelihood of Trump vs. Biden, Round 2.

The solution is money, as is true in all things in American politics. The Big Money donors in the Democratic Party should have a conference call with Team Biden and tell it, flat out, we're not supporting the president's re-election. It's time for a younger generation of leaders.

Without their money, President Biden would realize that he cannot run a competitive campaign. But in a strange echo of how Republican leaders genuflect to Donald Trump and don't confront him, the wealthy contributors to the Democratic Party do exactly the same with Mr. Biden.

Ethan PodellRutherford Island, Maine

To the Editor:

In an ideal world, few would want a presidential rematch. Donald Trump is a menace, and it would be nice to have a Democratic nominee who is young, charismatic and exciting. But in the real world, I favor a Trump-Biden rematch, if Mr. Trump is the Republican nominee.

Mr. Biden might shuffle like a senior, and mumble his words, but he is a decent man who loves our country and has delivered beyond expectations.

In leadership crises, Americans yearn for shiny new saviors riding into town on a stallion. I prefer an honest old shoe whom we can count on to get us through an election of a lifetime.

Jerome T. MurphyCambridge, Mass.The writer is a retired Harvard professor and dean who taught courses on leadership.

To the Editor:

I am grateful to Pamela Paul for articulating and encapsulating how I, and probably many others, feel about the impending 2024 presidential race. I appreciate the stability that President Biden returned to the White House and our national politics. However, the future demands so much more than Mr. Biden or any other announced candidate can deliver.

Christine CunhaBolinas, Calif.

To the Editor:

Pamela Paul presents many reasons, in her view, why President Biden is a flawed candidate, including that Mr. Biden's ''old age is showing.'' As an example, she writes that during an interview on MSNBC he appeared to wander off the set.

Fox News has been pushing this phony notion relentlessly, claiming that he walked off while the host was still talking. In fact, the interview was over, Mr. Biden shook hands with the host, they both said goodbye, and while Mr. Biden left the set, the host faced the camera and announced what was coming up next on her show.

Howard EhrlichmanHuntington, N.Y.

Perils of A.I., and Limits on Its Development

To the Editor:

Re ''New Worries That Chatbot Reads Faces'' (Business, July 19):

The integration of facial surveillance and generative A.I. carries a warning: Without prohibitions on the use of certain A.I. techniques, the United States could easily construct a digital dystopia, adopting A.I. systems favored by authoritarian governments for social control.

Our report ''Artificial Intelligence and Democratic Values'' established that facial surveillance is among the most controversial A.I. deployments in the world. UNESCO urged countries to prohibit the use of A.I. for mass surveillance. The European Parliament proposes a ban in the pending E.U. Artificial Intelligence Act. And Clearview AI, the company that scraped images from websites, is now prohibited in many countries.

Earlier this year, we urged the Federal Trade Commission to open an investigation of OpenAI. We specifically asked the agency to prevent the deployment of future versions of ChatGPT, such as the technique that will make it possible to match facial images with data across the internet.

We now urge the F.T.C. to expedite the investigation and clearly prohibit the use of A.I. techniques for facial surveillance. Even the White House announcement of voluntary standards for the A.I. industry offers no guarantee of protection.

Legal standards, not industry assurances, are what is needed now.

Merve HickokLorraine KisselburghMarc RotenbergWashingtonThe writers are, respectively, the president, the chair and the executive director of the Center for A.I. and Digital Policy, an independent research organization. Ms. Hickok testified before Congress in March on the need to establish guardrails for A.I.

To the Editor:

Re ''Pressed by Biden, Big Tech Agrees to A.I. Rules'' (front page, July 22):

It is troubling that the Biden administration is jumping in and exacting ''voluntary'' limitations on the development of A.I. technologies. The government manifestly lacks the expertise and knowledge necessary to ascertain what guardrails might be appropriate, and the inevitable outcome will be to stifle innovation and reduce competition, the worst possible result.

Imagine what the internet would be today had the government played a similarly intrusive and heavy-handed role at its inception.

Kenneth A. MargolisChappaqua, N.Y.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/07/24/opinion/trump-biden-2024-election.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/07/24/opinion/trump-biden-2024-election.html)

**Graphic**

This article appeared in print on page A19.

**Load-Date:** July 25, 2023

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[***A Plunge Into a Public Pool Is a Dive Into the French Psyche***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:693F-39C1-DXY4-X00W-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

September 4, 2023 Monday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; Foreign Desk; Pg. 4; PARIS DISPATCH

**Length:** 1296 words

**Byline:** By Catherine Porter

**Body**

Swimming in Paris is a full-on cultural experience, offering intimate views into the French psyche, which is on near-naked display in the swimming lanes, locker rooms and (mostly coed) showers.

I slip into the water and push off quickly before the man swimming like a breast-stroking porpoise gets any closer. Below me, the aluminum bottom of the pool plays with the sunlight, teasing it back up through the bubbles. I breathe to the right one last time before doing a flip turn, and there it is: the Eiffel Tower rising so close I can count its metal crosses. The pool windows offer an unobstructed, third-story view.

Swimming in Paris is a full-on cultural experience. Many public pools don't just feel like historical monuments, they are historical monuments. Backstroking beneath the buttresses stretching across the vaulted ceiling of the 99-year-old Butte-aux-Cailles pool feels like backstroking through a cathedral.

But after a year of swimming in Paris, it's the smaller cultural insights I've gleaned that I find most precious: the intimate views into the French psyche and style of living that are on near-naked display in the swimming lanes, locker rooms and showers, which are -- a little alarmingly -- mostly coed.

I have been a swimmer since I was a kid. I competed on my high school team and for a year in college. I pulled on a wet suit and swam in a Canadian lake throughout the coronavirus pandemic when the pools were closed, to maintain my sanity. It's my form of exercise and stress release.

So when I moved to Paris last August, I quickly developed a to-visit list of public pools across the city, many dating from the 1930s, during the height of the Art Deco architectural craze. They're stunning.

Take the Piscine des Amiraux, built in 1930 on the city's ***working-class*** northern edge. It's a long, thin pool, with walls covered in white subway tiles. Look up, and you see a skylight roof, above two rings of balconies lined with the green doors of individual changing rooms. You hang your stuff on anchor-shaped hooks, and when you are done swimming, a cabin boy comes and opens the door for you.

It all feels like swimming back through time.

But even the more modern pools offer touches of beauty that seem luxurious to a North American eye raised on functionality.

Most have huge windows, letting natural light pour in. Many open onto lush gardens. I was so taken with two trees spilling lush pink blooms down one side of the Jean Taris pool that I didn't notice the dome of the Panthéon rising behind them until the lifeguard, helping me identify the trees, pointed it out. (Crepe myrtle, by the way.)

I figured out some of the rules and unspoken systems pretty quickly: no shoes in the changing room, bathing caps required and no board shorts, just snug fits. The coed showers were harder to get used to, even though bathers keep their suits on.

Paris introduced ''mixité'' to the showers in 2006 to cut costs and to reflect the city's liberal attitudes about gender, explained Franck Guilluy, a former world champion pentathlete who oversees the city's 50 pools. The transformation, however, solved fewer problems than it created -- including exhibitionism -- and the city is bringing the experiment to an end, putting in separate showers as it renovates pools.

Still, however squeamish it has made me -- notably when men lather up and vigorously scrub what's beneath their suits and then rinse off by holding their shorts open to the water as they stand right beside me -- some swimmers like it.

The writer Colombe Schneck, together with her artist sister Marine Schneck, visited all 50 pools and published a guide, ''Paris à la Nage.'' Colombe Schneck considers the public pools one of the few places in the city where there is true social mixing, disrobed of sex, gender and class.

The coed showers reinforce that communal ideal, she said.

''We are only bodies swimming -- men and women. We don't care. We should all go together,'' Ms. Schneck tells me over a post-swim drink and snack at a nearby cafe, in keeping with the sisters' mantra: ''We don't swim to get thin.'' (Each pool in their guide is accompanied by a local restaurant or cafe recommendation.)

She had no answer as to why the most perfectly appointed Parisians, so consumed with fashion rules and rigid etiquette on the city's streets, have no issue flaunting their informality in the showers.

''We are all a mix of contradictions,'' she said.

That's just one of the many cultural enigmas I've discovered in Paris pools. For a country renowned for bureaucracy and regulations, there's shockingly little order in the lanes.

On a typical morning at my local pool, most lanes are full with a mix of swimmers: the serious athletes pushing buttons on their watches between sets; the competent-but-slow breaststrokers who prove difficult to get past; and those I call the sensualists: People who come to commune with the water and enter their own dream world. You might find them doing a few strokes and then drifting down to the bottom of the pool.

Technically, the lanes are supposed to be separated into fast, medium and slow. But I have seen that at only one pool.

The French bring their devotion to liberty into the water with them. You might have passed a swimmer three times already, but he won't wait at the wall to let you by again. Instead, he'll push off right in front of you.

''I almost never go to public pools -- it's impossible to swim,'' commiserated Arthur Germain, a celebrated young French swimmer who in 2021 swam the full length of the Seine over 49 days.

French bureaucracy almost killed his project -- despite his being the son of Paris's mayor, Anne Hidalgo. Mr. Germain needed approval from 14 government authorities and 330 mayors. He sees the pandemonium in swim lanes as the natural response to living with all of those rules.

''When people have liberty in France, it's very chaotic,'' Mr. Germain said. ''People don't reflect. They don't think of swimmers around them.''

As for the sensualists, the French sports historian Thierry Terret helped me understand them.

The first swimming pools in Paris were built literally floating atop the Seine and resembled a mix between a single-sex social club and a Turkish bath. People would go for the day to visit the barber, bob in the water, have a sumptuous wine-soaked meal and then take a two-hour nap.

When the first year-round pools were built on land in the later part of the 19th century, they were constructed to resemble rivers -- long and thin, with changing depths and even rocks and waterfalls.

''The first real pools were built for every other reason but sport,'' Mr. Terret said.

Only later, particularly during the Cold War when winning Olympic medals offered ideological superiority, would competition become part of swimming culture.

The mixed cultures displayed in pools today are a legacy of this.

At first, I found swimming here frustrating: too much dodging and motorboat-style kicking to make a pass.

But over time, I've adapted. Rather than battle them, I'm learning from the sensualists.

I've slowed down enough to absorb the architectural and botanical beauty around me. Rather than chopping through the water, I've started to feel its silky threads weave through my fingers. I've worked to notice the light bending through the water. It now feels less like a harried game of Frogger and more like swimming through an Impressionist painting.

There are a few less-beautiful pools in the city, Mr. Guilluy says -- underground, no garden, no Art Deco features. They tend to be less busy.

I could try one of them to get in a true workout, I suppose.

But given the choice between beauty and exercise, I'll take beauty. In that way, I'm becoming a Parisian.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/03/world/europe/paris-france-swimming-pools.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/03/world/europe/paris-france-swimming-pools.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: In Paris, backstroking under the buttresses stretching across the vaulted ceiling of the 99-year-old Butte-aux-Cailles pool is like swimming through a cathedral.

The Butte-aux-Cailles pool, above and at right. For a country renowned for bureaucracy and regulations, there's shockingly little order in the lanes at public pools in Paris. ''When people have liberty in France, it's very chaotic,'' said Arthur Germain, who swam the full length of the Seine over 49 days. ''People don't reflect. They don't think of swimmers around them.''

Outside the Butte-aux-Cailles pool, left. Many pools don't just feel like historical monuments, they are historical monuments. More modern pools also offer touches of beauty.

COLOMBE SCHNECK, co-author of a guide to public pools in Paris, about the coed showers at the facilities, introduced in 2006. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY DMITRY KOSTYUKOV FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A4.

**Load-Date:** September 4, 2023

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[***Boris Johnson’s Effort to Honor Allies Puts Glare on House of Lords***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68G1-HK91-JBG3-630C-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Section:** WORLD; europe

**Length:** 955 words

**Byline:** Stephen Castle

**Highlight:** The former prime minister tried to elevate some lawmakers, as British leaders do when they leave office. But three didn’t make the cut, and now he’s fighting with Rishi Sunak.

**Body**

The former prime minister tried to elevate some lawmakers, as British leaders do when they leave office. But three didn’t make the cut, and now he’s fighting with Rishi Sunak.

Famous for its gilded furnishings, ceremonial gowns and archaic procedures, Britain’s House of Lords holds the dubious distinction of being the world’s largest legislature outside China.

Now, the unelected second chamber of the British Parliament has found itself at the center of an acrimonious rift over efforts by former Prime Minister Boris Johnson to add his friends and allies to its already swollen ranks.

Like all departing prime ministers, Mr. Johnson was entitled to nominate candidates for “resignation honors,” which also include knighthoods. But when three people on his nominees list did not make the final cut, he accused the current prime minister, Rishi Sunak, of blocking them.

One of those disappointed — Nadine Dorries, a former cabinet minister — claimed she was obstructed by “posh boys” because of her ***working-class*** background. And when Mr. Sunak said in public that Mr. Johnson had lobbied him to overturn the way nominees were vetted and approved, Mr. Johnson retorted that this was “rubbish.”

While the debacle revealed for the first time in public the depth of the animosity between Mr. Sunak and Mr. Johnson, it also delivered a fresh blow to the already shaky reputation of the House of Lords.

“The extraordinary thing about this is the damage it is doing to the Conservative Party and to our public institutions,” said Catherine Haddon, program director at the Institute for Government, a research group specializing governance, noting the questions it raised about the resignation honors system.

“The fact that this is so transparently one of Johnson overtly rewarding those around him just shows what a problem it is.”

The controversy over the House of Lords may seem esoteric, but membership comes with benefits in addition to a fancy title. Known as peers, Lords members can claim up to 342 pounds (about $433) as a daily allowance when they attend sessions. They hold their seats for a lifetime and don’t have to stand for election. Their role is to shape and revise laws after they are debated in the House of Commons.

But the House of Lords now has 777 members and a chamber too small to accommodate all at the same time. Most of its (predominantly male) members are at the end of their careers, with an average age of 71.

Among those honored by Mr. Johnson are Charlotte Owen, an adviser to him who becomes the youngest member of the House of Lords at 29; and his spokesman Ross Kempsell, 31. In addition to nominating peers, Mr. Johnson secured lesser honors for other allies, including Kelly Jo Dodge, his parliamentary hairdresser.

He is also widely reported to have pressed, unsuccessfully, for a knighthood for his father, Stanley Johnson, while several of those embroiled in the scandal of lockdown-breaking parties in Downing Street during the Covid-19 pandemic were also honored.

The biggest political difficulty centers on members of the House of Commons who were nominated by Mr. Johnson for elevation to the House of Lords. They had to promise to relinquish their seats in the Commons, but three — including Ms. Dorries — were under the impression that they could remain in the Commons until the next general election, effectively delaying their peerages.

That would have avoided elections in each of their constituencies, contests that Conservatives could have lost.

The issue was discussed at a meeting between Mr. Sunak and Mr. Johnson, but both came away with different understandings of what was agreed.

Asked about the rift on Monday, Mr. Sunak suggested that Mr. Johnson had wanted him to bend the rules for the approval of nominations or — as he put it — “to do something I wasn’t prepared to do.”

Ms. Dorries angrily accused Mr. Sunak and his political aide James Forsyth of blocking her deliberately. It was, she told Talk TV, a story “about a girl from Liverpool” having something taken away from her by “two privileged posh boys,” she said, referring Mr. Sunak and Mr. Forsyth.

Ms. Haddon, of the Institute for Government, said that Downing Street could have been more proactive in keeping Ms. Dorries informed, but that it was up to Mr. Johnson to keep her abreast.

“Nadine Dorries should have been aware that this was a problem, and if it was Johnson that was giving her assurances, that goes to questions that have been raised in many forums about Johnson’s behavior when it comes to telling the truth and being open and honest with people,” she added.

One of the three nominees who failed to make the final list resigned his seat in the House of Commons anyway, meaning it is up for grabs and may be hard for Conservatives to hold. There will also be a contest for the seat that Mr. Johnson held until he quit Parliament on Friday, after seeing draft conclusions of an investigation into whether he had misled lawmakers over the lockdown-breaking parties in Downing Street. Publication of that document is expected on Thursday.

Having said she was quitting the Commons, however, Ms. Dorries has yet to do so formally, keeping the prime minister waiting on her next move.

But for Mr. Sunak, the bad news is that the furor over honors may not be over.

Mr. Johnson was succeeded briefly in Downing Street last year by Liz Truss, who was prime minister just for 44 days. Her resignation honors list is still to come.

PHOTO: Former Prime Minister Boris Johnson, above, and the incumbent, Rushi Sunak, a fellow Conservative, dispute the handling of Mr. Johnson’s nominees for the House of Lords and other honors. (PHOTOGRAPH BY DANIEL LEAL/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE — GETTY IMAGES) This article appeared in print on page A9.

**Load-Date:** June 15, 2023

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[***Snapping Up Farmers' Land to Create a City***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B54-38N1-JBG3-6033-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Section:** Section BU; Column 0; Money and Business/Financial Desk; Pg. 4

**Length:** 3714 words

**Byline:** By Conor Dougherty

**Body**

In Solano County, Calif., a who's who of tech money is trying to build a city from the ground up. But some of the locals whose families have been there for generations don't want to sell the land.

When Jan Sramek walked into the American Legion post in Rio Vista, Calif., for a town-hall meeting last month, everyone in the room knew that he was really just there to get yelled at.

For six years a mysterious company called Flannery Associates, which Mr. Sramek controlled, had upended the town of 10,000 by spending hundreds of millions of dollars trying to buy every farm in the area. Flannery made multimillionaires out of some owners and sparked feuds among others. It sued a group of holdouts who had refused its above-market offers, on the grounds that they were colluding for more.

The company was Rio Vista's main source of gossip, yet until a few weeks before the meeting no one in the room had heard of Mr. Sramek or knew what Flannery was up to. Residents worried it could be a front for foreign spies looking to surveil a nearby Air Force base. One theory held the company was acquiring land for a new Disneyland.

Now the truth was standing in front of them. And somehow it was weirder than the rumors.

The truth was that Mr. Sramek wanted to build a city from the ground up, in an agricultural region whose defining feature was how little it had changed. The idea would have been treated as a joke if it weren't backed by a group of Silicon Valley billionaires who included Michael Moritz, the venture capitalist; Reid Hoffman, the investor and co-founder of LinkedIn; and Laurene Powell Jobs, the founder of the Emerson Collective and the widow of the Apple co-founder Steve Jobs. They and others from the technology world had spent some $900 million on farmland in a demonstration of their dead seriousness about Mr. Sramek's vision.

Rio Vista, part of Solano County, is technically within the San Francisco Bay Area, but its bait shops and tractor suppliers and Main Street lined with American flags can feel a state away. Mr. Sramek's plan was billed as a salve for San Francisco's urban housing problems. But paving over ranches to build a city of 400,000 wasn't the sort of idea you'd expect a group of farmers to be enthused about.

As the TV cameras anticipated, a group of protesters had gathered in the parking lot to shake signs near pickup trucks. Inside, a crowd in jeans and boots sat in chairs, looking skeptical.

Mr. Sramek, 36, who is from the Czech Republic and had come to California to try to make it in start-ups, was now the center of their economy. Flannery had become the largest landowner in the region, amassing an area twice the size of San Francisco.

Christine Mahoney, 63, whose great-grandfather established her family's farm when Rutherford B. Hayes was president, told me that, like it or not, Mr. Sramek was now her neighbor. Ms. Mahoney had refused several offers for her land, and Flannery's lawsuit -- an antitrust case in federal court -- described her as a conspirator who was out to bilk his company.

But she had never met the man in person, so she came to say hello.

''You might be asking yourself, 'Why is this guy with a funny accent here?''' Mr. Sramek began the meeting.

He spent about 20 minutes pitching his plans before submitting to questions and resentments. People accused him of pushing small farms out of business. They said Flannery's money was turning families against each other.

''Good neighbors don't sue their neighbors!'' one man yelled to applause.

Mr. Sramek, who is tall, intense and practiced in the art of holding eye contact, stayed up front after the meeting to glad-hand.

When Ms. Mahoney and her husband, Dan, 65, approached him, Mr. Sramek said, ''Hi, Christine!'' as if they had met several times before and he wasn't currently suing her.

''I'd like to welcome you as our neighbor, but it's kind of difficult,'' Ms. Mahoney said.

She talked about how much stress the lawsuit had put on her family.

Mr. Sramek nodded, as if she were talking about someone else, not him. Then he asked the couple to dinner. The Mahoneys agreed.

Going to the Ballot

One key difference between building an app and building a city is that a city requires permission. On Wednesday, Mr. Sramek's company officially filed a proposed ballot initiative that would ask voters to buy in. Specifically, the measure aims to amend a longstanding ''orderly growth'' ordinance that protects Solano County's farms and open space by steering development to urban areas.

Solano's residents have consistently backed the city-centered-growth laws, so Mr. Sramek's project is bound to be controversial. To overcome resistance, the initiative includes a long list of promises like new roads, money to invest in downtowns across the county and a $400 million fund to help Solano residents buy homes.

Mr. Sramek also revealed that he hoped to build directly next to Rio Vista, with a half-mile-wide park separating the old farming town from the new tech city. Renderings that his company released this month portray a medium-density community that is roughly the opposite of a subdivision, with a grid of rowhouses that lie a short walk from shops and have easy access to bike lanes and bus stops. He said the first phase of building could accommodate around 50,000 people.

Even if the measure gets on the ballot and passes, it will be one step on a path requiring approval from county, state and federal agencies -- a long list of ifs that explains why large projects are usually measured in decades, not the few years that Mr. Sramek seems to imagine.

It's a crucial step, however. Beyond amending the ordinance, a win would pressure county officials to work with Mr. Sramek, so opponents are already lining up. A group called Solano Together, a mix of agricultural and environmental organizations like Greenbelt Alliance, recently created a website that characterizes the project as harmful sprawl that would destroy farms.

The fight is something of a throwback. Whether it was paving over San Fernando Valley orange groves to build out Los Angeles or ripping out apricot farms in what is now Silicon Valley, California became the nation's biggest state and economy largely by trading open and agricultural land for population and development.

That shifted in the 1960s and 1970s, when a backlash against the growth-first regime and its penchant for destroying landscapes helped create modern environmentalism. In the half-century since, this turn has been codified in laws that aim to restrict development to existing cities and their edges. It has protected farms and open space, but also helped drive up the cost of living by making housing scarcer and more expensive to build.

Mr. Sramek framed his proposal as a backlash to the backlash, part of an ideological project to revive Californians' appetite for growth. If the state is serious about tackling its dire affordable housing problem, he argued, it doesn't just have to build more housing in places like San Francisco and its suburbs -- it also has to expand the urban footprint with new cities.

As a matter of policy, this is hard to dismiss. This is politics, however, so the bigger question is whether voters share his desire to return California to an era of expansion. And whether -- after six years during which Mr. Sramek obfuscated his role in Flannery's secret land acquisition, along with the company's billionaire backers and true purpose, all while pursuing farmers with aggressive tactics and lawsuits -- they find him trustworthy.

The Golden Boy vs. 1877

Christine and Dan Mahoney's house looks onto a barn that says 1877, the year Ms. Mahoney's great-grandfather built it.

When I met the couple for an interview at their house last year, Ms. Mahoney had decorated the dining table with black-and-white pictures of relatives in button dresses and bonnets. Later we drove along roads named for her ancestors.

Winding through the hills, Ms. Mahoney ticked off parcels that belonged to the family, others that were owned by neighbors and more owned by Flannery. When I asked how she discerned the lines of ownership in an expanse of yellow grassland, she said: ''You live here a hundred years.''

Mr. Sramek, meanwhile, talks about growth in moral terms, as if progress and wealth are simpatico and the most consequential people are those who build big things and a fortune along the way.

Driving near the Mahoneys' ranch recently, through the same yellow hills, he posited that the mix of wealth and innovation that has exploded in the Bay Area has happened only a handful of times in history. (Florence, Paris, London, New York, Chicago and ''maybe L.A.'' were some others.) We were 60 miles from San Francisco in a place where the tallest structures are wind turbines, but his message was that the region could be an economic sun, and that bringing more people in the orbit was worthy of the trade-offs.

An immigrant and striver who at 22 was a co-author of a book called ''Racing Towards Excellence,'' Mr. Sramek got his first spurt of publicity at Goldman Sachs, where the financial press hailed him as a ''Golden Boy'' trader and considered it newsworthy when he left, after two years of employment, to chase a bigger dream in start-ups.

His tech career was less sparkling. After Goldman, he moved from London to Zurich and started a corporate education company called Better. It operated for two years and prompted a move to San Francisco, where he founded a social media company, Memo, in 2015.

Memo was billed as a higher-minded version of Twitter and won praise from the venture capitalist Marc Andreessen. That praise was delivered on Twitter instead of Memo, which was pretty much the story: Memo failed to rack up users and shut down after a year.

His failures aside, Mr. Sramek was smitten with the Bay Area's culture of creative capitalism. He was less enamored with the actual place.

The mythical Silicon Valley was in reality a bunch of office parks and cul-de-sacs where subdivision-grade homes went for $2 million. The more picturesque and urban San Francisco was being consumed by rising rents and their attendant homeless problems.

Complaining about the cost of living, and the region's inability to fix it, had become something of a side hustle for many Bay Area chief executives. And after Memo, Mr. Sramek started looking for a big disruptive idea for them to fund.

''If we go back six or seven years, the popular hit in the press was 'Silicon Valley is not doing enough in the real world,''' he said. ''And I was sitting there working on this.''

Flannery Associates

Mr. Sramek likes to fish. The way he tells it, around 2016 he and his girlfriend (now wife) started making the one-hour drive from San Francisco to Rio Vista to catch bass on the Sacramento River. One of those trips, driving past pastures and grazing sheep, sparked an idea.

''What if you could start from scratch?'' he said.

In a state whose agricultural bounty has historically been a function of moving water great distances, the area is something of an anachronism. For generations, families like the Mahoneys have practiced ''dryland farming,'' which means they rely on rain, not irrigation.

The Mahoneys talk about this the same way they talk about their land and family: with an emphasis on tradition and the romance of continuity. Mr. Sramek described the land as ''not prime.''

The phrase angered several farmers at the Rio Vista town meeting, but in dollar terms it's accurate. At the time of Mr. Sramek's first fishing trip, land in the area was trading around $4,000 an acre -- a pittance compared with a Central Valley almond orchard (about $10,000 to $55,000 per acre) or a Napa Valley vineyard (anywhere from $50,000 to more than $500,000 per acre), according to the California chapter of the American Society of Farm Managers and Rural Appraisers.

Mr. Sramek starting doing research and soon found himself immersed in zoning policy and poring over old development maps dreaming of a start-up city. Investors were initially reluctant, he said, so he borrowed $1 million from friends and banks to put a deposit on a handful of properties, then hired consultants and land-use lawyers to assess what it would take to build there.

By now Mr. Sramek was well networked. He had done a fellowship at Y Combinator, the start-up incubator. He was in a book club with partners at Sequoia Capital. He was friends with billionaires like Patrick and John Collison, the sibling founders of the payments company Stripe.

The Collisons became two of Flannery's first investors. Mr. Andreessen and Chris Dixon, also of the Andreessen Horowitz venture capital firm, joined soon after, along with Mr. Moritz, who was Sequoia's chairman. All of them helped Mr. Sramek solicit others.

In a 2017 note to potential investors I obtained, Mr. Moritz wrote that if ''done right'' the project could help relieve congestion and housing prices in the Bay Area, and mused about the potential to experiment with new kinds of governance. It could also be spectacularly profitable, he said: Mr. Moritz estimated that investors could make 10 times their money even if they just got the land rezoned, and far more if and when it was developed.

Flannery Associates was named for Flannery Road, which borders the first property Mr. Sramek bought. Aside from that detail and its Delaware incorporation, residents and public officials could find almost nothing about its shareholders or intentions. Just that it wanted a lot of land, didn't care about the price and was willing to strong-arm owners when money didn't work.

In addition to working their own land, many farmers in the area lease parcels where they grow crops and graze animals. As Flannery consumed more and more property, people like Ian Anderson found themselves in the uncomfortable position of trying to rebuff its offers for parcels they owned -- while at the same time farming land they rented from Flannery.

Mr. Anderson learned how vulnerable he was after a local newspaper quoted him saying that the company had begun insisting on short-term leases and that this made it increasingly difficult to farm. Later, Flannery's lawyer sent him a letter informing him that it was terminating multiple leases covering thousands of acres.

''The Andersons have made it clear that they do not like Flannery,'' according to the letter. ''The Andersons are of course free to have their opinions, but they cannot expect that Flannery will continue to just be a punching bag and lease property to them.''

Representative John Garamendi, a Democrat from the area, characterized moves like this as ''mobster techniques.'' The bigger concern was that Flannery's holdings had grown into a giant mass that butted against Travis Air Force Base on three sides.

The proximity to the base alarmed both the county and the Department of Defense, which prompted local officials and members of Congress to call for investigations. The investigations elevated the mystery of Flannery Associates into a mainstay on local TV news.

''The F.B.I. was investigating this, the State Department was investigating this, the Treasury Department was investigating this -- all the local electeds were trying to get information and calling their legislators,'' said Representative Mike Thompson, another Democrat from the area.

The company remained silent.

Mr. Sramek said Flannery had operated in secret to prevent landowners from jacking up prices, and defended the lawsuits as just. He argued that while some farmers didn't want to sell, most had done so willingly -- at prices no other buyer could offer.

''We paid way over market value, and created hundreds of millionaires in the process,'' he said. ''We are glad that we have been able to settle most of our disputes, and we are open to settling the remaining ones.''

A Simple Case of Wealthy Landowners?

By 2023, Mr. Sramek and his investors were in deep. Flannery had spent some $900 million buying 60,000 acres. The first two rounds of funding, at about $10 million each, had ballooned to several more rounds at $100 million each. (Mr. Sramek said the company had now raised ''more than $900 million'' but would not be more specific.)

Big investors begot bigger investors, and the list expanded to a roster of Silicon Valley heavyweights including Mr. Hoffman and Ms. Powell Jobs.

The company's offers became so generous that many farmers decided they couldn't refuse.

The Mahoneys sold Flannery a few hundred acres early on. (Their land is owned by several different entities and hard to tally overall, but in the 1960s Ms. Mahoney's father told a newspaper that he had 16,000 acres in the area.) But as Flannery gobbled more of the land around them, Ms. Mahoney said, she realized that something big was happening and that their entire farming business could be at risk. So the family stopped selling to Flannery. The company persisted with more offers, however, improving terms and increasing prices to levels that would have netted tens of millions of dollars. The family continued to say no.

Flannery arrived while the Mahoneys were in the midst of transition. Over 150 years, the family's company, R. Emigh Livestock, had expanded from two dozen lambs to one of largest sheep farmers in California. Ms. Mahoney's father was in his 90s (he died last year) and she was passing leadership to her son Ryan, who said his wish was to stay there until he was in his 90s, too.

You wouldn't know it from her jeans or penchant for nostalgia, but Ms. Mahoney had spent her career running a corporation, one whose business was raising lambs and cattle. She was, like Mr. Sramek, a C.E.O.

And after years of back and forth, one thing Flannery's entreaties had made clear was that there was one property the Mahoneys owned that it coveted above the others: Goose Haven Ranch. But Goose Haven was the one the family was most protective of. It had been the center of the lambing operation long enough that the road leading up to it was designed for wagon traffic.

Elsewhere in the county, Flannery had started buying into farms by acquiring shares from family members who wanted out, then becoming what amounted to unwelcome partners with the ones who remained. Two of these arrangements led to lawsuits between Flannery and the other owners. Both settled, but one of them netted a trove of emails and text messages among several neighbors including the Mahoneys.

In May, Flannery used those messages to file an antitrust suit against the Mahoneys and several holdouts. The suit contended that the farmers were colluding to raise prices, describing them as ''wealthy landowners who saw an opportunity to conspire, collude, price fix and illegally overcharge Flannery.'' It asked for $510 million in damages.

The complaint describes the messages (like Ms. Mahoney writing to a neighbor, ''That's great that we can support each other!'') as ''a smoking gun'' proving that the defendants did want to sell but at even higher prices than Flannery was offering.

In a joint motion to dismiss, lawyers for the Mahoneys and other defendants described Flannery's lawsuit as ''a ham-fisted intimidation technique'' designed to smother them with legal fees.

Even after being sued, the Mahoneys still had no idea who Flannery actually was.

The Campaign Apology Tour

In August, The New York Times broke the news of who was behind the purchases. Mr. Sramek confirmed his role, and soon topped his LinkedIn profile with a new title: chief executive of California Forever, the company's new name.

He has been in campaign mode ever since, meeting with elected officials, union leaders and environmental groups. California Forever has opened four offices across the county, and Solano's freeways are now plastered with California Forever billboards.

In a state where it can take years to get a duplex approved, Mr. Sramek seems to have calculated that his project is too big to fail. Developers, planners and lawyers I spoke to all expected the project to either never happen or take at least 20 years. Whether out of bluster, delusion or confidence, Mr. Sramek, who recently bought a house in nearby Fairfield, said he had promised his wife that their infant daughter would start school in the development he wanted to build.

He didn't find some secret hack that can make California an easier place to build. Rather, he believes the state's attitude toward growth is changing. Californians, he thinks, have grown frustrated -- with punishing housing costs, with homelessness, with the state's inability to complete projects like the high-speed rail line that was supposed to connect the Bay Area and Los Angeles but has stalled. So just maybe his will, and gobs of money, can create a new posture toward growth.

''There's a cultural moment where we realize the pendulum has gone too far,'' Mr. Sramek said. ''We can't say we are about economic opportunity and ***working-class*** Californians are leaving the state every year.''

Last year's event in Rio Vista was held at the end of lambing season in December. Before the meeting, I dropped by a barn with the Mahoneys where a group of ''bummers'' -- lambs born weak or to overburdened ewes -- were in sawdust pens drinking milk. They would be chops in less than a year, and Ms. Mahoney cooed to them between my questions.

I asked her a crass but obvious one: why the money from Mr. Sramek, those tens of millions, wasn't enticing.

''Everybody has their price, right?'' she said. ''I've heard that so many times. 'Everybody has their number -- what's your number?' I guess I haven't found it yet.''

''When God calls us home, that's our number,'' Mr. Mahoney joked. ''Totally different philosophy.''

On Wednesday, Mr. Sramek returned to the American Legion post in Rio Vista. This time he had arrived as part of a kickoff event for the ballot initiative. Neighbors and protesters had returned but were prohibited from going inside, where slides of maps and renderings were presented to the press, and details about design were discussed.

The maps had a curious detail: On the edge of the proposed community's downtown was Goose Haven Ranch.

The night before the meeting, the Mahoneys sold it. They got about $23 million.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/19/business/economy/flannery-california-forever-solano.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/19/business/economy/flannery-california-forever-solano.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Top, Christine Mahoney and her husband, Dan, on the farmland in Rio Vista, Calif., that her family acquired in the 19th century. A company backed by tech billionaires has been buying up land in the area to construct a city of 400,000 people, part of which is shown in the rendering above. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY AARON WOJACK FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

CALIFORNIA FOREVER) (BU4)

Above, Solano County, Calif., the site of the proposed city. Right, one of many ads put up by the group behind the city plan. Below, clockwise from top: Solano County

Jan Sramek, the finance and tech veteran who concocted the city plan

and Ian Anderson, whose lease of farmland owned by Mr. Sramek's company was terminated after he publicly criticized the company. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY AARON WOJACK FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (BU5) This article appeared in print on page BU4.

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[***Social Media Magnifies Cultural Rifts Exposed By Rape Cases in Italy***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6938-1381-JBG3-61CF-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Body**

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Though the rapes of the two girls, cousins just 10 and 12 years old, took place over many months, they seized national attention this past week after they were reported by the local news media, hurling the issue of violence against women and girls in Italy back into the spotlight.

Those assaults were among a host of horrific crimes that have been all over the news this summer. Two weeks ago, the focus was on a group of seven young men, including one 17-year-old, who are under investigation in the rape of a 19-year-old woman in Palermo. Before that, there were cases of women being stabbed, shot or poisoned by their partners or those known to them.

The cases have provoked debate in Italy over its neglected areas, its often chauvinistic attitudes toward women and the dangerous amplifying role played by social media. They have also exposed deep divisions over the persistence of the problem of violence against women and how to address it.

On Thursday, Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni visited Caivano, almost certainly a first for the ***working-class*** town of 37,800, where heroin addicts inject openly during the day. Italy's first woman to hold the office, and the first from the far right, Ms. Meloni skated past the many issues pertaining to women, focusing instead on law and order and calling the crimes ''barbaric.''

''This territory will be cleaned up, and you will soon see the results of our presence here,'' she said, referring to the problems of ''illegality and drugs.'' She pledged to reopen the sports center, build a new multimedia library and send more teachers to Caivano's schools.

''There can't be stateless zones in Italy,'' she said, speaking from the courtyard of the local school. ''And I am telling this to the many Caivanos of Italy.''

A day before Ms. Meloni's visit, dozens of police officers kept watch on street corners and in parks where the grass grew knee-high. In the wake of the violence, local officials said they would send more officers to patrol the area.

''We don't need more policemen,'' said one older resident, Antonio, who declined to give his full name for fear of being ostracized in his neighborhood. ''We need more time in school, more social workers and more psychologists to help children in families who can't take care of them.''

The two young cousins grew up in public housing in the Rione I.A.C.P. district, in what neighbors described as troubled families. A juvenile court decided to move them to a foster home. Their case is under investigation, and no charges have yet been filed.

''Now that the girls are safe with the competent authorities, we need to think about all the other kids who live here,'' said Bruno Mazza, the president of the A Childhood to Live organization, which runs the only afternoon activities for children in that neighborhood. ''We can't move everybody out -- we need to start from here and now.''

Advocates for women say cases of violence against women and girls are not necessarily growing, but they get more sensational attention in the summer months when news cycles are slow.

Experts said the numbers in Italy, where 27 percent of women say they have experienced violence, were roughly in line with those of other European countries.

''These are cases that resonate, but they are unfortunately nothing new,'' said Antonella Veltri, the president of the Network of Women Against Violence, which runs shelters across the country. ''This is a cultural phenomenon, deeply rooted in a chauvinist society for decades.''

''Now it's taking a new, even more horrible turn with social media that acts like a megaphone,'' she said.

Ms. Veltri was referring to the sensation created by another recent case of gang rape in Palermo, which is still under investigation. This summer, seven young men met a 19-year-old woman at a downtown club. According to the police, they persuaded the bartender to pour her several drinks, encouraged her to smoke marijuana and then took her to an isolated warehouse, where they raped her, beat her and filmed the abuse.

A frame from security video that appeared in the news media showed them carrying her through the streets, as she could barely walk. Another shot showed them leaving her on the ground as they headed to a nearby deli.

Italian newspapers published leaked excerpts alleged to be from the men's WhatsApp messages and conversations. In one, the night was described as ''100 cats on top of a bitch.'' In a tapped conversation, one of the rapists reportedly said it was disgusting because it was ''too many'' on her, but he justified it by saying ''flesh is flesh.''

Eventually the names and addresses of those accused in the case became public, and their social media accounts were filled with insults. But the same was true of the woman's Instagram account. In an interview in an Italian newspaper, she spoke of having suicidal thoughts. The authorities eventually took her to a shelter.

Hundreds of celebrities as well as regular Italians expressed support for the woman with the hashtag ''I am not flesh.'' The father of a girl who was raped in 2020 in Rome wrote a letter to the newspaper La Repubblica in which he described the ''ordeal of having your dignity broken.''

His daughter was 16 at the time and, he said, still had suicidal thoughts. ''A rape is an intricate puzzle of betrayals,'' he wrote. ''The betrayals of those who use you as an object, and of those who see in you, the victim who decided to report it to the police to protect everybody, an annoyance to get rid of, exactly like you were just a disposable container for animal ejaculations.''

According to a recent report from the national statistics agency ISTAT, there is still a pervasive view in Italy that women who are abused were somehow at fault, courting the aggression.

That attitude was echoed this week by Andrea Giambruno, an anchorman on a national commercial television channel, who is also Ms. Meloni's partner and the father of her daughter.

Everyone had a right to enjoy themselves and even get drunk, he said, but if women avoided getting drunk, they might avoid ''getting found by the wolf.''

The remark caused an uproar among leftist politicians and activists. Mr. Giambruno, expressing disgust for his critics, defended himself by reminding them that, in the same broadcast, he had called the rapists ''beasts'' and their acts ''abominable.''

Ms. Meloni has not publicly addressed his remarks.

The idea that women's actions or clothing can trigger violence permeates even the courts in Italy, where sexuality and sexual violence are still not always differentiated.

This year, a court in Florence acquitted two 19-year-olds who were accused of raping an 18-year-old at a party, finding that there had been a ''mistaken perception of consensus,'' since she had slept with one of them in the past.

The European Court of Human Rights and U.N. authorities have often condemned Italy's courts for decisions in rape cases that used offensive language: One acquitted the accused and said he had been ''passionate,'' and another victim was called ''uninhibited.''

Such treatment discourages women from coming forward, said Ilaria Boiano, a lawyer for the Differenza Donna women's association, which runs the national emergency number for women who are victims of violence.

''The latest cases are just the tip of the iceberg, unfortunately,'' she said. ''Many women don't even report it.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/02/world/europe/italy-rape-women-violence.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/02/world/europe/italy-rape-women-violence.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: An abandoned pool in Caivano, Italy, where the police said two young girls were gang raped, top. The two girls, who are cousins, grew up in Caivano's public housing, above left. Bruno Mazza, right, runs a group that provides programs for neighborhood children. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY GIANNI CIPRIANO FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A6.

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[***Rape Cases Seize Italy’s Attention and Expose Cultural Rifts***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6938-06V1-JBG3-6181-00000-00&context=1519360)

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Italian newspapers published leaked excerpts alleged to be from the men’s WhatsApp messages and conversations. In one, the night was described as “100 cats on top of a bitch.” In a tapped conversation, one of the rapists reportedly said it was disgusting because it was “too many” on her, but he justified it by saying “flesh is flesh.”

Eventually the names and addresses of those accused in the case became public, and their social media accounts were filled with insults. But the same was true of the woman’s Instagram account. In an interview in an Italian newspaper, she spoke of having suicidal thoughts. The authorities eventually took her to a shelter.

Hundreds of celebrities as well as regular Italians expressed support for the woman with the hashtag “I am not flesh.” The father of a girl who was raped in 2020 in Rome wrote a letter to the newspaper La Repubblica in which he described the “ordeal of having your dignity broken.”

His daughter was 16 at the time and, he said, still had suicidal thoughts. “A rape is an intricate puzzle of betrayals,” he wrote. “The betrayals of those who use you as an object, and of those who see in you, the victim who decided to report it to the police to protect everybody, an annoyance to get rid of, exactly like you were just a disposable container for animal ejaculations.”

According to a recent report from the national statistics agency ISTAT, there is still a pervasive view in Italy that women who are abused were somehow at fault, courting the aggression.

That attitude was echoed this week by Andrea Giambruno, an anchorman on a national commercial television channel, who is also Ms. Meloni’s partner and the father of her daughter.

Everyone had a right to enjoy themselves and even get drunk, he said, but if women avoided getting drunk, they might avoid “getting found by the wolf.”

The remark caused an uproar among leftist politicians and activists. Mr. Giambruno, expressing disgust for his critics, defended himself by reminding them that, in the same broadcast, he had called the rapists “beasts” and their acts “abominable.”

Ms. Meloni has not publicly addressed his remarks.

The idea that women’s actions or clothing can trigger violence permeates even the courts in Italy, where sexuality and sexual violence are still not always differentiated.

This year, a court in Florence acquitted two 19-year-olds who were accused of raping an 18-year-old at a party, finding that there had been a “mistaken perception of consensus,” since she had slept with one of them in the past.

The European Court of Human Rights and U.N. authorities have often condemned Italy’s courts for decisions in rape cases that used offensive language: One acquitted the accused and said he had been “passionate,” and another victim was called “uninhibited.”

Such treatment discourages women from coming forward, said Ilaria Boiano, a lawyer for the Differenza Donna women’s association, which runs the national emergency number for women who are victims of violence.

“The latest cases are just the tip of the iceberg, unfortunately,” she said. “Many women don’t even report it.”

PHOTOS: An abandoned pool in Caivano, Italy, where the police said two young girls were gang raped, top. The two girls, who are cousins, grew up in Caivano’s public housing, above left. Bruno Mazza, right, runs a group that provides programs for neighborhood children. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY GIANNI CIPRIANO FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A6.

**Load-Date:** September 5, 2023

**End of Document**



[***A Trump-Biden Rematch That Many Are Dreading; letters***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68SH-NDP1-JBG3-619H-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

July 24, 2023 Monday 23:41 EST

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 1184 words

**Highlight:** Readers discuss a column by Pamela Paul that lamented the prospect. Also: The perils of A.I., and limits on its development.

**Body**

To the Editor:

Re “[*The Presidential Rematch Nobody Wants*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/07/20/opinion/columnists/2024-election-biden-trump.html),” by Pamela Paul (column, July 21):

Ms. Paul asks, “Have you met anyone truly excited about Joe Biden running for re-election?”

I am wildly enthusiastic about President Biden, who is the best president in my lifetime. His legislation to repair America’s infrastructure and bring back chip manufacturing are both huge accomplishments. Mr. Biden has done more to combat climate change, the existential issue of the day, than all the presidents who have gone before him.

Mr. Biden extracted us from the endless morass of Afghanistan. He has marshaled the free peoples of the world to stop the Russian takeover of Ukraine, giving dictators around the world pause.

Mr. Biden is the first president in a generation to really believe in unions and to emphasize the issues of working people, understanding how much jobs matter.

I might wish he were 20 years younger. I wish I were 20 years younger.

Most important, Joe Biden is an honorable man at a time when his biggest rivals do not know the meaning of the word. Being honorable is the essential virtue, without which youth or glibness do not matter.

I support his re-election with all my heart and soul.

Gregg Coodley

Portland, Ore.

To the Editor:

We endured (barely) four years of Donald Trump. Now we have Joe Biden, whose time has come and gone, and third party disrupters who know they cannot win but are looking for publicity.

Mr. Biden had his turn, and is exceedingly arrogant to believe that he is our best hope. His good sense and moral values won’t help if Donald Trump wins against him, which is eminently possible. The Democratic Party must nominate a powerfully charismatic candidate.

Mitchell Zuckerman

New Hope, Pa.

To the Editor:

I think Pamela Paul misses the point entirely. No, Biden supporters are not jumping up and down in a crazed frenzy like Trump supporters. That is actually a good thing. People like me who fully support President Biden’s re-election are sick and tired of the nonstop insanity that is Donald Trump. I’m very happy to have a sound, calm, upstanding president who actually gets things done for middle- and ***working-class*** Americans.

Excitement isn’t the answer to solving America’s problems. A president who gets things done is — like Joe Biden!

Sue Everett

Chattanooga, Tenn.

To the Editor:

Pamela Paul is spot on in her diagnosis of the depressing likelihood of Trump vs. Biden, Round 2.

The solution is money, as is true in all things in American politics. The Big Money donors in the Democratic Party should have a conference call with Team Biden and tell it, flat out, we’re not supporting the president’s re-election. It’s time for a younger generation of leaders.

Without their money, President Biden would realize that he cannot run a competitive campaign. But in a strange echo of how Republican leaders genuflect to Donald Trump and don’t confront him, the wealthy contributors to the Democratic Party do exactly the same with Mr. Biden.

Ethan Podell

Rutherford Island, Maine

To the Editor:

In an ideal world, few would want a presidential rematch. Donald Trump is a menace, and it would be nice to have a Democratic nominee who is young, charismatic and exciting. But in the real world, I favor a Trump-Biden rematch, if Mr. Trump is the Republican nominee.

Mr. Biden might shuffle like a senior, and mumble his words, but he is a decent man who loves our country and has delivered beyond expectations.

In leadership crises, Americans yearn for shiny new saviors riding into town on a stallion. I prefer an honest old shoe whom we can count on to get us through an election of a lifetime.

Jerome T. Murphy

Cambridge, Mass.

The writer is a retired Harvard professor and dean who taught courses on leadership.

To the Editor:

I am grateful to Pamela Paul for articulating and encapsulating how I, and probably many others, feel about the impending 2024 presidential race. I appreciate the stability that President Biden returned to the White House and our national politics. However, the future demands so much more than Mr. Biden or any other announced candidate can deliver.

Christine Cunha

Bolinas, Calif.

To the Editor:

Pamela Paul presents many reasons, in her view, why President Biden is a flawed candidate, including that Mr. Biden’s “old age is showing.” As an example, she writes that during an interview on MSNBC he appeared to wander off the set.

Fox News has been pushing this phony notion relentlessly, [*claiming that he walked off while the host was still talking.*](https://www.foxnews.com/video/6330313672112) In fact, the interview was over, Mr. Biden shook hands with the host, they both said goodbye, and while Mr. Biden left the set, the host faced the camera and announced what was coming up next on her show.

Howard Ehrlichman

Huntington, N.Y.

Perils of A.I., and Limits on Its Development

To the Editor:

Re “[*New Worries That Chatbot Reads Faces*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/07/18/technology/openai-chatgpt-facial-recognition.html?searchResultPosition=1)” (Business, July 19):

The integration of facial surveillance and generative A.I. carries a warning: Without prohibitions on the use of certain A.I. techniques, the United States could easily construct a digital dystopia, adopting A.I. systems favored by authoritarian governments for social control.

Our report [*“Artificial Intelligence and Democratic Values”*](https://www.caidp.org/reports/aidv-2022/) established that facial surveillance is among the most controversial A.I. deployments in the world. [*UNESCO urged countries*](https://www.unesco.org/en/artificial-intelligence) to prohibit the use of A.I. for mass surveillance. The European Parliament proposes a ban in the pending [*E.U. Artificial Intelligence Act*](https://artificialintelligenceact.eu/). And Clearview AI, the company that scraped images from websites, is now [*prohibited in many countries*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/09/technology/clearview-ai-suit.html).

Earlier this year, we urged the Federal Trade Commission [*to open an investigation of OpenAI*](https://www.caidp.org/cases/openai/). We specifically asked the agency to prevent the deployment of future versions of ChatGPT, such as the technique that will make it possible to match facial images with data across the internet.

We now urge the F.T.C. to expedite the investigation and clearly prohibit the use of A.I. techniques for facial surveillance. Even the White House announcement of voluntary standards for the A.I. industry offers no guarantee of protection.

Legal standards, not industry assurances, are what is needed now.

Merve Hickok

Lorraine Kisselburgh

Marc Rotenberg

Washington

The writers are, respectively, the president, the chair and the executive director of the Center for A.I. and Digital Policy, an independent research organization. Ms. Hickok testified before Congress in March on the need to establish guardrails for A.I.

To the Editor:

Re “[*Pressed by Biden, Big Tech Agrees to A.I. Rules*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/07/21/us/politics/ai-regulation-biden.html)” (front page, July 22):

It is troubling that the Biden administration is jumping in and exacting “voluntary” limitations on the development of A.I. technologies. The government manifestly lacks the expertise and knowledge necessary to ascertain what guardrails might be appropriate, and the inevitable outcome will be to stifle innovation and reduce competition, the worst possible result.

Imagine what the internet would be today had the government played a similarly intrusive and heavy-handed role at its inception.

Kenneth A. Margolis

Chappaqua, N.Y.

This article appeared in print on page A19.

**Load-Date:** July 24, 2023

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[***A Waterfront Area Mixes Traditional and Trendy***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6938-1381-JBG3-61H8-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

September 3, 2023 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section RE; Column 0; Real Estate Desk; Pg. 7; LIVING IN

**Length:** 1364 words

**Byline:** By Kathleen Lynn

**Body**

With relatively affordable prices and an easy commute to Manhattan, the area is attracting new residents, but it still has a strong sense of community.

Catherine Seaman and Tom Metzger were living in a small, sixth-floor walk-up in the Hell's Kitchen neighborhood of Manhattan in 2022 when they decided that Mr. Metzger, 33, a construction consultant, would need more space if he were going to work comfortably from home. And if they were going to move, Dr. Seaman, 31, a gynecologist, needed an easy commute to Mount Sinai Hospital on the Upper East Side.

They found their answer across the East River, in Astoria, Queens, where they now pay $3,650 a month -- about what they paid in Manhattan -- for a one-bedroom that is twice the size of their old place, in a new complex called Astoria West.

Now they also have room for a dog, a Doberman-German shepherd mix named Jake. Dr. Seaman's commute is half an hour, by ferry and CitiBike. And the couple love Astoria's laid-back pace.

''When you take a walk, there's not a million people around,'' Dr. Seaman said.

With its two-story brick homes, new multifamily developments and easy commute to Manhattan, Astoria has been attracting renters and buyers who want more space for the money than they can find in Manhattan or Brooklyn. That influx of young residents and new construction has resulted in ''a mix of traditional and trendy,'' said Adrienne Onofri, a journalist and the author of ''Walking Queens,'' which maps out walking tours of Astoria and surrounding neighborhoods.

John LaPolla III and Brittany Barb have lived in Astoria since 2014, first in rental apartments and now in a two-family house they bought for $1.09 million in 2021. ''It was definitely the most affordable option for what we were looking for,'' said Mr. LaPolla, 35, who owns a Long Island-based flooring business that takes him around the tristate area, making Astoria's location near highways and the Robert F. Kennedy Bridge an asset.

But they also appreciate that ''the sense of community is really strong,'' said Ms. Barb, 33, a photographer.

The couple bought their home from a family that had owned it for half a century. ''Everybody around us has been here for a long time, and they feel a real sense of pride about the block,'' Mr. LaPolla said. ''It still feels like a ***working-class*** area; it feels like people are making the sauce on Sunday.''

Stephen LoRusso, 33, a video editor, likes the leafy streets and homey atmosphere of the area, where he has rented since 2015. ''I wave to my barber every day when I walk past,'' he said.

And Queens, he added, is ''still relatively affordable compared to Brooklyn.''

What You'll Find

Astoria is bounded by the East River to the north and west; Long Island City, Sunnyside Gardens and Woodside to the south; and Jackson Heights to the east.

The Ditmars-Steinway section of Astoria, north of Ditmars Boulevard, tends to be quieter, with one- and two-family houses. New multifamily buildings are rising in other parts of Astoria, including the East River waterfront.

''As other neighborhoods, like Williamsburg, were trending up to Manhattan prices, Astoria has really over the last few years become very trendy and attracted a lot of new development,'' said Joseph Grosso, a real estate agent with the Corcoran Group in Manhattan, who has represented a number of new developments in Astoria.

Being on the water sets Astoria apart from many New York City neighborhoods, said Craig Wood, the founder and chief executive of Cape Advisors, the developer of the new 534-unit Astoria West apartment complex overlooking the East River. The location, he said, was ''a gem waiting to be found.''

New commercial developments include Wildflower Studios, a seven-story, 775,000-square-foot film production studio under construction on 19th Avenue, backed by the actor Robert De Niro, among other investors.

What You'll Pay

Kenny Lee, an economist for StreetEasy, said online searches for rentals in Astoria have increased by 32 percent in the past year, attributing that to people who have returned to work in Manhattan offices and are looking for easy commutes.

According to information provided by StreetEasy, in the 12 months ending July 31, 2023, the median asking rent increased to $2,600, from $2,290 during the previous 12 months.

As of July 31, 2023, according to data from StreetEasy, the median sale price for co-ops was $460,000, the median sale price for condos was $565,000, and the median sale price for single-family houses and townhouses was $1.265 million.

The number of home sales recorded by StreetEasy declined in the past year: In the 12 months ending on July 31, 2023, 78 co-ops sold, down from 88 during the preceding 12 months; 129 condos sold, down from 215; and 248 single-family homes and townhouses sold, down from 387. Mr. Lee suggested that this was probably because rising mortgage rates have priced out many potential buyers.

The Vibe

Astoria is known for its Greek restaurants, reflecting the community's history as a magnet for Greek immigrants. But serious eaters have a variety of choices when it comes to food, including Italian, Mexican and, in a section of Steinway Street known as Little Egypt, Egyptian and Moroccan. Bohemian Hall, a social club and beer garden founded more than a century ago, is a legacy of an earlier wave of Czech and Slovak immigrants.

''We made a promise to ourselves when we moved here that we'd go back to Manhattan for dinner once a week,'' Dr. Seaman said. ''But most weeks we don't -- there are so many fun restaurants and bars here.''

While some national retail and restaurant chains are venturing into Astoria, including a Target that's coming to 31st Street near Ditmars Boulevard, many of the businesses are mom-and-pop operations where proprietors get to know their customers, said Sonia Mylonas, who covers the neighborhood with a website and a magazine called Give Me Astoria.

The oldest and largest city pool in New York City is in Astoria Park, which stretches along the East River, under the Robert F. Kennedy Bridge (formerly the Triborough Bridge) and the Hell Gate railroad bridge.

''I walk to the park two or three times a week after work, take a book and sit by the water,'' said Mr. LoRusso, the video editor.

The Schools

Astoria has 13 public elementary schools, including a charter school, and three intermediate schools. The Baccalaureate School for Global Education, which follows the rigorous International Baccalaureate program, serves students in seventh through 12th grade. The Young Women's Leadership School of Astoria enrolls girls in sixth through 12th grade.

Public high schools in or near Astoria include William Cullen Bryant High School, Long Island City High School and Frank Sinatra School of the Arts. Private options include St. John's Prep, a coed Roman Catholic school for students in ninth through 12th grade.

The Commute

Traveling to Astoria from Midtown Manhattan by subway usually takes less than half an hour on the N, W, R or M lines.

The N.Y.C. Ferry, which opened in 2017, zigzags across the East River, linking Astoria to East 90th Street in Manhattan, Roosevelt Island, Long Island City, East 34th Street, the Brooklyn Navy Yard and Pier 11 near Wall Street. The fare is $4 one way, or $27.50 for 10 trips.

Drivers have easy access to Grand Central Parkway, Brooklyn-Queens Expressway and the Robert F. Kennedy Bridge, which connects Queens to Manhattan and the Bronx.

The History

The worlds of music and film both have legacies in Astoria. Piano maker Steinway & Sons was founded by Henry Engelhard Steinway in Manhattan in 1853; his son William moved the company's operations to Queens in the early 1870s. About 300 people now work at the Astoria site, which includes Steinway's American headquarters and a factory that produces more than 1,200 pianos a year.

Kaufman Astoria Studios, which opened in 1920, later became a home for Paramount Pictures. During World War II, the studio was used to make military training films. Movie, television and commercial productions are still made there.

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[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/30/realestate/astoria-queens-nyc-neighborhood.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/30/realestate/astoria-queens-nyc-neighborhood.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: A walk along the water as the sun sets on Astoria Park, with views of the Hell Gate Bridge and the Robert F. Kennedy Bridge, is one of the perks for residents of Astoria, Queens. (PHOTOGRAPH BY MAANSI SRIVASTAVA/THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page RE7.

**Load-Date:** September 3, 2023

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[***Letters***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65M7-8GC1-DXY4-X0R5-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

June 5, 2022 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section BR; Column 0; Book Review Desk; Pg. 10

**Length:** 776 words

**Body**

Left Out

To the Editor:

Claire Berlinski, in her review of Camille Kouchner's ''The Familia Grande'' (May 22), states that the story really begins in 1968 with ''protests, organized by French students,'' that ''quickly spread beyond academia.'' This is a common but false representation of those protests. I was a privileged American student at l'UniversitÃ© d'Aix-Marseilles that year. We were clearly told by our professors, in the fall, that the unions and leftist parties were planning nationwide rallies, strikes and protests for the 10th anniversary of DeGaulle taking power. The students, closely aligned with those leftist movements (and many of them ***working-class*** themselves), naturally took part. But all the U.S. media was cognizant of, or would report on, was the students. Unions? Leftist parties? ***Working-class*** people? What are those? Afterward, the students were all anyone remembered.

That alliance of unions, workers and students brought the country to a halt. At our present moment, in this country and around the world, we should understand the real history.

Henry Bloom, M.D. University Heights, Ohio

Jacob Taubes

To the Editor:

Ordinarily, we would embrace the idea that reviewers are entitled to their own opinions. However, Mark Lilla's review of Jerry Muller's ''Professor of Apocalypse'' (May 22), a biography of our father, Jacob Taubes, is so steeped in sensationalism and hyperbole that it demands a response. First, full disclosure: We authorized this biography, and the author shared his research and many drafts. Although differences of opinion occasionally arose, we always respected the integrity, fairness and critical balance of Muller's scholarship.

To be sure, our father was a deeply flawed and controversial man who sometimes suffered from mental illness and engaged in destructive behavior. But Muller's biography offers a far more holistic portrait of his ''many lives'' than Lilla's repulsive caricature, which revels in almost every salacious highlight in Muller's account at the expense of his many more spiritual, generous and redemptive qualities.

Lilla maligns our father's scholarly reputation by falsely claiming that most of his ideas were borrowed or patently derivative. While our father did develop his ideas in sometimes contentious conversation with others, it is reckless and sloppy to dismiss his work. Beyond contributing to postwar topics Lilla shoots down, our father's original thought on the Apostle Paul has been recognized in philosophical Paul scholarship, a topic discussed in Ole Jacob Loland's ''Pauline Ugliness: Jacob Taubes and the Turn to Paul.''

Equally reprehensible is Lilla's suggestion that our father's behavior led to our mother's suicide, when the two had been separated and living independent lives for almost a decade by then. We were puzzled by the motives for such a sweeping dismissal and by the thought process that led Lilla to describe our father's intellectual practice as ''erotic.''

Ethan TaubesCatskill, N.Y.

Tanaquil Taubes, M.D.New York

â™¦

To the Editor:

The ''brilliant if shady scholar of Jewish mysticism'' Jacob Taubes continues to exert a peculiar magnetic pull: Upon spotting Mark Lilla's review of the new Taubes biography, I abandoned my next errand and raced home to read the essay. Given Taubes's concern with messianic redemption, and awareness of ''what that yearning can make people do,'' my excitement owed in part to longing for my late father -- another brilliantly quixotic, lightly published polymath (and a lovely person, but I am of course biased) who introduced me to Taubes's work.

Taubes's manifest flaws notwithstanding, his keen sense for the unknowable, unreachable sources of our yearning perhaps intimates his own internal chaos. Poignantly, Taubes's interlocutor who saw state power as a bulwark against chaos, Carl Schmitt, lived much longer (to nearly 100). Yet as Taubes recognized, in the end, mystery envelops all.

Andrew M. Wender Victoria, British Columbia

Correction

The Up Close feature on May 22 misstated in some copies the surname of a photojournalist, the author of ''Communism(s): A Cold War Album.'' He is Arthur Grace, not Close.

[*books@nytimes.comThe*](mailto:books@nytimes.comThe) Times welcomes letters from readers. Letters for publication should include the writer's name, address and telephone number. Letters should be addressed to The Editor, The New York Times Book Review, 620 Eighth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10018. The email address is [*books@nytimes.com*](mailto:books@nytimes.com) Letters may be edited for length and clarity. We regret that because of the large volume of mail received, we are unable to acknowledge or to return unpublished letters.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/12/books/review/letters-to-the-editor.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/12/books/review/letters-to-the-editor.html)

**Load-Date:** June 5, 2022

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[***Looking Back on a Formative Friendship With Compassion; Fiction***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68JR-DS21-JBG3-60YS-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

June 27, 2023 Tuesday 22:32 EST

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**Section:** BOOKS; review

**Length:** 1029 words

**Byline:** Hamilton Cain

**Highlight:** In her new novel, “The Rachel Incident,” Caroline O’Donoghue examines the bond between two young booksellers in Ireland.

**Body**

In her new novel, “The Rachel Incident,” Caroline O’Donoghue examines the bond between two young booksellers in Ireland.

THE RACHEL INCIDENT, by Caroline O’Donoghue

The turn of the century saw L.G.B.T.Q. characters stride boldly into popular culture, shedding caricatures and claiming spaces long denied them. No television series embodied that shift more than “[*Will &amp; Grace*](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/09/27/arts/television/will-and-grace-review.html),” NBC’s ratings juggernaut that chronicled the complex friendship of Will Truman, a gay lawyer, and Grace Adler, a straight interior decorator.

Although it was set in Manhattan, and many of its jokes are now dated, the show resonated across the country and overseas, becoming an inflection point for millennial writers such as Caroline O’Donoghue. In her exuberant, bitingly satirical “The Rachel Incident,” O’Donoghue nods at “Will &amp; Grace” while probing the bonds between an Irish student and a young gay man involved in a surreptitious romance with a closeted professor.

Rachel Murray is a happily married, pregnant journalist based in present-day London, where she’s written extensively about the legalization of abortion in her native Republic of Ireland. While filing a piece for The Hibernian Post, she discovers that Fred Byrne, her long-ago Victorian literature instructor at University College Cork, is now in a coma. The memory of Byrne conjures a pivotal year in Rachel’s past, and she feels the urge to text her closest friend, James Devlin, now an accomplished screenwriter living in New York. Once upon a time, James was involved with Byrne.

Most of the novel unfolds in 2010, as the Irish economy crumbles amid a global recession. Almost six feet tall, on the cusp of graduation with no clear career path, Rachel is keenly aware of her beige “middle-middle-class” upbringing. She has benefited from a rung halfway up the social ladder, but doesn’t click with others above or below her. Dazzled by Byrne, indifferent to her parents’ struggles, Rachel aspires vaguely to a life of the mind. She takes a job at a bookstore, where she immediately befriends her colleague James. There’s a touch of the devil in him, but what she really surrenders to is his ***working-class*** charm. The pair move into a flat on Shandon Street, where they binge episodes of “Absolutely Fabulous” and Cher movies. Theirs is a platonic relationship, a “rare orchid,” as Rachel calls it, one that requires careful cultivation.

“Over the course of just a month, I would be colonized by James on a molecular level,” Rachel notes, “and my personality would mold around his whenever there was space to do so.” Born in England, James had immigrated to Cork as a child: “His English accent was mostly gone, but he still peppered his speech with words like ‘minge.’ He called college ‘uni,’ which I liked because ‘Rachel’s off to uni’ made me feel clean and jolly hockey sticks about my education.” She adores him because he adores her, reveling in his attention.

The great world spins; tides rise and fall; aimless 20-somethings flirt with danger. Rachel and James burn through their earnings on parties and in pubs, hanging out among a like-minded crowd, a “Gaynaissance” of Cork-based Wills and Graces. (O’Donoghue includes a running gag about the series.) Rachel’s crush on Dr. Byrne leads to a sham book launch where she intends to seduce him; instead, he and James hook up in the stockroom after hours, embarking on a fraught liaison. The trio come to an understanding and maintain a cone of silence, deceiving Deenie Harrington, Byrne’s glamorous wife and editor, and Carey, Rachel’s roguish boyfriend, whose on-again-off-again presence (“harder to pin down than egg whites”) only stokes her desire. She rhapsodizes about his abs.

This might sound like a raunchier version of a sitcom — “Will &amp; Grace” with a soupçon of “Sex and the City” — but O’Donoghue has something more sophisticated in mind, hidden beneath the shagging and banter. “The Rachel Incident” recalls the fiction of both Sally Rooney and Anne Tyler as the author interrogates the dynamics of power, from academia to publishing houses to bedrooms.

In the vein of characters from “Normal People” or Tyler’s Baltimore novels, Rachel is astute and funny as hell: “Dr. Byrne posed for shots, holding the book in different positions,” she observes at the launch. “The photographer filled the same role as a clown might at a child’s birthday party. There was a sense that, without him, it was just a bunch of adults who knew each other and were willing to participate in the role play that one of them was famous for a day. It seemed a revolutionary act of kindness, like the Make-a-Wish Foundation but for well-liked men nearing 40.”

O’Donoghue also keeps an eye on a handful of subplots. Ireland’s economy craters; the Murrays scrape to pay bills. Rachel gets another job at a call center, but pines for a true profession. Confident in her status as one-half of an alpha couple, Deenie offers Rachel an internship, enlisting her mentee’s assistance with an anthology of her famous father’s poetry.

Present-day Rachel opines that “it is vanishingly rare for a person working in the arts to admit that a blood connection secured their place within it.” After a harrowing dinner at the Harrington-Byrnes’ Edwardian flat, Rachel realizes that she prefers the warmth of James and Carey to the chilly poses of the affluent: “I hated her, then. Hated her friends, her daughter-of-a-poet beauty, her fake money worries. I hated him. Hated his cowardice, the way he pretended to love James, the way he was a tourist in our lives.”

Byrne, of course, is no accidental tourist, and his machinations topple like dominoes. Can Rachel reinvent herself? O’Donoghue steers us toward reckonings large and small, her hand steady on the tiller. All the incidents in “The Rachel Incident” add up to a gratifying, accomplished novel.

Hamilton Cain is a book critic and the author of “This Boy’s Faith: Notes From a Southern Baptist Upbringing.”

THE RACHEL INCIDENT | By Caroline O’Donoghue | 304 pp. | Alfred A. Knopf | $28

Hamilton Cain is a book critic and the author of “This Boy’s Faith: Notes from a Southern Baptist Upbringing.”

This article appeared in print on page BR9.

**Load-Date:** August 28, 2023

**End of Document**



[***The Republican Party Has Devolved Into a Racket; Guest Essay***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:696F-26P1-DXY4-X191-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

September 18, 2023 Monday 14:20 EST

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**Section:** OPINION; politics

**Length:** 1634 words

**Byline:** Sam Rosenfeld and Daniel Schlozman

**Highlight:** The G.O.P. has lost a commitment to solving the nation’s problems and become purposeless.

**Body**

This is the Republican Party today. In the House, Speaker Kevin McCarthy, trying to corral a fractious majority, has ordered an impeachment inquiry into President Biden over his son’s financial entanglements, even as elements in his caucus push to shut down the government unless there are drastic cuts in spending. In the Senate, Mitt Romney announced his plan to retire, having [*declared to his biographer*](https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2023/11/mitt-romney-retiring-senate-trump-mcconnell/675306/) that “a very large portion of my party really doesn’t believe in the Constitution.”

In Wisconsin and North Carolina, G.O.P. legislators push the envelope of hardball tactics to remove or disempower Democrats in other branches of government. And in the presidential campaign, Republican contenders struggle to make the case for a non-Trump candidacy without antagonizing Donald Trump’s many supporters, and often avoid major spheres of public policy.

Together these depict a party that is preoccupied with antics that crash into the guardrails of American political life and conspicuously lacks a coherent, forward-looking vision for governing. A modern political party has devolved into a racket.

The country needs a right-of-center party. But today, as the G.O.P. has lost a collective commitment to solving the nation’s problems and become purposeless, the line separating party politics from political conspiracy has frayed. Mr. Trump, in this way, is the product more than the author of that collective party failure.

The Georgia election case against Mr. Trump and 18 others makes for a particularly powerful X-ray of the party. The sheer array and specific identities of those indicted in the case highlights how easily a conspiracist approach to political life, unconstrained by a party now incapable of policing boundaries or channeling passions into a larger purpose beyond raw hardball, can justify and compel illicit machinations.

The defendants in the Georgia case represent every major component of what scholars term a modern “party network”: formal party organizations at the state and local level (like the former Georgia party chairman David Shafer), informal activist and interest groups (like John Eastman of the Claremont Institute) and candidate-centered operations (like Harrison Floyd of Black Voices for Trump).

Beyond those indicted, the broader party work of evasion and deflection contributes to the conspiracy. The posture’s stock-in-trade is an “anti-anti” discourse, which focuses on excoriating foes rather than making explicit defenses of behavior or positive arguments about plans for the country. As Senator Romney described the dynamic among his colleagues, “These guys have got to justify their silence, at least to themselves.” A conservative media ecosystem, including Fox News, helps enable a politics of performative antics and profits handsomely from it.

The Trump-focused personalism that has defined Republican politics since 2015 is more a symptom than the cause of the party’s pathology. Indeed, the combined conspiracy of insider electoral malfeasance and outsider “anti-anti” attacks says less about how spellbound the party is by Mr. Trump than about how aimless it has become beyond the struggle for power and the demonization of its enemies.

Conspiracism has a long provenance on the American right, reaching back to McCarthyism and the John Birch Society. So does a ruthlessly mercenary view of political parties. A speaker at the second Conservative Political Action Conference in 1975 deemed parties “no more than instruments, temporary and disposable.” Such activists soon occupied the party’s commanding heights.

Along with that activism came the constriction of the party’s vision for the public good. Starting in the 1970s, Republicans won elections by marrying a regressive economic agenda with us-versus-them populist appeals. At moments like the “Reagan revolution,” Jack Kemp’s work to broaden conservatism’s appeal to more ***working-class*** voters or George W. Bush and Karl Rove’s ambition to build an enduring Republican majority around an “opportunity society,” the party’s collective effort could take on a confident and expansive cast.

But the programmatic side of the party, under the leadership of figures like Paul Ryan (a Kemp protégé), came eventually to alienate even the party’s own base with an unpopular agenda more and more tailored to the affluent.

By 2016, as a demagogue unleashed a hostile takeover of a hollowed and delegitimized party, the conspiracism and the transactional view of political institutions had fully joined. Conspiracism brought about active conspiracy.

But conspiracy and party have an even longer history, one that stretches back to the frenzied and unbounded politics of the early Republic. In the 1790s, the emergent parties of Hamiltonian Federalists and Jeffersonian Democratic-Republicans fell into personalized strife, but possessed neither the legitimacy nor the machinery to channel and stabilize the conflict. The organizers of new party activity on both sides were, to a one, avowedly antiparty politicians, and so they conceived of their efforts as a temporary expediency — emergency measures necessary to combat the nefarious conspiracies threatening to undermine the Constitution.

In an era in which personal reputation was still inextricable from conflict over public matters, politicians refused to accept their opponents as legitimate, let alone as constituting a loyal opposition.

For example, the vitriol and paranoia that attended the election of 1800, pitting the incumbent John Adams against Thomas Jefferson, underscored the danger that a politics unfettered by strong parties poses to the Republic. The election featured not merely epic bouts of mudslinging but credible threats of collective violence and secession from both sides.

The construction of mass political parties in subsequent generations — organizations with huge electoral bases and institutions like nominating conventions for party decision-making — channeled individual ambition into collective public purposes. At times, to be sure, as when Democratic pioneers of the mass party of the 19th century aimed for a cross-sectional politics that would sideline the divisive slavery question, the stability achieved through party politics actually suppressed conflict necessary to providing genuine political alternatives.

But with mass parties came a shared understanding that the erosion of collective party principle could threaten a reversion to the 18th century’s politics-as-cabal. As the early political scientist Francis Lieber put it in 1839, “all parties are exposed to the danger of passing over into factions, which, if carried still farther, may become conspiracies.”

The Republican Party of the 21st century has succumbed to that danger, and so revived something of the brittle and unstable quality of politics in the Republic’s early years. This leaves the Republic itself, now as then, vulnerable.

Parties organize political conflict — what the political theorists Russell Muirhead and Nancy Rosenblum term “the discipline of regulated rivalry” — but they also offer projects with visions, however blinkered and partial, for how societies should handle their challenges and build their futures.

Without that commitment to solve problems, the tendencies to conspiracism and ultimately conspiracy prove harder to resist. Barring the sort of fundamental course correction that typically comes only from the defeats of many political actors in multiple elections, those tendencies inside the Republican Party will endure long after, and regardless of how, Mr. Trump departs from the scene.

This is not to impugn every Republican. As confirmed by both the federal and Georgia election-related indictments, many Republican officials, like the Georgia secretary of state, Brad Raffensperger, resisted intense pressure to interfere with the election and did their duty. And for all their defenses of Mr. Trump against his several indictments, his Republican presidential rivals have generally shied away from taking the critical step of saying they would have acted differently from Mike Pence when the Electoral College votes were counted at the Capitol on Jan. 6.

But these responsible individual actions simply cannot substitute for a conspicuously missing party project.

Might that project emerge from Republican governors? Lacking the option of substituting antics for governance, they have forged viable approaches in power. Indeed, many of the country’s [*most popular governors*](https://morningconsult.com/governor-rankings/) are Republicans.

But our polarized political system is also a nationalized one, where state-level success as a problem solver too often obstructs rather than clears a path to national influence within the Republican Party. And we have no illusions that behavior dangerous to democracy will lead to long-lasting punishment at the polls.

To see the personalism around Mr. Trump in the context of the entire party is to see past the breathless statements about his magnetic appeal and to observe a party more bent on destroying its enemies than on the tough work of solving hard problems.

As long as that remains so, the impulse to conspiracy will remain, and democracy will depend on keeping it in check.

Sam Rosenfeld, an associate professor of political science at Colgate, and Daniel Schlozman, an associate professor of political science at Johns Hopkins, are the authors of the forthcoming “[*The Hollow Parties*](https://press.princeton.edu/books/hardcover/9780691248554/the-hollow-parties): The Many Pasts and Disordered Present of American Party Politics.”

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PHOTO: (PHOTOGRAPH BY Sam Whitney/The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** September 19, 2023

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[***A Singer-Songwriter Caught in Two Worlds***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64F5-2CG1-JBG3-61HF-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

January 1, 2022 Saturday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section C; Column 0; The Arts/Cultural Desk; Pg. 2

**Length:** 1149 words

**Byline:** By Alex Marshall

**Body**

The musician is fast becoming one of Britain's biggest rock acts with tracks about ***working class*** life in North Shields. Can he let himself leave the town?

NORTH SHIELDS, England -- Sam Fender, a singer-songwriter often labeled Britain's answer to Bruce Springsteen, realized his life had changed for good on Halloween.

This year he bought ''eight massive boxes'' of chocolate for any children who might knock on his door in North Shields, a ***working class*** town that sits on the banks of the River Tyne in northeast England.

Fender expected the stash to last all night, but it went almost instantly.

''Everyone in the neighborhood was, like, 'That's Sam Fender's house, let's go knock!''' the musician recalled in a recent interview at his studio a short walk from the town center, in a nondescript building surrounded by car mechanics' workshops. The trick or treaters' parents were more keen on getting selfies with the star than candy, whether they knew his music or not. ''That scared us a bit,'' he said. ''It was just nuts.''

Over the past year, Fender, 27, has become one of Britain's biggest music stars, but said he still doesn't want to be ''that guy'' who is too famous to answer his door on Halloween -- a position that touches on a tension running through his newfound success: how to be a star while remaining part of the local community that defines his songwriting.

His second album of anthemic pop-rock, ''Seventeen Going Under,'' released in October, quickly hit the top of the British charts, just like his debut did, and since then he's sold out arenas, announced a 45,000-capacity outdoor show in London and charmed the British public by appearing hung over on morning TV.

For a few weeks this fall, the album's title track sparked a TikTok trend because of lyrics -- ''I was far too scared to hit him, but I would hit him in a heartbeat now'' -- that speak to suffering at the hands of bullies and domestic abusers.

[Video: Watch on YouTube.]

All that success had been built on the back of North Shields, a depressed town of some 30,000 people in a region where 34 percent of children live in poverty, but is also home, Fender said, to some of ''the funniest, most loving, caring people you've ever met.''

Fender sets most of his songs in the town, often referencing local pubs or fistfights on the nearby chilly beaches, and sings about his and his friends' experiences, including troubled childhoods, male suicides and widespread political alienation.

Owain Davies, Fender's manager who was also born locally, said Fender's songs were ''emotive and powerful,'' but their subject matter allows them to ''speak for a lot of people up here -- a lot of us.''

Now Fender is in a sort of limbo, unable to have a normal life in North Shields or Newcastle, the nearest city, as he tries to navigate fame, even as he desperately wants to. ''I'm bouncing between two complete opposites and I'm in a stage now where I don't feel I belong in either of them,'' Fender said, breaking eye contact only for bites of a chicken burger with copious mayonnaise he'd ordered from his local pub.

The thought of leaving home was difficult for an artist in the northeast in a way it wouldn't necessarily be for someone from London, he explained: ''We're tribal. Anything from Newcastle that does good belongs to Newcastle.''

At a time when many British music stars attended performing arts schools and arrive primed for success, Fender's route to fame is more illustrative of the barriers class can still present. Class has long animated music here, as a topic for songs and a badge of honor: The Clash made supporting workers' rights part of its mission and the Sex Pistols sneered at the Queen; the Britpop battles of the 1990s pitted the middle-class Blur against the ***working-class*** Oasis, as the arty Pulp sang about posh outsiders slumming it with common people.

After initially growing up on a middle class street in North Shields, things became difficult, Fender said, after his parents divorced when he was 8. As a teenager, he lived with his mother, a nurse who had to stop work because she suffered from fibromyalgia, a condition that causes pain and fatigue.

''We were always having to beg, borrow and steal off anyone who could help her,'' Fender said.

At 18, Fender was working in a local pub to support them both when Davies, the manager, came in. At his boss's encouragement, Fender played the Beatles song ''Get Back'' followed by one of his own tracks.

Davies, recalling that moment in a telephone interview, said he'd drunk several pints of beer by that point but was still ''totally struck by this incredible voice.'' He immediately got on the phone to book Fender some proper shows.

''It feels like a Disney story when you tell it,'' Fender said, adding, ''Davies saved my life.''

What followed was far from a fairy tale of overnight success, though. For the next few years, Fender kept playing gigs and writing songs, ''trying to figure out who I was,'' he said.

Then, age 20, he became seriously ill (he won't discuss the condition's specifics) and sat in the hospital thinking, ''If I'm going to die young, I want to make sure I've wrote something worth listening to.'' Soon, he was writing songs about his life in North Shields.

This local focus has won him fans far from Britain. Steven Van Zandt, a veteran member of Bruce Springsteen's E Street Band who regularly plays Fender's music on his radio show in the United States, said in a telephone interview that Fender ''could have taken the easy route'' thanks to his voice and looks. Instead, Fender chose to sing ''these intensely personal songs of ***working class*** life that had no guarantee of success,'' Van Zandt said, calling that decision ''courageous.''

Fender seemed overjoyed some of his heroes, who include Springsteen, loved his music, but in an hourlong interview, he returned to talking about his hometown again and again. At one point, he mentioned a campaign he led last year to stop the local council from charging people money for calling its emergency help lines for the homeless. After Fender took to social media to complain about the problem, the council promised to make the lines free.

''I sometimes feel like, 'Am I really doing anything that good?''' Fender said. That was a rare moment when he felt he was, he said.

Fender insisted he would never leave North Shields behind and became visibly anxious when talking about the possibility. But Halloween night and other similar experiences had shown him it might be time to try living somewhere else for at least a few months. Somewhere that doesn't feel like a ''goldfish bowl,'' he said, maybe New York, maybe London, somewhere that is ''the opposite of where I'm from.'' The only thing for certain was his songs wouldn't change.

''You can take a lad out of Shields,'' he said, ''but you can't take Shields out of the lad.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2021/12/30/arts/music/sam-fender.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/12/30/arts/music/sam-fender.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: In North Shields, England, which Sam Fender says is home to some of ''the funniest, most loving, caring people you've ever met.'' (PHOTOGRAPH BY MARY TURNER FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** January 1, 2022

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[***Michelle Wu is the first woman and first person of color to be elected mayor of Boston.***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:640K-P361-JBG3-61G8-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

November 3, 2021 Wednesday 11:47 EST

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**Section:** US; elections

**Length:** 358 words

**Byline:** Ellen Barry

**Highlight:** “We are ready to be a Boston for everyone,” said Ms. Wu, whose campaign was buoyed by support from the city’s young, left-leaning voters and by Black, Asian and Latino residents.

**Body**

BOSTON — Michelle Wu, who entered public service out of frustration with the obstacles that her immigrant family faced, will be the next mayor of Boston, pledging to make the city a proving ground for progressive policy.

Buoyed by support from the city’s young, left-leaning voters and by Black, Asian and Latino residents, Ms. Wu, 36, soundly defeated City Councilor Annissa Essaibi George.

Ms. Essaibi George, who ran as a pragmatic centrist in the style of former Mayor Martin J. Walsh, had the backing of the city’s traditional power centers, like its police, its trade unions and its ***working-class*** Irish American neighborhoods.

“From every corner of our city, Boston has spoken,” Ms. Wu said, to a jubilant crowd in the city’s South End. “We are ready to meet the moment. We are ready to be a Boston for everyone.”

Conceding the race, Ms. Essaibi George said, “I want to offer a great big congratulations to Michelle Wu.”

“She is the first woman, first person of color, and as an Asian American, the first elected to be mayor of Boston,” she said. “I know this is no small feat.”

Ms. Wu — who grew up outside Chicago and moved to the Boston area to attend Harvard — was [*an unusual candidate for this city,*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/10/28/us/michelle-wu-boston-election.html) and her victory sets a number of precedents.

She is the first woman and [*the first person of color to be elected mayor in Boston*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/09/us/boston-mayor-election.html), which [*has been led by an unbroken string of Irish American or Italian American men since the 1930s*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/11/06/us/boston-city-council-change.html). Kim Janey, a Black woman, has served as acting mayor since March, when Mr. Walsh was confirmed as the U.S. labor secretary. Ms. Wu will also be the first mayor of Boston [*not born in the city*](https://www.wgbh.org/news/politics/2021/04/14/are-bostonians-wedded-to-the-idea-that-the-mayor-should-be-born-here) since 1925.

Boston has been booming, as jobs in technology, medicine and education attract waves of young professionals. But that success has come at a cost, forcing ***working-class*** and middle-class families to leave the city in search of affordable housing.

Ms. Wu has promised to push back against gentrification, with policies tailored to help lower-income residents stay in the city, such as waiving fees for public transport, imposing a form of rent control, and reapportioning city contracts to firms owned by Black Bostonians.

**Load-Date:** November 3, 2021

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[***Battleground Nevada***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:654B-WSS1-DXY4-X0F7-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

April 1, 2022 Friday 15:28 EST

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**Section:** BRIEFING

**Length:** 1882 words

**Byline:** David Leonhardt

**Highlight:** The state will help determine Senate control in this year’s midterm elections.

**Body**

The state will help determine Senate control in this year’s midterm elections.

Nevada, perhaps more than any other state, has showcased the potential for a more diverse America to move the country’s politics to the left. Rising numbers of Asian American and Latino residents have helped Democrats win the state in the past four presidential elections. The party also holds both of Nevada’s Senate seats.

Now, however, Nevada highlights a more worrisome trend for Democrats: their struggles with ***working-class*** voters, including voters of color. Those struggles are threatening the Democratic dream of a lasting majority produced by demographic change.

“Senator Catherine Cortez Masto, a Nevada Democrat and the country’s first Latina senator, is one of the party’s most endangered incumbents,” my colleagues Jennifer Medina and Reid Epstein write, [*in a profile of the campaign*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/04/01/us/politics/nevada-midterms-democrats.html). The race is one of several competitive Senate campaigns this year for Democratic incumbents, with others in Arizona, Georgia and New Hampshire. Losing any would endanger Democrats’ Senate control.

Some of the Democrats’ challenges this year reflect the usual struggles of a president’s party in the midterms, when opposition voters tend to be more energized. Yet Cortez Masto, who’s a former Nevada attorney general and protégé of the late Senator Harry Reid, is also battling more enduring trends.

Nevada is a ***working-class*** state, where about one-quarter of adults have a four-year college degree — and Democrats have increasingly become [*the party of highly educated professionals*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/09/08/us/politics/how-college-graduates-vote.html). In 2020, this dynamic hurt the party among Latinos, who [*shifted modestly*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/04/02/us/politics/trump-latino-voters-2020.html) toward Donald Trump. Nearly 30 percent of Nevadans are Latino.

Moderate Democrats tend to blame progressives for these problems, and progressives tend to blame moderates. I think both sides have a point, and today’s newsletter will use Nevada as a case study.

The left’s point

“I don’t know what the government does for us, even when they say they want to help,” Margarita Mejia, 68, a retired hotel worker in Las Vegas, told The Times.

Mejia has often voted for Democrats, but she said that she sat out the election in 2020. When asked if she knew the name of the Nevada senator running for re-election this year — Cortez Masto — Mejia said no.

President Biden was elected on an agenda designed to combat this apathy. It promised tangible help for ***working-class*** families, with policies to lower the cost of prescription drugs, eyeglasses, dental care, pre-K and more. Polls show many of these policies, including the tax increases on the rich that would pay for the bill, are [*highly popular*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/09/29/briefing/democrats-agenda-biden.html).

But a small number of Democratic centrists in the Senate have kept even a scaled-down plan from passing so far. The most prominent have been Joe Manchin and Kyrsten Sinema. They describe the bill as too radical.

(Manchin and Sinema have also cited the risk of inflation, but the economist Larry Summers — who has warned loudly about inflation — explained on [*Ezra Klein’s podcast*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/03/29/podcasts/transcript-ezra-klein-interviews-larry-summers.html) why that fear is misplaced.)

In opposing the bill, the senators are embracing [*an elite version of centrism*](https://nymag.com/intelligencer/2021/11/joe-biden-agenda.html) that most Americans reject, as Jonathan Chait of New York Magazine has noted. Manchin has blocked economic programs that would help many of his constituents, and Sinema is blocking taxes on the rich. Both appear to be blocking new corporate regulations.

Obviously, there are substantive arguments in favor of an economy in which the wealthy pay low taxes and corporations are lightly regulated. But most ***working-class*** voters do not buy those arguments. By adopting them, a small number of congressional Democrats [*have made Biden look weak*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/02/25/opinion/democrats-squad-moderates-progressives.html), as The Times’s Jamelle Bouie has written.

They have also left voters like Mejia unsure what Biden and the federal government have done for them. No wonder many see politics as disconnected from daily life.

The center’s point

To raise her profile with Latino voters, Cortez Masto recently released [*a Spanish-language biographical video*](https://vimeo.com/685973525/784c10ad8d), showing family photos set to uplifting music. The narrator starts by explaining that Cortez Masto’s grandfather and father served in the military and ends by saying that she defends workers and supports small businesses “because they carry the aspirations of our families.”

These themes — family, military service, economic underdogs — are a mix of populist and conservative. They are also a reminder of why the Democratic Party has turned off some voters, including Latinos, with an increasingly liberal message over the past decade. That liberal message tends to downplay the country’s distinctiveness and [*highlight Americans’ differences*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/02/17/briefing/san-francisco-losing-liberal.html) rather than their similarities.

“Hispanics appear to be increasingly turned off by progressive mottos and movements,” Mike Madrid, a Republican consultant, [*wrote for Times Opinion*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/03/22/opinion/politics/latinos-democratic-party.html).

After Latino voters shifted toward Republicans in 2020, Equis Research, a public-opinion firm focused on Latinos, spent months trying to understand why. Equis [*concluded*](https://equisresearch.medium.com/post-mortem-part-two-the-american-dream-voter-66dd6f673d1e) that while most Latino voters did not particularly like Trump — and opposed some of his policies, like family separation and corporate tax cuts — they preferred his approach on several big issues.

Many were uncomfortable with some Democrats’ openness to socialism (and were bombarded with Republican ads about it). Many agreed with Trump about the importance of border security. Some thought the Democrats ignored actual Latino concerns (as opposed to political activists’ impression of those concerns).

Above all, many Latinos liked Trump’s emphasis on reopening the economy, Equis found. Asked if they approved of his policy of “living without fear of Covid,” 55 percent of Latinos said yes. Even now, with highly effective vaccines and treatments available, some liberal Democrats continue to favor [*indefinite Covid restrictions*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/03/18/briefing/covid-risks-poll-americans.html).

“I’m super Mexican, but just the way he wanted to keep jobs here, and the way he wanted to promote the economy, that was something admirable,” said a 33-year-old Texas woman who voted for Obama, skipped the 2016 election and voted for Trump in 2020.

The common theme is that the same highly progressive agenda that’s popular with college graduates and Democratic activists is souring many ***working-class*** Latinos on the party. Like many other demographic groups, Latinos are politically diverse, and most still supported Biden in 2020. But the decline in their support helps explain why the party fared worse than expected.

If that decline continues, it will mean trouble for Democrats, in Nevada and beyond. Cortez Masto’s biographical ad suggests she understands the problems that both the political left and center are causing, whether or not she can solve them.

For more: [*Read the story by Jennifer and Reid*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/04/01/us/politics/nevada-midterms-democrats.html), which notes that Cortez Masto’s likely opponent oversaw Trump’s effort in Nevada to overturn the 2020 election result.

THE LATEST NEWS

State of the War

* Russia’s defense ministry announced a cease-fire in Mariupol, and the International Red Cross said it hoped to [*enter the besieged city today*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2022/03/31/world/ukraine-russia-war-news/a-humanitarian-corridor-is-agreed-on-for-mariupol-a-city-under-siege).

1. Hundreds of Syrian fighters are heading [*to join Russian forces in Ukraine*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/03/31/world/middleeast/syrian-mercenaries-ukraine-russia.html).
2. Britain will send more military aid to Ukraine, including artillery and vehicles.
3. The U.S. [*imposed new sanctions on Russian technology companies*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/03/31/world/europe/us-sanctions-russia.html).

More on Ukraine

* Checkpoints, hotlines and apps for reporting suspicious activities: For Ukrainians, every stranger [*is a potential spy*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/03/31/world/europe/ukraine-spies-saboteurs.html).

1. “I don’t want to lie to my students”: In European classrooms, teachers are facing [*questions from worried children*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/03/31/world/europe/ukraine-war-schools.html).

Politics

* The House passed a bill to [*limit the cost of insulin*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/03/31/health/insulin-price-house-bill-democrats.html) to $35 a month, sending it to the Senate.

1. A judge declared New York’s legislative maps, drawn by Democrats, [*to be unconstitutional*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/03/31/nyregion/redistrict-gerrymander-new-york.html). An appeal is likely.

* A federal judge struck down parts of Florida’s election law, saying it [*discriminated against Black voters*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/03/31/us/politics/florida-voting-law.html).

1. She took the White House photos. [*Trump took the profit*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/03/31/us/politics/trump-photographer-shealah-craighead.html).

Other Big Stories

* Hungary’s prime minister, Viktor Orban, [*changed the rules*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/03/31/world/europe/hungary-viktor-orban-election.html) to help him in Sunday’s national elections.

1. Since Myanmar’s military seized control more than a year ago, tens of thousands of people have [*traded city life for jungle insurgency*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/03/30/world/asia/myanmar-jungle-insurgency.html).
2. New Mexico will offer [*tuition-free higher education*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/03/31/us/new-mexico-free-college.html) to all residents.
3. The National Archives has posted [*records from the 1950 census*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/03/31/us/census-data-1950.html), a trove for genealogists, historians and the curious.

Opinions

Biden should [*stop saying what the U.S. won’t do*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/04/01/opinion/biden-putin-ukraine-nuclear-weapons.html) to defend Ukraine, Steven Simon and Jonathan Stevenson argue.

Jaeah Lee on the rap song that helped sentence a 17-year-old [*to life in prison*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/03/30/opinion/rap-music-criminal-trials.html).

MORNING READS

No fee: People have returned tens of thousands of books to New York City libraries, and [*treasures are rolling in*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/03/31/nyregion/nyc-library-fines-books-returned.html).

On the road: Pump your own gas? [*New Jerseyans would rather not*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/03/31/nyregion/new-jersey-gas-pumping.html).

Modern Love: When in pain, it helps to know someone who has [*experience treating it*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/04/01/style/modern-love-the-dentist-who-treated-my-divorce.html).

A Times classic: [*How pandemics end*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/10/health/coronavirus-plague-pandemic-history.html).

Advice from Wirecutter: Every home needs [*a basic tool kit*](https://www.nytimes.com/wirecutter/reviews/best-basic-home-toolkit/).

Lives Lived: Nancy Milford wrote best-selling biographies of the Jazz Age women Zelda Fitzgerald and Edna St. Vincent Millay. Milford [*died at 84*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/03/31/books/nancy-milford-dead.html).

ARTS AND IDEAS

A Grammys primer

This Sunday is [*the 64th annual Grammy Awards*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/03/31/arts/music/grammy-awards.html), in Las Vegas. Here’s what you need to know:

Who’s nominated? The jazz pianist Jon Batiste earned the most nominations with 11, including album and record of the year. Doja Cat, Justin Bieber and H.E.R. have eight each.

Who’s performing? The show is essentially one big concert, with Billie Eilish, Carrie Underwood, J Balvin and more taking the stage. Other highlights include a tribute to Stephen Sondheim.

Who’s the artist to watch? Olivia Rodrigo, the 19-year-old singer-songwriter behind “Drivers License,” is up for several awards. Our critics [*broke down the competition for record of the year*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/03/29/arts/music/grammys-record-of-the-year.html) — which pits Rodrigo against Abba and Tony Bennett, among others.

Anything else I should know? Kanye West was [*barred from performing*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/03/22/arts/music/kanye-west-grammy-awards.html) because of his online behavior, though he is up for five awards. And producers have raced to put together a tribute to [*Taylor Hawkins*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/03/25/arts/music/taylor-hawkins-foo-fighters-dead.html), the drummer for Foo Fighters, who had been scheduled to perform before his death last week.

PLAY, WATCH, EAT

What to Cook

The [*pastry qatayef*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/03/29/dining/qatayef-ramadan-dessert.html) is synonymous with Ramadan. This one has a creamy filling.

What to Watch

“[*Starstruck,” on HBO Max,*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/03/31/arts/television/starstruck-hbo-rose-matafeo.html) is a charming rom-com series that shows what comes after the fairy-tale ending.

Art

Preview [*the Whitney Biennial*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/03/31/arts/design/whitney-biennial-review.html), which opens on April 6.

Late Night

The hosts [*discussed Putin*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/04/01/arts/television/late-night-putin-advisers.html).

Take the News Quiz

Test your [*knowledge of the week’s headlines*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2022/04/01/briefing/news-quiz-boosters-susan-collins-coors-light.html).

Now Time to Play

The pangram from yesterday’s Spelling Bee was chiefly. Here is today’s puzzle — or you can [*play online*](https://www.nytimes.com/puzzles/spelling-bee).

Here’s [*today’s Wordle*](https://www.nytimes.com/games/wordle/index.html). Here’s [*today’s Mini Crossword*](https://www.nytimes.com/crosswords/game/mini), and a clue: Not a single person (five letters).

If you’re in the mood to play more, find [*all our games here*](https://www.nytimes.com/crosswords).

Thanks for spending part of your morning with The Times. See you tomorrow. — David

P.S. Tara Parker-Pope, who founded The Times’s Well section, is leaving to become [*an editor at The Washington Post*](https://twitter.com/taraparkerpope/status/1508488691362287632).

Here’s [*today’s front page*](https://static01.nyt.com/images/2022/04/01/nytfrontpage/scan.pdf).

“[*The Daily*](https://www.nytimes.com/thedaily)” is about Mariupol.

Claire Moses, Ian Prasad Philbrick, Tom Wright-Piersanti, Ashley Wu and Sanam Yar contributed to The Morning. You can reach the team at [*themorning@nytimes.com*](mailto:themorning@nytimes.com).

[*Sign up here to get this newsletter in your inbox*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing).

PHOTO: Voters at Paradise Recreation Center on Election Day in Las Vegas, in 2020. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Bridget Bennett for The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** April 1, 2022

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[***Blaze Kills 74 In Urban Camp In South Africa***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:692T-5SY1-DXY4-X00S-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

September 1, 2023 Friday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; Foreign Desk; Pg. 1

**Length:** 1432 words

**Byline:** By John Eligon and Lynsey Chutel

**Body**

Johannesburg, with a severe shortage of affordable housing, has hundreds of illegally occupied derelict buildings that officials and housing advocates say have become firetraps.

They arrived in desperation, unable to find anything better, safer or cheaper in a city with a severe shortage of affordable housing. They settled in a trash-choked building owned and neglected by the city of Johannesburg, paying ''rent'' to criminals.

Hundreds of people lived there, and on Thursday morning, at least 74 died there, including at least 12 children, in one of the worst residential fires in South Africa's history. Flames devoured a structure that overcrowding, security gates, mounds of garbage and flimsy subdividing had turned into a death trap. Some victims leaped from upper windows of the five-story building rather than burn to death.

The disaster came as no surprise to residents, housing advocates or officials of a city that has more than 600 derelict, illegally occupied structures -- all but about 30 of them privately owned -- according to Mgcini Tshwaku, a city councilman who oversees public safety.

The buildings are home to untold thousands of South Africans suffering from a shortage of housing and jobs, and to migrants from other countries who come searching for opportunity, only to find a nation enduring its own economic crisis. And these urban squatter camps are routinely ''hijacked,'' residents say, by organized groups demanding payment.

Distraught people milled through the crowd gathered around the building in the downtown area, and went from hospital to hospital, searching for loved ones or anyone who might have scraps of information. Officials said at least 61 survivors were treated at several hospitals.

Looking for her missing brother, Kenneth Sihle Dube, Ethel Jack gazed up at his fourth-floor window, hoping that the dishes she could see still stacked there meant that his corner of the building had not been devastated. She saw bodies covered in foil blankets lined up in the street and spotted her brother's neighbor, her face burned, shaken and crying.

''I'm just praying he jumped from the window and didn't die,'' Ms. Jack said. He turned up, alive, at a hospital east of the city.

Many of the dead were burned beyond recognition and would have to be identified through genetic testing, officials said. Nomantu Nkomo-Ralehoko, a local health official, told reporters that of those identified so far, two were from Malawi, two from Tanzania and at least two more from South Africa.

People who knew the building said that after the fire began, shortly after 1 a.m., people could have been trapped in the darkness by security gates that were on each floor -- though it is not clear which ones were locked -- as well as the warren of subdivided dwellings within. Mr. Tshwaku said that bodies were piled just inside a locked gate on the ground floor that had prevented at least some of the victims from escaping.

The authorities said they did not yet know what caused the blaze, which appeared to have started on the ground floor of a building they said housed some 200 families. But in such buildings, where there is no formal electric service, people routinely rely on small fires for cooking, heat and light, and sometimes on dangerous amateur electrical hookups.

''I am surprised more fires haven't happened,'' said Mary Gillett-de Klerk, a coordinator at the Johannesburg Homelessness Network, calling the fatal blaze ''an event waiting to happen.''

Visiting the scene, President Cyril Ramaphosa called the disaster ''a wake-up call for us to begin to address the situation of housing in the inner city.''

''The lesson for us is that we've got to address this problem and root out those criminal elements,'' he said. ''It is these types of buildings that are taken over by criminals, who then levy rent on vulnerable people and families who need and want accommodation in the inner city.''

But the underlying problems have to do with political dysfunction and economics. Official corruption is endemic, and in the nation that the World Bank ranks as the most unequal in the world, many of the wealthy live in gated communities with private security, while millions of the poor live in ramshackle slums. Three decades after the end of apartheid, inequality still falls largely along racial lines.

Johannesburg's chronically unstable municipal government has had six mayors in a little over two years, and has failed to address a housing crisis that, like other problems, some politicians have blamed on migrants. Different administrations and political parties accuse each other of graft and of causing political chaos and lack of public services. A fire department that is chronically short of resources dispatched just two engines to the fire on Thursday.

The sprawling building that burned on Thursday once housed offices of the apartheid government, a checkpoint for controlling the movement of Black workers in and out of the city. Mayor Kabelo Gwamanda, who took office in May, said that in recent years the city had leased it to a nonprofit organization that provided emergency shelter for women and children. It also housed a medical clinic.

The city last did a safety inspection there in June 2019, around the time the nonprofit moved out. Inspectors did not return because ''we wouldn't want to go into a hostile environment,'' Rapulane Monageng, acting chief of emergency management services for the city, said at a news conference.

Afikile Madiya was living in the women's shelter when the nonprofit left, and dozens of men started moving in, occupying empty offices on the top floor. They demanded fees from the women and starting moving many more people in, she said, cramming up to 10 people into a room and subdividing it with cardboard, corrugated metal or sometimes just a sheet. She soon moved out.

In October 2019, the authorities raided the building and arrested 140 people in an illegal rent scheme, said Floyd Brink, the city manager, but the case was closed in 2022 for lack of evidence.

New York Times journalists visited the now-gutted building in May while reporting for an article about the chaotic state of Johannesburg. They saw trash spilling out of second-floor windows, a heap of rubbish partially blocking the entrance and a courtyard crammed with corrugated metal shacks housing more people.

Neighbors described the building as a nightmarish shantytown frequented by drug dealers, where a woman was thrown last year from the fourth floor. They said pickpockets and thieves would disappear into the squalid building, impossible to find, while at night screams and what sounded like gunshots emanated from it.

After the end of apartheid, many Black people migrated from rural areas and townships to the city center, where they had been prohibited from living, creating a housing crunch. But since then, advocates say, the government has prioritized the building of private rental units that are priced beyond the reach of most South Africans and of student accommodations, while low-income residents fill long waiting lists for places in public housing.

''There are a lot of houses that are being built for those who can afford them,'' said Thami Hukwe, the coordinator of the Housing Crisis Committee, a residents' group in Gauteng Province, which includes Johannesburg. He said that the Black population was most affected by the housing crisis.

''We are not being prioritized,'' he added, ''especially the poor and the ***working-class*** communities.''

Beginning in the 1990s, many landlords, fearful of the direction of the new South Africa, abandoned downtown buildings and let them fall into disrepair, said Khululiwe Bhengu, a senior attorney with the Socio-Economic Rights Institute of South Africa, a nonprofit. The buildings slowly filled up with squatters, and officials say that criminal syndicates moved in, demanding payment from the new residents.

''People are occupying these buildings because there's nowhere else where they can access the inner city,'' Ms. Bhengu said.

Mr. Tshwaku, the city councilman, said he had started a program this year to inspect such buildings and get people to move out of them. So far, 14 of the more than 600 buildings have been inspected, he said, but it is not clear how many people have relocated.

That effort is hampered by the fact that, legally, officials cannot remove people from their dwellings, even those who are present illegally, without providing alternative housing, if the residents show that they cannot find new accommodations on their own.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/31/world/africa/johannesburg-fire-derelict-building.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/31/world/africa/johannesburg-fire-derelict-building.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Hundreds of people lived in the city-owned building in Johannesburg. The city has over 600 derelict, illegally occupied structures. (PHOTOGRAPH BY JEROME DELAY/ASSOCIATED PRESS) (A1)

A firefighter surveyed the scene on Thursday. The building once housed offices of the apartheid government, a checkpoint for controlling Black workers' movement. (PHOTOGRAPH BY MICHELE SPATARI/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE -- GETTY IMAGES)

Flames and smoke rising from the building early Thursday, above left. At least 12 children were among the victims. Grief lingered after the fire, above. People gathered at the scene, one of the worst residential fires in South Africa's history, left. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY JOAO SILVA/THE NEW YORK TIMES

SHIRAAZ MOHAMED/REUTERS) (A10) This article appeared in print on page A1, A10.

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[***The ‘New Redlining’ Is Deciding Who Lives in Your Neighborhood***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:62GB-R2D1-DXY4-X2PH-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 1990 words

**Byline:** Richard D. Kahlenberg

**Highlight:** If you care about social justice, you have to care about zoning.

**Body**

If you care about social justice, you have to care about zoning.

Housing segregation by race and class is a fountainhead of inequality in America, yet for generations, politicians have been terrified to address the issue. That is why it is so significant that President Biden has proposed, as part of his American Jobs Act, a $5 billion race-to-the-top [*competitive grants program*](https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/03/31/fact-sheet-the-american-jobs-plan/) to spur jurisdictions to “eliminate exclusionary zoning and harmful land use policies.”

Mr. Biden would reward localities that voluntarily agree to jettison “minimum lot sizes, mandatory parking requirements and prohibitions on multifamily housing.” The Biden administration is off to an important start, but over the course of his term, Mr. Biden should add sticks to the carrots he has already proposed.

Although zoning may seem like a technical, bureaucratic and decidedly local question, in reality the issue relates directly to three grand themes that Joe Biden ran on in the 2020 campaign: racial justice, respect for ***working-class*** people and national unity. Perhaps no single step would do more to advance those goals than tearing down the government-sponsored walls that keep Americans of different races and classes from living in the same communities, sharing the same public schools and getting a chance to know one another across racial, economic and political lines.

Economically discriminatory zoning policies — which say that you are not welcome in a community unless you can afford a single-family home, sometimes on a large plot of land — are not part of a distant, disgraceful past. In most American cities, zoning laws prohibit the construction of relatively affordable homes — duplexes, triplexes, quads and larger multifamily units — on [*three-quarters*](https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/03/31/fact-sheet-the-american-jobs-plan/) of residential land.

In the 2020 race, Mr. Biden said he was running to [*“restore the soul of our nation,”*](https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/03/31/fact-sheet-the-american-jobs-plan/) which had been damaged by President Donald Trump’s [*embrace of racism*](https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/03/31/fact-sheet-the-american-jobs-plan/). Removing exclusionary barriers that keep millions of Black and Hispanic people out of safe neighborhoods with strong schools is central to the goal of advancing racial justice. Over the past several decades, as the sociologist Orlando Patterson [*has noted*](https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/03/31/fact-sheet-the-american-jobs-plan/), Black people have been integrated into the nation’s political life and the military, “but the civil-rights movement failed to integrate Black Americans into the private domain of American life.”

Single-family exclusive zoning, which was adopted by communities shortly after the Supreme Court struck down explicit racial zoning in 1917, is what activists call the “new [*redlining*](https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/03/31/fact-sheet-the-american-jobs-plan/).” Racial discrimination has created an enormous wealth gap between white and Black people, and single-family-only zoning perpetuates that inequality.

While exclusionary zoning laws are especially harmful to Black people, the discrimination is more broadly rooted in class snobbery — a second problem Mr. Biden highlighted in his campaign. As a proud product of Scranton, Pa., Mr. Biden said he would value the dignity of working people and not look down on anyone. The elitism Mr. Biden promised to reject helps explain why in virtually all-white communities like [*La Crosse,*](https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/03/31/fact-sheet-the-american-jobs-plan/)Wis., efforts to remedy economic segregation have received strong pushback from upper-income whites, and why middle-class Black communities have sometimes shown fierce [*resistance*](https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/03/31/fact-sheet-the-american-jobs-plan/) to low-income housing.

If race were the only factor driving exclusionary zoning, one would expect to see such policies most extensively promoted in communities where racial intolerance is highest, but in fact the [*most restrictive zoning*](https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/03/31/fact-sheet-the-american-jobs-plan/) is found in politically liberal cities, where racial views are more progressive. As Harvard’s Michael Sandel has noted, social psychologists [*have found*](https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/03/31/fact-sheet-the-american-jobs-plan/) that highly-educated elites “may denounce racism and sexism but are unapologetic about their negative attitudes toward the less educated.” Class discrimination helps explain why, despite a 25 percent [*decline*](https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/03/31/fact-sheet-the-american-jobs-plan/) in Black-white residential segregation since 1970, income segregation [*has more than doubled*](https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/03/31/fact-sheet-the-american-jobs-plan/).

By addressing a problem common to America’s multiracial ***working class***, reducing exclusionary barriers could also help promote Mr. Biden’s third big goal: national unity. Today, no two groups are more politically divided from each other than ***working-class*** whites and ***working-class*** people of color. For centuries, going back to Bacon’s Rebellion in 1676, right-wing politicians have successfully pitted these two groups against each other, but every once in a while, America breaks free of this grip, and lower-income and ***working-class*** people of all races come together and engage in what the Rev. William Barber II [*calls*](https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/03/31/fact-sheet-the-american-jobs-plan/) “fusion politics.”

It happened in 1968, when Mr. Biden’s hero Robert Kennedy [*brought together*](https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/03/31/fact-sheet-the-american-jobs-plan/) ***working-class*** Black, Latino and white constituencies in a presidential campaign that championed a liberalism without elitism and a populism without racism. It happened again in 1997 and 2009 in Texas, when Republican legislators representing white ***working-class*** voters and Democrats representing Black and Hispanic constituencies [*came together*](https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/03/31/fact-sheet-the-american-jobs-plan/) to support (and then to defend) the Texas top 10 percent plan to admit the strongest students in every high school to the University of Texas at Austin, despite the opposition of legislators representing wealthy white suburban districts that had dominated admissions for decades. And a similar coalition appears to be coming together in California, over the issue of exclusionary zoning. State Senator Scott Wiener, who has been trying to [*legalize*](https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/03/31/fact-sheet-the-american-jobs-plan/) multifamily living spaces, told me that Republican and Democratic legislators representing ***working-class*** communities have supported reform, while the opponents have one thing in common: They represent wealthier constituents who “wanted to keep certain people out of their community.”

Taking on exclusionary zoning also begins to address two other challenges the Biden administration has identified: the housing affordability crisis and climate change. Economists from [*across the political spectrum*](https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/03/31/fact-sheet-the-american-jobs-plan/) agree that zoning laws that ban anything but single-family homes artificially drive up prices by limiting the supply of housing that can be built in a region. At a time when the Covid-19 pandemic has left many Americans jobless and people are struggling to make rent or pay their mortgages, it is incomprehensible that ubiquitous government zoning policies would be permitted to make the housing affordability crisis worse by driving prices unnaturally higher.

Likewise, there is [*widespread agreement*](https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/03/31/fact-sheet-the-american-jobs-plan/) that laws banning the construction of multifamily housing promote damage to the planet. Single-family-exclusive zoning pushes new development further and further out from central cities, which lengthens commutes and increases the emissions of greenhouse gases. This is an especially big problem for employees who cannot work remotely at a computer. Families should always have the freedom to make personal choices about their living arrangements, but as the planet heats up, it is bizarre that government would explicitly prohibit construction of the most environmentally friendly options.

It is clear that the federal government has the authority to act on this issue. While zoning laws are locally constructed, the federal government has long cited its powers to regulate interstate commerce as a rationale for pursuing important aims: combating racial discrimination in zoning, [*protecting religious institutions*](https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/03/31/fact-sheet-the-american-jobs-plan/) from discriminatory zoning and overriding zoning laws to site cellphone towers.

Enactment of Mr. Biden’s proposal for federal grants to encourage local reforms would be an important first step and could provide a significant incentive for change, just as President Barack Obama’s race-to-the-top program for education helped alter state and local behavior toward charter schools. But there are many other additional opportunities Mr. Biden should explore.

In December 2020, the Century Foundation, where I work, assembled more than 20 of the nation’s leading thinkers on housing over Zoom — elected officials, civil rights activists, libertarians and researchers — to discuss eight possible options. The alternatives included reinstating and strengthening the Obama administration’s 2015 Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing rule that requires local governments to begin taking steps to dismantle segregation, as well as Mr. Obama’s 2013 guidance making clear that unjustified policies that have a racially discriminatory “disparate impact” are illegal even absent discriminatory intent. Another set of policies would require states, cities and counties receiving existing federal funding for public infrastructure and housing to develop strategies to reduce exclusionary zoning.

But Mr. Biden should go even further and create what is known as a private right of action — comparable to the one found in the 1968 Fair Housing Act — to allow victims of economically discriminatory government zoning policies to sue in federal court, just as victims of racial discrimination currently can. This Economic Fair Housing Act, which [*I have proposed*](https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/03/31/fact-sheet-the-american-jobs-plan/) and the Equitable Housing Institute has developed into [*statutory language*](https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/03/31/fact-sheet-the-american-jobs-plan/), makes clear that state-sponsored economic discrimination is wrong, whether or not it has a racially disparate impact. And because it is wrong, the law should apply in every town and state in the country — not just those that want to participate in the new federal funding programs Mr. Biden’s proposal would provide.

For important historical reasons, being a class snob is not held in the same disrepute as being a racist. But in the context of exclusionary zoning laws, the message of the racist and the class snob is cut from the same cloth: Black families and ***working-class*** families are so degraded that the state should sponsor laws to make it illegal for anyone to build the types of housing they can afford. As we begin to come out of a pandemic in which grocery clerks, health care workers and truck drivers were recognized as everyday heroes, government discrimination against them must end.

Blue cities and states — most notably [*Minneapolis*](https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/03/31/fact-sheet-the-american-jobs-plan/) and [*Oregon*](https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/03/31/fact-sheet-the-american-jobs-plan/) — have recently led the way on eliminating single-family exclusive zoning, as a matter of racial justice, housing affordability and environmental protection. But conservatives often [*support*](https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/03/31/fact-sheet-the-american-jobs-plan/) this type of reform as well, because they don’t want government micromanaging what people can do on their own land. At the national level, some conservatives have joined liberals in championing reforms like the [*Yes in My Backyard Act*](https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/03/31/fact-sheet-the-american-jobs-plan/), which seeks to discourage exclusionary zoning.

While democratic egalitarianism and the liberty to be free from government interference are values that are typically in tension with each other, in the case of exclusionary zoning reform, they point in the same direction. Perhaps for that reason, surveys suggest it is popular. In a 2019 Data for Progress [*poll*](https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/03/31/fact-sheet-the-american-jobs-plan/), for example, voters were asked, “Would you support or oppose a policy to ensure smaller, lower-cost homes like duplexes, townhouses and garden apartments can be built in middle- and upper-class neighborhoods?” Supporters outnumbered opponents two to one. After decades of federal inaction on this issue, Congress must move boldly to embrace the country’s anti-racist and anti-elitist mood to remove state-sponsored barriers that divide the nation’s people.

Richard D. Kahlenberg ([*@RickKahlenberg*](https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/03/31/fact-sheet-the-american-jobs-plan/)) is a senior fellow at the Century Foundation and the author of “Tearing Down the Walls: How the Biden Administration and Congress Can Reduce Exclusionary Zoning,” from which this essay is adapted.

The Times is committed to publishing [*a diversity of letters*](https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/03/31/fact-sheet-the-american-jobs-plan/) to the editor. We’d like to hear what you think about this or any of our articles. Here are some [*tips*](https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/03/31/fact-sheet-the-american-jobs-plan/). And here’s our email: [*letters@nytimes.com*](https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/03/31/fact-sheet-the-american-jobs-plan/).

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PHOTOS (PHOTOGRAPHS BY BETTMANN / GETTY IMAGES AND ABSTRACT AERIAL ART / GETTY IMAGES)

**Load-Date:** August 17, 2021

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[***Zoning Is a Social Justice Matter***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:62GJ-KGH1-JBG3-61XM-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Body**

If you care about social justice, you have to care about zoning.

Housing segregation by race and class is a fountainhead of inequality in America, yet for generations, politicians have been terrified to address the issue. That is why it is so significant that President Biden has proposed, as part of his American Jobs Act, a $5 billion race-to-the-top competitive grants program to spur jurisdictions to ''eliminate exclusionary zoning and harmful land use policies.''

Mr. Biden would reward localities that voluntarily agree to jettison ''minimum lot sizes, mandatory parking requirements and prohibitions on multifamily housing.'' The Biden administration is off to an important start, but over the course of his term, Mr. Biden should add sticks to the carrots he has already proposed.

Although zoning may seem like a technical, bureaucratic and decidedly local question, in reality the issue relates directly to three grand themes that Joe Biden ran on in the 2020 campaign: racial justice, respect for ***working-class*** people and national unity. Perhaps no single step would do more to advance those goals than tearing down the government-sponsored walls that keep Americans of different races and classes from living in the same communities, sharing the same public schools and getting a chance to know one another across racial, economic and political lines.

Economically discriminatory zoning policies -- which say that you are not welcome in a community unless you can afford a single-family home, sometimes on a large plot of land -- are not part of a distant, disgraceful past. In most American cities, zoning laws prohibit the construction of relatively affordable homes -- duplexes, triplexes, quads and larger multifamily units -- on three-quarters of residential land.

In the 2020 race, Mr. Biden said he was running to ''restore the soul of our nation,'' which had been damaged by President Donald Trump's embrace of racism. Removing exclusionary barriers that keep millions of Black and Hispanic people out of safe neighborhoods with strong schools is central to the goal of advancing racial justice. Over the past several decades, as the sociologist Orlando Patterson has noted, Black people have been integrated into the nation's political life and the military, ''but the civil-rights movement failed to integrate Black Americans into the private domain of American life.''

Single-family exclusive zoning, which was adopted by communities shortly after the Supreme Court struck down explicit racial zoning in 1917, is what activists call the ''new redlining.'' Racial discrimination has created an enormous wealth gap between white and Black people, and single-family-only zoning perpetuates that inequality.

While exclusionary zoning laws are especially harmful to Black people, the discrimination is more broadly rooted in class snobbery -- a second problem Mr. Biden highlighted in his campaign. As a proud product of Scranton, Pa., Mr. Biden said he would value the dignity of working people and not look down on anyone. The elitism Mr. Biden promised to reject helps explain why in virtually all-white communities like La Crosse, Wis., efforts to remedy economic segregation have received strong pushback from upper-income whites, and why middle-class Black communities have sometimes shown fierce resistance to low-income housing.

If race were the only factor driving exclusionary zoning, one would expect to see such policies most extensively promoted in communities where racial intolerance is highest, but in fact the most restrictive zoning is found in politically liberal cities, where racial views are more progressive. As Harvard's Michael Sandel has noted, social psychologists have found that highly-educated elites ''may denounce racism and sexism but are unapologetic about their negative attitudes toward the less educated.'' Class discrimination helps explain why, despite a 25 percent decline in Black-white residential segregation since 1970, income segregation has more than doubled.

By addressing a problem common to America's multiracial ***working class***, reducing exclusionary barriers could also help promote Mr. Biden's third big goal: national unity. Today, no two groups are more politically divided from each other than ***working-class*** whites and ***working-class*** people of color. For centuries, going back to Bacon's Rebellion in 1676, right-wing politicians have successfully pitted these two groups against each other, but every once in a while, America breaks free of this grip, and lower-income and ***working-class*** people of all races come together and engage in what the Rev. William Barber II calls ''fusion politics.''

It happened in 1968, when Mr. Biden's hero Robert Kennedy brought together ***working-class*** Black, Latino and white constituencies in a presidential campaign that championed a liberalism without elitism and a populism without racism. It happened again in 1997 and 2009 in Texas, when Republican legislators representing white ***working-class*** voters and Democrats representing Black and Hispanic constituencies came together to support (and then to defend) the Texas top 10 percent plan to admit the strongest students in every high school to the University of Texas at Austin, despite the opposition of legislators representing wealthy white suburban districts that had dominated admissions for decades. And a similar coalition appears to be coming together in California, over the issue of exclusionary zoning. State Senator Scott Wiener, who has been trying to legalize multifamily living spaces, told me that Republican and Democratic legislators representing ***working-class*** communities have supported reform, while the opponents have one thing in common: They represent wealthier constituents who ''wanted to keep certain people out of their community.''

Taking on exclusionary zoning also begins to address two other challenges the Biden administration has identified: the housing affordability crisis and climate change. Economists from across the political spectrum agree that zoning laws that ban anything but single-family homes artificially drive up prices by limiting the supply of housing that can be built in a region. At a time when the Covid-19 pandemic has left many Americans jobless and people are struggling to make rent or pay their mortgages, it is incomprehensible that ubiquitous government zoning policies would be permitted to make the housing affordability crisis worse by driving prices unnaturally higher.

Likewise, there is widespread agreement that laws banning the construction of multifamily housing promote damage to the planet. Single-family-exclusive zoning pushes new development further and further out from central cities, which lengthens commutes and increases the emissions of greenhouse gases. This is an especially big problem for employees who cannot work remotely at a computer. Families should always have the freedom to make personal choices about their living arrangements, but as the planet heats up, it is bizarre that government would explicitly prohibit construction of the most environmentally friendly options.

It is clear that the federal government has the authority to act on this issue. While zoning laws are locally constructed, the federal government has long cited its powers to regulate interstate commerce as a rationale for pursuing important aims: combating racial discrimination in zoning, protecting religious institutions from discriminatory zoning and overriding zoning laws to site cellphone towers.

Enactment of Mr. Biden's proposal for federal grants to encourage local reforms would be an important first step and could provide a significant incentive for change, just as President Barack Obama's race-to-the-top program for education helped alter state and local behavior toward charter schools. But there are many other additional opportunities Mr. Biden should explore.

In December 2020, the Century Foundation, where I work, assembled more than 20 of the nation's leading thinkers on housing over Zoom -- elected officials, civil rights activists, libertarians and researchers -- to discuss eight possible options. The alternatives included reinstating and strengthening the Obama administration's 2015 Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing rule that requires local governments to begin taking steps to dismantle segregation, as well as Mr. Obama's 2013 guidance making clear that unjustified policies that have a racially discriminatory ''disparate impact'' are illegal even absent discriminatory intent. Another set of policies would require states, cities and counties receiving existing federal funding for public infrastructure and housing to develop strategies to reduce exclusionary zoning.

But Mr. Biden should go even further and create what is known as a private right of action -- comparable to the one found in the 1968 Fair Housing Act -- to allow victims of economically discriminatory government zoning policies to sue in federal court, just as victims of racial discrimination currently can. This Economic Fair Housing Act, which I have proposed and the Equitable Housing Institute has developed into statutory language, makes clear that state-sponsored economic discrimination is wrong, whether or not it has a racially disparate impact. And because it is wrong, the law should apply in every town and state in the country -- not just those that want to participate in the new federal funding programs Mr. Biden's proposal would provide.

For important historical reasons, being a class snob is not held in the same disrepute as being a racist. But in the context of exclusionary zoning laws, the message of the racist and the class snob is cut from the same cloth: Black families and ***working-class*** families are so degraded that the state should sponsor laws to make it illegal for anyone to build the types of housing they can afford. As we begin to come out of a pandemic in which grocery clerks, health care workers and truck drivers were recognized as everyday heroes, government discrimination against them must end.

Blue cities and states -- most notably Minneapolis and Oregon -- have recently led the way on eliminating single-family exclusive zoning, as a matter of racial justice, housing affordability and environmental protection. But conservatives often support this type of reform as well, because they don't want government micromanaging what people can do on their own land. At the national level, some conservatives have joined liberals in championing reforms like the Yes in My Backyard Act, which seeks to discourage exclusionary zoning.

While democratic egalitarianism and the liberty to be free from government interference are values that are typically in tension with each other, in the case of exclusionary zoning reform, they point in the same direction. Perhaps for that reason, surveys suggest it is popular. In a 2019 Data for Progress poll, for example, voters were asked, ''Would you support or oppose a policy to ensure smaller, lower-cost homes like duplexes, townhouses and garden apartments can be built in middle- and upper-class neighborhoods?'' Supporters outnumbered opponents two to one. After decades of federal inaction on this issue, Congress must move boldly to embrace the country's anti-racist and anti-elitist mood to remove state-sponsored barriers that divide the nation's people.

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**Body**

In Solano County, Calif., a who’s who of tech money is trying to build a city from the ground up. But some of the locals whose families have been there for generations don’t want to sell the land.

When Jan Sramek walked into the [*American Legion post*](https://mylegion.org/PersonifyEbusiness/Post-Detail?@IP_IDENTITY_MCID=00005017800L&amp;@IP_IDENTITY_SCID=0) in Rio Vista, Calif., for a town-hall meeting last month, everyone in the room knew that he was really just there to get yelled at.

For six years a [*mysterious company*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/25/business/land-purchases-solano-county.html) called Flannery Associates, which Mr. Sramek controlled, had upended the town of 10,000 by spending hundreds of millions of dollars trying to buy every farm in the area. Flannery made multimillionaires out of some owners and sparked feuds among others. It sued a group of holdouts who had refused its above-market offers, on the grounds that they were colluding for more.

The company was Rio Vista’s main source of gossip, yet until [*a few weeks before the meeting*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/29/business/economy/california-land-solano-county.html) no one in the room had heard of Mr. Sramek or knew what Flannery was up to. Residents worried it [*could be a front*](https://abc7news.com/travis-afb-air-force-base-flannery-associates-llc-john-garamendi/13527836/) for foreign spies looking to surveil a nearby Air Force base. One theory held the company was acquiring land for a new Disneyland.

Now the truth was standing in front of them. And somehow it was weirder than the rumors.

The truth was that Mr. Sramek wanted to build a city from the ground up, in an agricultural region whose defining feature was how little it had changed. The idea would have been treated as a joke if it weren’t backed by a [*group of Silicon Valley billionaires*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/25/business/land-purchases-solano-county.html) who included Michael Moritz, the venture capitalist; Reid Hoffman, the investor and co-founder of LinkedIn; and Laurene Powell Jobs, the founder of the Emerson Collective and the widow of the Apple co-founder Steve Jobs. They and others from the technology world had spent some $900 million on farmland in a demonstration of their dead seriousness about Mr. Sramek’s vision.

Rio Vista, part of Solano County, is technically within the San Francisco Bay Area, but its bait shops and tractor suppliers and Main Street lined with American flags can feel a state away. Mr. Sramek’s plan was billed as a salve for San Francisco’s urban housing problems. But paving over ranches to build a city of 400,000 wasn’t the sort of idea you’d expect a group of farmers to be enthused about.

As the TV cameras anticipated, a group of protesters had gathered in the parking lot to shake signs near pickup trucks. Inside, a crowd in jeans and boots sat in chairs, looking skeptical.

Mr. Sramek, 36, who is from the Czech Republic and had come to California to try to make it in start-ups, was now the center of their economy. Flannery had become the largest landowner in the region, amassing an area twice the size of San Francisco.

Christine Mahoney, 63, whose great-grandfather established her family’s farm when Rutherford B. Hayes was president, told me that, like it or not, Mr. Sramek was now her neighbor. Ms. Mahoney had refused several offers for her land, and Flannery’s lawsuit — an antitrust case in federal court — described her as a conspirator who was out to bilk his company.

But she had never met the man in person, so she came to say hello.

“You might be asking yourself, ‘Why is this guy with a funny accent here?’” Mr. Sramek began the meeting.

He spent about 20 minutes pitching his plans before submitting to questions and resentments. People accused him of pushing small farms out of business. They said Flannery’s money was turning families against each other.

“Good neighbors don’t sue their neighbors!” one man yelled to applause.

Mr. Sramek, who is tall, intense and practiced in the art of holding eye contact, stayed up front after the meeting to glad-hand.

When Ms. Mahoney and her husband, Dan, 65, approached him, Mr. Sramek said, “Hi, Christine!” as if they had met several times before and he wasn’t currently suing her.

“I’d like to welcome you as our neighbor, but it’s kind of difficult,” Ms. Mahoney said.

She talked about how much stress the lawsuit had put on her family.

Mr. Sramek nodded, as if she were talking about someone else, not him. Then he asked the couple to dinner. The Mahoneys agreed.

Going to the Ballot

One key difference between building an app and building a city is that a city requires permission. On Jan. 17, Mr. Sramek’s company officially filed a proposed ballot initiative that would ask voters to buy in. Specifically, the measure aims to amend a longstanding “[*orderly growth*](https://ballotpedia.org/Solano_County_General_Plan_Amendment,_Measure_T_(November_2008))” ordinance that protects Solano County’s farms and open space by steering development to urban areas.

Solano’s residents have consistently backed the city-centered-growth laws, so Mr. Sramek’s project is bound to be controversial. To overcome resistance, the initiative includes a long list of promises like new roads, money to invest in downtowns across the county and a $400 million fund to help Solano residents buy homes.

Mr. Sramek also revealed that he hoped to build directly next to Rio Vista, with a half-mile-wide park separating the old farming town from the new tech city. Renderings that his company released this month portray a medium-density community that is roughly the opposite of a subdivision, with a grid of rowhouses that lie a short walk from shops and have easy access to bike lanes and bus stops. He said the first phase of building could accommodate around 50,000 people.

Even if the measure gets on the ballot and passes, it will be one step on a path requiring approval from county, state and federal agencies — a long list of ifs that explains why large projects are usually measured in decades, not the few years that Mr. Sramek seems to imagine.

It’s a crucial step, however. Beyond amending the ordinance, a win would pressure county officials to work with Mr. Sramek, so opponents are already lining up. A group called [*Solano Together*](https://www.solanotogether.org/), a mix of agricultural and environmental organizations like Greenbelt Alliance, recently created a website that characterizes the project as harmful sprawl that would destroy farms.

The fight is something of a throwback. Whether it was paving over San Fernando Valley orange groves to build out Los Angeles or ripping out apricot farms in what is now Silicon Valley, California became the nation’s biggest state and economy largely by trading open and agricultural land for population and development.

That shifted in the 1960s and 1970s, when a backlash against the growth-first regime and its penchant for destroying landscapes helped create modern environmentalism. In the half-century since, this turn has been codified in laws that aim to restrict development to existing cities and their edges. It has protected farms and open space, but also helped drive up the cost of living by making housing scarcer and more expensive to build.

Mr. Sramek framed his proposal as a backlash to the backlash, part of an ideological project to revive Californians’ appetite for growth. If the state is serious about tackling its dire affordable housing problem, he argued, it doesn’t just have to build more housing in places like San Francisco and its suburbs — it also has to expand the urban footprint with new cities.

As a matter of policy, this is hard to dismiss. This is politics, however, so the bigger question is whether voters share his desire to return California to an era of expansion. And whether — after six years during which Mr. Sramek obfuscated his role in Flannery’s secret land acquisition, along with the company’s billionaire backers and true purpose, all while pursuing farmers with aggressive tactics and lawsuits — they find him trustworthy.

The Golden Boy vs. 1877

Christine and Dan Mahoney’s house looks onto a barn that says 1877, the year Ms. Mahoney’s great-grandfather built it.

When I met the couple for an interview at their house last year, Ms. Mahoney had decorated the dining table with black-and-white pictures of relatives in button dresses and bonnets. Later we drove along roads named for her ancestors.

Winding through the hills, Ms. Mahoney ticked off parcels that belonged to the family, others that were owned by neighbors and more owned by Flannery. When I asked how she discerned the lines of ownership in an expanse of yellow grassland, she said: “You live here a hundred years.”

Mr. Sramek, meanwhile, talks about growth in moral terms, as if progress and wealth are simpatico and the most consequential people are those who build big things and a fortune along the way.

Driving near the Mahoneys’ ranch recently, through the same yellow hills, he posited that the mix of wealth and innovation that has exploded in the Bay Area has happened only a handful of times in history. (Florence, Paris, London, New York, Chicago and “maybe L.A.” were some others.) We were 60 miles from San Francisco in a place where the tallest structures are wind turbines, but his message was that the region could be an economic sun, and that bringing more people in the orbit was worthy of the trade-offs.

An immigrant and striver who at 22 was a co-author of a book called “Racing Towards Excellence,” Mr. Sramek got his first spurt of publicity at Goldman Sachs, where the financial press hailed him as a “[*Golden Boy*](https://www.cnbc.com/id/42883374)” [*trader*](https://nymag.com/intelligencer/2009/12/meet_jan_sramek_the_22-year-ol.html) and [*considered it newsworthy*](https://www.businessinsider.com/jan-sramek-quits-goldman-2011-5) when he left, after two years of employment, to chase a bigger dream in start-ups.

His tech career was less sparkling. After Goldman, he moved from London to Zurich and started a corporate education company called Better. It operated for two years and prompted a move to San Francisco, where he founded a social media company, Memo, in 2015.

Memo was billed as a higher-minded version of Twitter and [*won praise*](https://baatz.io/2023/memo-retrospective/) from the venture capitalist Marc Andreessen. That praise was delivered on Twitter instead of Memo, which was pretty much the story: Memo failed to rack up users and shut down after a year.

His failures aside, Mr. Sramek was smitten with the Bay Area’s culture of creative capitalism. He was less enamored with the actual place.

The mythical Silicon Valley was in reality a bunch of office parks and cul-de-sacs where subdivision-grade homes went for $2 million. The more picturesque and urban San Francisco was being consumed by rising rents and their attendant homeless problems.

Complaining about the cost of living, and the region’s inability to fix it, had become something of a side hustle for many Bay Area chief executives. And after Memo, Mr. Sramek started looking for a big disruptive idea for them to fund.

“If we go back six or seven years, the popular hit in the press was ‘Silicon Valley is not doing enough in the real world,’” he said. “And I was sitting there working on this.”

Flannery Associates

Mr. Sramek likes to fish. The way he tells it, around 2016 he and his girlfriend (now wife) started making the one-hour drive from San Francisco to Rio Vista to catch bass on the Sacramento River. One of those trips, driving past pastures and grazing sheep, sparked an idea.

“What if you could start from scratch?” he said.

In a state whose agricultural bounty has historically been a function of moving water great distances, the area is something of an anachronism. For generations, families like the Mahoneys have practiced “dryland farming,” which means they rely on rain, not irrigation.

The Mahoneys talk about this the same way they talk about their land and family: with an emphasis on tradition and the romance of continuity. Mr. Sramek described the land as “not prime.”

The phrase angered several farmers at the Rio Vista town meeting, but in dollar terms it’s accurate. At the time of Mr. Sramek’s first fishing trip, land in the area was trading around $4,000 an acre — [*a pittance*](https://calasfmra.com/ag-land-trends/) compared with a Central Valley almond orchard (about $10,000 to $55,000 per acre) or a Napa Valley vineyard (anywhere from $50,000 to more than $500,000 per acre), according to the California chapter of the American Society of Farm Managers and Rural Appraisers.

Mr. Sramek starting doing research and soon found himself immersed in zoning policy and poring over old development maps dreaming of a start-up city. Investors were initially reluctant, he said, so he borrowed $1 million from friends and banks to put a deposit on a handful of properties, then hired consultants and land-use lawyers to assess what it would take to build there.

By now Mr. Sramek was well networked. He had done a fellowship at Y Combinator, the start-up incubator. He was in a book club with partners at Sequoia Capital. He was friends with billionaires like Patrick and John Collison, the sibling founders of the payments company Stripe.

The Collisons became two of Flannery’s first investors. Mr. Andreessen and Chris Dixon, also of the Andreessen Horowitz venture capital firm, joined soon after, along with Mr. Moritz, who was Sequoia’s chairman. All of them helped Mr. Sramek solicit others.

In a 2017 note to potential investors I obtained, Mr. Moritz wrote that if “done right” the project could help relieve congestion and housing prices in the Bay Area, and mused about the potential to experiment with new kinds of governance. It could also be spectacularly profitable, he said: Mr. Moritz estimated that investors could make 10 times their money even if they just got the land rezoned, and far more if and when it was developed.

Flannery Associates was named for Flannery Road, which borders the first property Mr. Sramek bought. Aside from that detail and its Delaware incorporation, residents and public officials could find almost nothing about its shareholders or intentions. Just that it wanted a lot of land, didn’t care about the price and was willing to strong-arm owners when money didn’t work.

In addition to working their own land, many farmers in the area lease parcels where they grow crops and graze animals. As Flannery consumed more and more property, people like Ian Anderson found themselves in the uncomfortable position of trying to rebuff its offers for parcels they owned — while at the same time farming land they rented from Flannery.

Mr. Anderson learned how vulnerable he was after a local newspaper quoted him saying that the company had begun insisting on short-term leases and that this made it increasingly difficult to farm. Later, Flannery’s lawyer sent him a letter informing him that it was terminating multiple leases covering thousands of acres.

“The Andersons have made it clear that they do not like Flannery,” according to the letter. “The Andersons are of course free to have their opinions, but they cannot expect that Flannery will continue to just be a punching bag and lease property to them.”

Representative John Garamendi, a Democrat from the area, characterized moves like this as “[*mobster techniques*](https://nypost.com/2023/08/30/silicon-valley-titans-accused-of-mobster-techniques/).” The bigger concern was that Flannery’s holdings had grown into a giant mass that butted against Travis Air Force Base on three sides.

The proximity to the base alarmed both the county and the Department of Defense, which prompted local officials and members of Congress to call for investigations. The investigations elevated the mystery of Flannery Associates into a mainstay on local TV news.

“The F.B.I. was investigating this, the State Department was investigating this, the Treasury Department was investigating this — all the local electeds were trying to get information and calling their legislators,” said Representative Mike Thompson, another Democrat from the area.

The company remained silent.

Mr. Sramek said Flannery had operated in secret to prevent landowners from jacking up prices, and defended the lawsuits as just. He argued that while some farmers didn’t want to sell, most had done so willingly — at prices no other buyer could offer.

“We paid way over market value, and created hundreds of millionaires in the process,” he said. “We are glad that we have been able to settle most of our disputes, and we are open to settling the remaining ones.”

A Simple Case of Wealthy Landowners?

By 2023, Mr. Sramek and his investors were in deep. Flannery had spent some $900 million buying 60,000 acres. The first two rounds of funding, at about $10 million each, had ballooned to several more rounds at $100 million each. (Mr. Sramek said the company had now raised “more than $900 million” but would not be more specific.)

Big investors begot bigger investors, and the list expanded to a roster of Silicon Valley heavyweights including Mr. Hoffman and Ms. Powell Jobs.

The company’s offers became so generous that many farmers decided they couldn’t refuse.

The Mahoneys sold Flannery a few hundred acres early on. (Their land is owned by several different entities and hard to tally overall, but in the 1960s Ms. Mahoney’s father told a newspaper that he had 16,000 acres in the area.) But as Flannery gobbled more of the land around them, Ms. Mahoney said, she realized that something big was happening and that their entire farming business could be at risk. So the family stopped selling to Flannery. The company persisted with more offers, however, improving terms and increasing prices to levels that would have netted tens of millions of dollars. The family continued to say no.

Flannery arrived while the Mahoneys were in the midst of transition. Over 150 years, the family’s company, R. Emigh Livestock, had expanded from two dozen lambs to one of largest sheep farmers in California. Ms. Mahoney’s father was in his 90s (he died last year) and she was passing leadership to her son Ryan, who said his wish was to stay there until he was in his 90s, too.

You wouldn’t know it from her jeans or penchant for nostalgia, but Ms. Mahoney had spent her career running a corporation, one whose business was raising lambs and cattle. She was, like Mr. Sramek, a C.E.O.

And after years of back and forth, one thing Flannery’s entreaties had made clear was that there was one property the Mahoneys owned that it coveted above the others: Goose Haven Ranch. But Goose Haven was the one the family was most protective of. It had been the center of the lambing operation long enough that the road leading up to it was designed for wagon traffic.

Elsewhere in the county, Flannery had started buying into farms by acquiring shares from family members who wanted out, then becoming what amounted to unwelcome partners with the ones who remained. Two of these arrangements led to lawsuits between Flannery and the other owners. Both settled, but one of them netted a trove of emails and text messages among several neighbors including the Mahoneys.

In May, Flannery used those messages to [*file an antitrust suit*](https://fingfx.thomsonreuters.com/gfx/legaldocs/zdpxdejmlpx/Flannery%20Associates%20-%20ED%20California%20-%202023-05-18.pdf) against the Mahoneys and several holdouts. The suit contended that the farmers were colluding to raise prices, describing them as “wealthy landowners who saw an opportunity to conspire, collude, price fix and illegally overcharge Flannery.” It asked for $510 million in damages.

The complaint describes the messages (like Ms. Mahoney writing to a neighbor, “That’s great that we can support each other!”) as “a smoking gun” proving that the defendants did want to sell but at even higher prices than Flannery was offering.

In a joint motion to dismiss, lawyers for the Mahoneys and other defendants described Flannery’s lawsuit as “a ham-fisted intimidation technique” designed to smother them with legal fees.

Even after being sued, the Mahoneys still had no idea who Flannery actually was.

The Campaign Apology Tour

In August, The New York Times broke the news of who was behind the purchases. Mr. Sramek confirmed his role, and soon topped his LinkedIn profile with a new title: chief executive of California Forever, the company’s new name.

He has been in campaign mode ever since, meeting with elected officials, union leaders and environmental groups. California Forever has opened four offices across the county, and Solano’s freeways are now plastered with California Forever billboards.

In a state where it can take years to get a duplex approved, Mr. Sramek seems to have calculated that his project is too big to fail. Developers, planners and lawyers I spoke to all expected the project to either never happen or take at least 20 years. Whether out of bluster, delusion or confidence, Mr. Sramek, who recently bought a house in nearby Fairfield, said he had promised his wife that their infant daughter would start school in the development he wanted to build.

He didn’t find some secret hack that can make California an easier place to build. Rather, he believes the state’s attitude toward growth is changing. Californians, he thinks, have grown frustrated — with punishing housing costs, with homelessness, with the state’s inability to complete projects like the [*high-speed rail line*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/09/us/california-high-speed-rail-politics.htm) that was supposed to connect the Bay Area and Los Angeles but has stalled. So just maybe his will, and gobs of money, can create a new posture toward growth.

“There’s a cultural moment where we realize the pendulum has gone too far,” Mr. Sramek said. “We can’t say we are about economic opportunity and ***working-class*** Californians are leaving the state every year.”

Last year’s event in Rio Vista was held at the end of lambing season in December. Before the meeting, I dropped by a barn with the Mahoneys where a group of “bummers” — lambs born weak or to overburdened ewes — were in sawdust pens drinking milk. They would be chops in less than a year, and Ms. Mahoney cooed to them between my questions.

I asked her a crass but obvious one: why the money from Mr. Sramek, those tens of millions, wasn’t enticing.

“Everybody has their price, right?” she said. “I’ve heard that so many times. ‘Everybody has their number — what’s your number?’ I guess I haven’t found it yet.”

“When God calls us home, that’s our number,” Mr. Mahoney joked. “Totally different philosophy.”

On Wednesday, Mr. Sramek returned to the American Legion post in Rio Vista. This time he had arrived as part of a kickoff event for the ballot initiative. Neighbors and protesters had returned but were prohibited from going inside, where slides of maps and renderings were presented to the press, and details about design were discussed.

The maps had a curious detail: On the edge of the proposed community’s downtown was Goose Haven Ranch.

The night before the meeting, the Mahoneys sold it. They got about $23 million.

PHOTOS: Top, Christine Mahoney and her husband, Dan, on the farmland in Rio Vista, Calif., that her family acquired in the 19th century. A company backed by tech billionaires has been buying up land in the area to construct a city of 400,000 people, part of which is shown in the rendering above. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY AARON WOJACK FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES; CALIFORNIA FOREVER) (BU4); Above, Solano County, Calif., the site of the proposed city. Right, one of many ads put up by the group behind the city plan. Below, clockwise from top: Solano County; Jan Sramek, the finance and tech veteran who concocted the city plan; and Ian Anderson, whose lease of farmland owned by Mr. Sramek’s company was terminated after he publicly criticized the company. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY AARON WOJACK FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (BU5) This article appeared in print on page BU4.

**Load-Date:** February 1, 2024

**End of Document**



[***Biden Affirms Working-Class Roots to Win Back Obama-Trump Voters***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:60WT-5JH1-DXY4-X3XJ-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

September 22, 2020 Tuesday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; National Desk; Pg. 16

**Length:** 840 words

**Byline:** By Thomas Kaplan and Michael Crowley

**Body**

The Democratic nominee, in Wisconsin, tried to place himself on the side of American workers, while Mr. Trump used a trip to Ohio to blame his opponent for job losses there.

Joseph R. Biden Jr. directly appealed on Monday to voters who once supported Barack Obama but were drawn to Donald J. Trump in the 2016 election, visiting a foundry in northeast Wisconsin and accusing the president of turning his back on working people.

Mr. Trump was also looking to drum up support in the Midwest, flying to Ohio for rallies in the Dayton and Toledo areas as he tries to keep that state in his column this November.

In his latest trip to a Midwestern battleground, Mr. Biden traveled to Manitowoc, a city along Lake Michigan in a county that Mr. Trump won by 21 percentage points in 2016 -- a drastic shift from 2008, when Mr. Obama won there by nearly eight points. (Mitt Romney narrowly won it in 2012.)

''I know many of you were frustrated,'' Mr. Biden said at the Wisconsin Aluminum Foundry, offering a message to people who voted for Mr. Trump in 2016. ''You were angry. You believe we weren't seen -- you weren't being seen, represented or heard. I get it. It has to change, and I promise you this: It will change with me. You will be seen, heard and respected by me.''

The speech was Mr. Biden's latest attempt to place himself squarely on the side of American workers while presenting Mr. Trump as catering to the rich. ''The simple truth is that Donald Trump ran for office saying he would represent the forgotten men and women in this country,'' Mr. Biden said. ''And then once he got in office, he forgot us.''

The president seemed to be aiming as well at Obama-Trump voters, among others, using his Dayton appearance on Monday to accuse Mr. Biden of betraying American workers with his past support for ''globalist'' economic policies that he said had devastated the Midwest's manufacturing base. The Obama-Biden ticket carried Ohio and many other Midwestern states in both 2008 and 2012.

''For 47 years, Joe Biden shook the hands of American workers and then stabbed them in the back,'' Mr. Trump said, citing Mr. Biden's support for China's entry into the World Trade Organization and his backing of the North American Free Trade Agreement.

''Joe Biden should not be asking for your support,'' Mr. Trump said. ''He should be begging for your forgiveness.''

The renewed focus on the economy, amid intense political attention on the sudden Supreme Court vacancy, offered Mr. Biden a chance to continue drawing contrasts between his own modest upbringing in Scranton, Pa., and Mr. Trump's life of privilege -- themes that were on display last week during a CNN town hall event and a speech in Minnesota. Once again, he played up a populist talking point by defending the fact that he did not have an Ivy League degree.

''You close the door on me because you think I'm not good enough -- guess what?'' Mr. Biden said. ''Like all you guys, I'm going to bust down that door.''

Mr. Biden, a graduate of the University of Delaware and the Syracuse University College of Law, added: ''I say it's about time that a state school president sat in the Oval Office. Because you know what? If I'm sitting there, you're going to be sitting there, too.''

The trip on Monday was Mr. Biden's second to Wisconsin as the Democratic presidential nominee. In early September, he visited Kenosha in the aftermath of the police shooting of Jacob Blake and held a small event in Wauwatosa, a Milwaukee suburb.

Polls continue to show Mr. Biden with an edge in Wisconsin. A poll conducted by The New York Times and Siena College this month found him with a five-point lead over Mr. Trump among likely voters.

Mr. Biden also addressed the latest grim milestone in the coronavirus pandemic, with the death toll in the United States now at about 200,000. He criticized Mr. Trump for playing down the virus earlier this year, noting that the president has said he did not want to create panic.

''Trump panicked,'' Mr. Biden said. ''The virus was too big for him. All his life Donald Trump has been bailed out of any problem he faced. And with this crisis, a real crisis, a crisis that required serious presidential leadership, he just wasn't up to it. He froze. He failed to act. He panicked. And America's paid the worst price of any nation in the world.''

Wisconsin has an indoor mask mandate, and although it contains an exemption for political speeches, Mr. Biden wore a mask during his speech. His event was not open to the public -- offering a clear contrast with Mr. Trump's rallies, but also leaving him without the energetic audience that cheered on the president.

Mr. Trump, speaking outdoors to a crowd at the Dayton airport, rattled off statistics about the state's job losses, ''courtesy of Joe Biden.''

Mr. Trump also criticized Mr. Biden for supporting the 2015 Paris climate accord, which he called an ''anti-America deal,'' claiming that the pact would close ''probably 25 percent of your companies'' if he had not withdrawn from it.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/21/us/politics/biden-obama-trump-voters.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/21/us/politics/biden-obama-trump-voters.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: Supporters of former Vice President Joseph R. Biden Jr. and President Trump gathered outside the Wisconsin Aluminum Foundry in Manitowoc, where Mr. Biden campaigned on Monday. (PHOTOGRAPH BY ERIN SCHAFF/THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** September 22, 2020

**End of Document**



[***Astoria, Queens: ‘A Mix of Traditional and Trendy’; Living in***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:692C-KSH1-DXY4-X0NF-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

August 30, 2023 Wednesday 14:57 EST

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**Section:** REALESTATE

**Length:** 1394 words

**Byline:** Kathleen Lynn

**Highlight:** With relatively affordable prices and an easy commute to Manhattan, the area is attracting new residents, but it still has a strong sense of community.

**Body**

With relatively affordable prices and an easy commute to Manhattan, the area is attracting new residents, but it still has a strong sense of community.

Catherine Seaman and Tom Metzger were living in a small, sixth-floor walk-up in the Hell’s Kitchen neighborhood of Manhattan in 2022 when they decided that Mr. Metzger, 33, a construction consultant, would need more space if he were going to work comfortably from home. And if they were going to move, Dr. Seaman, 31, a gynecologist, needed an easy commute to Mount Sinai Hospital on the Upper East Side.

They found their answer across the East River, in Astoria, Queens, where they now pay $3,650 a month — about what they paid in Manhattan — for a one-bedroom that is twice the size of their old place, in a new complex called Astoria West.

Now they also have room for a dog, a Doberman-German shepherd mix named Jake. Dr. Seaman’s commute is half an hour, by ferry and CitiBike. And the couple love Astoria’s laid-back pace.

“When you take a walk, there’s not a million people around,” Dr. Seaman said.

With its two-story brick homes, new multifamily developments and easy commute to Manhattan, Astoria has been attracting renters and buyers who want more space for the money than they can find in Manhattan or Brooklyn. That influx of young residents and new construction has resulted in “a mix of traditional and trendy,” said Adrienne Onofri, a journalist and the author of “Walking Queens,” which maps out walking tours of Astoria and surrounding neighborhoods.

John LaPolla III and Brittany Barb have lived in Astoria since 2014, first in rental apartments and now in a two-family house they bought for $1.09 million in 2021. “It was definitely the most affordable option for what we were looking for,” said Mr. LaPolla, 35, who owns a Long Island-based flooring business that takes him around the tristate area, making Astoria’s location near highways and the Robert F. Kennedy Bridge an asset.

But they also appreciate that “the sense of community is really strong,” said Ms. Barb, 33, a photographer.

The couple bought their home from a family that had owned it for half a century. “Everybody around us has been here for a long time, and they feel a real sense of pride about the block,” Mr. LaPolla said. “It still feels like a ***working-class*** area; it feels like people are making the sauce on Sunday.”

Stephen LoRusso, 33, a video editor, likes the leafy streets and homey atmosphere of the area, where he has rented since 2015. “I wave to my barber every day when I walk past,” he said.

And Queens, he added, is “still relatively affordable compared to Brooklyn.”

What You’ll Find

Astoria is bounded by the East River to the north and west; Long Island City, Sunnyside Gardens and Woodside to the south; and Jackson Heights to the east.

The Ditmars-Steinway section of Astoria, north of Ditmars Boulevard, tends to be quieter, with one- and two-family houses. New multifamily buildings are rising in other parts of Astoria, including the East River waterfront.

“As other neighborhoods, like Williamsburg, were trending up to Manhattan prices, Astoria has really over the last few years become very trendy and attracted a lot of new development,” said Joseph Grosso, a real estate agent with the Corcoran Group in Manhattan, who has represented a number of new developments in Astoria.

Being on the water sets Astoria apart from many New York City neighborhoods, said Craig Wood, the founder and chief executive of Cape Advisors, the developer of the new 534-unit Astoria West apartment complex overlooking the East River. The location, he said, was “a gem waiting to be found.”

New commercial developments include Wildflower Studios, a seven-story, 775,000-square-foot film production studio under construction on 19th Avenue, backed by the actor Robert De Niro, among other investors.

What You’ll Pay

Kenny Lee, an economist for StreetEasy, said online searches for rentals in Astoria have increased by 32 percent in the past year, attributing that to people who have returned to work in Manhattan offices and are looking for easy commutes.

According to information provided by StreetEasy, in the 12 months ending July 31, 2023, the median asking rent increased to $2,600, from $2,290 during the previous 12 months.

As of July 31, 2023, according to data from StreetEasy, the median sale price for co-ops was $460,000, the median sale price for condos was $565,000, and the median sale price for single-family houses and townhouses was $1.265 million.

The number of home sales recorded by StreetEasy declined in the past year: In the 12 months ending on July 31, 2023, 78 co-ops sold, down from 88 during the preceding 12 months; 129 condos sold, down from 215; and 248 single-family homes and townhouses sold, down from 387. Mr. Lee suggested that this was probably because rising mortgage rates have priced out many potential buyers.

The Vibe

Astoria is known for its Greek restaurants, reflecting the community’s history as a magnet for Greek immigrants. But serious eaters have a variety of choices when it comes to food, including Italian, Mexican and, in a section of Steinway Street known as Little Egypt, Egyptian and Moroccan. Bohemian Hall, a social club and beer garden founded more than a century ago, is a legacy of an earlier wave of Czech and Slovak immigrants.

“We made a promise to ourselves when we moved here that we’d go back to Manhattan for dinner once a week,” Dr. Seaman said. “But most weeks we don’t — there are so many fun restaurants and bars here.”

While some national retail and restaurant chains are venturing into Astoria, including a Target that’s coming to 31st Street near Ditmars Boulevard, many of the businesses are mom-and-pop operations where proprietors get to know their customers, said Sonia Mylonas, who covers the neighborhood with a website and a magazine called [*Give Me Astoria*](https://givemeastoria.com/staff/).

The oldest and largest city pool in New York City is in Astoria Park, which stretches along the East River, under the Robert F. Kennedy Bridge (formerly the Triborough Bridge) and the Hell Gate railroad bridge.

“I walk to the park two or three times a week after work, take a book and sit by the water,” said Mr. LoRusso, the video editor.

The Schools

Astoria has 13 public elementary schools, including a charter school, and three intermediate schools. The Baccalaureate School for Global Education, which follows the rigorous International Baccalaureate program, serves students in seventh through 12th grade. The Young Women’s Leadership School of Astoria enrolls girls in sixth through 12th grade.

Public high schools in or near Astoria include William Cullen Bryant High School, Long Island City High School and Frank Sinatra School of the Arts. Private options include St. John’s Prep, a coed Roman Catholic school for students in ninth through 12th grade.

The Commute

Traveling to Astoria from Midtown Manhattan by subway usually takes less than half an hour on the N, W, R or M lines.

The N.Y.C. Ferry, which opened in 2017, zigzags across the East River, linking Astoria to East 90th Street in Manhattan, Roosevelt Island, Long Island City, East 34th Street, the Brooklyn Navy Yard and Pier 11 near Wall Street. The fare is $4 one way, or $27.50 for 10 trips.

Drivers have easy access to Grand Central Parkway, Brooklyn-Queens Expressway and the Robert F. Kennedy Bridge, which connects Queens to Manhattan and the Bronx.

The History

The worlds of music and film both have legacies in Astoria. Piano maker Steinway &amp; Sons was founded by Henry Engelhard Steinway in Manhattan in 1853; his son William moved the company’s operations to Queens in the early 1870s. About 300 people now work at the Astoria site, which includes Steinway’s American headquarters and a factory that produces more than 1,200 pianos a year.

Kaufman Astoria Studios, which opened in 1920, later became a home for Paramount Pictures. During World War II, the studio was used to make military training films. Movie, television and commercial productions are still made there.

For weekly email updates on residential real estate news, [*sign up here*](http://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/realestate/).

PHOTO: A walk along the water as the sun sets on Astoria Park, with views of the Hell Gate Bridge and the Robert F. Kennedy Bridge, is one of the perks for residents of Astoria, Queens. (PHOTOGRAPH BY MAANSI SRIVASTAVA/THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page RE7.

**Load-Date:** September 28, 2023

**End of Document**



[***A Converted Trump Critic Runs for a Seat in the Senate***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:63B7-CVG1-DXY4-X41R-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

August 9, 2021 Monday

Late Edition - Final

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**Length:** 1612 words

**Byline:** By Trip Gabriel

**Body**

As the ''Hillbilly Elegy'' author runs for Senate in Ohio, he has walked back previous criticism of Donald Trump and reversed arguments that the white ***working class*** bears responsibility for its problems.

Before he was a celebrity supporter of Donald J. Trump's, J.D. Vance was one of his most celebrated critics.

''Hillbilly Elegy,'' Mr. Vance's searing 2016 memoir of growing up poor in Ohio and Kentucky, offered perplexed and alarmed Democrats, and not a few Republicans, an explanation for Mr. Trump's appeal to an angry core of white, ***working-class*** Americans.

A conservative author, venture capitalist and graduate of Yale Law School, Mr. Vance presented himself as a teller of hard truths, writing personally about the toll of drugs and violence, a bias against education, and a dependence on welfare. Rather than blaming outsiders, he scolded his community. ''There is a lack of agency here -- a feeling that you have little control over your life and a willingness to blame everyone but yourself,'' he wrote.

In interviews, he called Mr. Trump ''cultural heroin'' and a demagogue leading ''the white ***working class*** to a very dark place.''

Today, as Mr. Vance pursues the Republican nomination for an open Senate seat in Ohio, he has performed a whiplash-inducing conversion to Trumpism, in which he no longer emphasizes that white ***working-class*** problems are self-inflicted. Adopting the grievances of the former president, he denounces ''elites and the ruling class'' for ''robbing us blind,'' as he said in his announcement speech last month.

Now championing the hard-right messages that animate the Make America Great Again base, Mr. Vance has deleted inconvenient tweets, renounced his old views about immigration and trade, and gone from a regular guest on CNN to a regular on ''Tucker Carlson,'' echoing the Fox News host's racially charged insults of immigrants as ''dirty.''

When ***working-class*** Americans ''dare to complain about the southern border,'' Mr. Vance said on Mr. Carlson's show last month, ''or about jobs getting shipped overseas, what do they get called? They get called racists, they get called bigots, xenophobes or idiots.''

''I love that,'' Mr. Carlson replied.

Whether Ohio Republicans do, too, is the big question for Mr. Vance -- who will crucially benefit from a $10 million super PAC funded by the tech billionaire Peter Thiel, a Trump supporter who once employed Mr. Vance.

His G.O.P. rivals in the state have had a field day. Josh Mandel, a former treasurer of Ohio who is the early front-runner in the five-candidate field, called Mr. Vance a ''RINO just like Romney and Liz Cheney,'' referring to the Utah senator and the Wyoming congresswoman who voted to impeach Mr. Trump for inciting the Capitol riot.

Liberals and some conservatives have also dismissed Mr. Vance for cynical opportunism. One Never Trump conservative, Tom Nichols, wrote of ''the moral collapse of J.D. Vance'' in The Atlantic.

Mr. Vance's adherence to some of the most extreme views of Trump supporters shows how the former president, despite losing the White House and Congress for his party, retains the support of fanatically loyal voters, who echo his resentments and disinformation and force most Republican candidates to bend a knee.

Yet Mr. Vance's flip-flops over policy and over Mr. Trump's demagogic style may not prove disqualifying with Ohio primary-goers when they vote next spring, according to strategists. Although Mr. Vance's U-turn might strike some as too convenient in an era when voters quickly sniff out inauthenticity, it is also true that his political arc resembles that of many Republicans who voted grudgingly for Mr. Trump in 2016, but after four years cemented their support. (Mr. Vance has said he voted third-party in 2016.)

''Will he be able to overcome his past comments on Trump and square that with the G.O.P. base? Maybe,'' said Michael Hartley, a Republican strategist in Ohio who is not working for any of the Senate candidates. He added that Mr. Vance had the lived experience to address policies that lift ***working-class*** people ''in a way that others cannot.''

Mr. Vance, 37, who lives with his wife and two young sons in Cincinnati, has carefully seeded the ground for his candidacy, appearing frequently on podcasts and news shows with far-right influencers of the Trump base, including Steve Bannon and Sebastian Gorka.

In interviews, speeches and on social media, he has become a culture warrior. He threatened to make Big Tech ''pay'' for putting conservatives ''in Facebook jail,'' and he mocked Gen. Mark A. Milley, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, after the four-star general said he sought to understand ''white rage'' in the wake of the assault on the Capitol.

To Mr. Vance, it is a ''big lie'' that Jan. 6 was ''this big insurrection,'' he told Mr. Bannon.

In ''Hillbilly Elegy,'' Mr. Vance credited members of the elite with fewer divorces, longer lives and higher church attendance, adding ruefully, ''These people are beating us at our own damned game.'' But that was not his message at a recent conservative gathering where he blamed a breakdown in the American family on ''the childless left.''

Mr. Carlson, Fox's highest-rated host, all but endorsed Mr. Vance during the candidate's appearance last month. Mr. Vance also has the backing of Representative Jim Banks of Indiana, a rising conservative leader in the House. And Charlie Kirk, the founder of the right-wing student group Turning Point USA, who has ties to the Trump family, has endorsed the ''Hillbilly Elegy'' author.

''He has been consistent in being able to diagnose the anxieties of Trump's base economically almost better than anyone else,'' Mr. Kirk said in an interview. Although Mr. Vance once mocked Mr. Trump's position that a southwest border wall would bring back ''all of these steel mill jobs,'' today he supports the ''America First'' agenda that reducing legal immigration will increase blue-collar wages, a link that many economists dispute. ''Why let in a large number of desperate newcomers when many of our biggest cities look like this?'' Mr. Vance said recently on Twitter over a picture of a homeless encampment in Washington.

Mr. Trump has met with all five major declared Ohio Republican Senate candidates -- who are seeking the open seat of the retiring Senator Rob Portman -- but has not signaled a preference. He is not likely to do so any time soon, according to a person briefed on his thinking. Among Democrats, Representative Tim Ryan has the field nearly to himself. Ohio, once a battleground state, has trended rightward in the Trump era.

Mr. Vance declined to be interviewed for this article. But an examination of his embrace of Trumpism through the ample record of his writings and remarks, as well as interviews with people close to him, show that it happened the way a Hemingway character famously described how he went bankrupt: ''Gradually, and then suddenly.''

The year 2018 appears to have been the turning point. That January, Mr. Vance considered a Senate bid in Ohio but ultimately decided not to run, citing family matters, after news reports brought to light his earlier hostile criticism of Mr. Trump.

Later that year, the furious opposition on the left to the Supreme Court nomination of Brett M. Kavanaugh was a milestone in Mr. Vance's political shift. Mr. Vance's wife, Usha, whom he met in law school, had clerked for Justice Kavanaugh. ''Trump's popularity in the Vance household went up substantially during the Kavanaugh fight,'' Mr. Vance told a conservative group in 2019.

Although Mr. Vance has said that he came to agree with Mr. Trump's policies on China and immigration, the most important factor in his conversion, he told Mr. Gorka in March, was a ''gut'' identification with Mr. Trump's rhetorical war on America's ''elites.''

''I was like, 'Man, you know, when Trump says the elites are fundamentally corrupt, they don't care about the country that has made them who they are, he was actually telling the truth,''' Mr. Vance said.

(His adoption of Trump-style populism did not inhibit him from flying to the Hamptons last month for a fund-raiser with Republican captains of industry, as reported by Politico.)

Finally, the influence of Mr. Thiel, a founder of PayPal, whom Mr. Vance has called a ''mentor to me,'' appears to have been decisive in Mr. Vance's embrace of Trumpism.

An outspoken and somewhat rare conservative in Silicon Valley, Mr. Thiel addressed the 2016 Republican convention and advised the Trump transition team. He is a fierce critic of China and global trade and a supporter of restrictionist immigration policies, and Mr. Vance has moved toward all those positions. Mr. Thiel, who did not respond to an interview request, is also paying for a super PAC for another protege, Blake Masters, in a Senate race in Arizona.

In March, Mr. Thiel brokered a meeting between Mr. Vance and Mr. Trump at Mar-a-Lago, the former president's resort in Florida. Mr. Vance made amends for his earlier criticism and asked Mr. Trump to keep an open mind, according to people briefed on the meeting. If Mr. Trump were going to attack Mr. Vance -- as he has other Republican 2022 candidates around the country whom he perceives to be disloyal -- he probably would have done so already.

For now, the former president's appetite for revenge in Ohio seems to be sated by attacking Representative Anthony Gonzalez, a Republican who voted for impeachment in January. Mr. Trump held a rally in the state in June to back a primary challenger to Mr. Gonzalez. Mr. Vance was on hand, sharing a photo on Twitter to show his support for Mr. Trump.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2021/08/08/us/politics/jd-vance-trump-ohio.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/08/08/us/politics/jd-vance-trump-ohio.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: J.D. Vance, the author of ''Hillbilly Elegy,'' with supporters after a rally last month in Middletown, Ohio, where he announced he was joining the crowded Republican race for an open Senate seat.

Mr. Vance has stopped exhorting the ***working class***, instead adopting the former president's grievances against ''elites.''(PHOTOGRAPHS BY JEFFREY DEAN/ASSOCIATED PRESS)

Mr. Vance is set to benefit from a $10 million super PAC funded by the tech billionaire Peter Thiel, above. (PHOTOGRAPH BY DOUG MILLS/THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** August 9, 2021

**End of Document**



[***A New Era of Prosperity for Greece***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6990-CG11-JBG3-62CV-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Length:** 1423 words

**Byline:** By Liz Alderman

**Body**

It is one of Europe's fastest-growing economies, and while investors and tourists are flocking to the country, memories of austerity measures are still fresh for Greeks.

Paris Skouros pointed toward the sky outside his office in Athens on a recent weekday. In the past six months, four high-rises had sprung up, built by Greek and international builders to be sold for use as tourist rentals, foreign real estate investments and company offices. Farther afield, a fresh crop of new buildings dotted the horizon.

Greece's financial crisis almost ruined his firm, Skouros & Sons, an elevator company. Years of harsh austerity measures imposed by international bailouts had been wrenching, Mr. Skouros said, as new construction ground to a standstill. But now an economic recovery has barreled in.

''During the crisis, we just wanted to survive,'' Mr. Skouros said, as the sound of hammers hitting sheet metal rang out in his workshop. ''Now we're profitable, and business is so strong that we can't find enough workers to keep up with demand.''

Laden with debt it couldn't pay back, Greece nearly broke the eurozone a decade ago. Today, it is one of Europe's fastest-growing economies. In a significant acknowledgment of the country's turnaround, credit ratings agencies have been upgrading their appraisal of Greece's debt, and opening the door for large foreign investors.

The economy is growing at twice the eurozone average, and unemployment, while still high at 11 percent, is the lowest in over a decade. Tourists have returned in droves, fueling a construction frenzy and new jobs. Multinational companies, like Microsoft and Pfizer, are investing. And banks that almost collapsed have cleaned up and are lending again, benefiting the broader economy.

Greece still faces risks. Its mountain of debt has shrunk, but at 166 percent of the economy, it's among the world's highest. The country's banks still hold a pile of nonperforming loans that is bigger than the European average. And the misery of austerity is still fresh for some people, made worse by stubbornly high inflation stoked by Russia's war in Ukraine.

The country's prime minister, Kyriakos Mitsotakis, a business-friendly conservative politician, was re-elected by a landslide in June after being credited with spurring a recovery by reducing taxes and debt. The government cut red tape for businesses and raised the minimum wage. The country is even paying back international bailout money ahead of schedule.

Mr. Mitsotakis hailed Greece's return to investors' graces. ''I will never allow us to relive the trauma of a national bankruptcy,'' he said a day after the latest upgrade.

Greece became the center of Europe's debt crisis after Wall Street imploded in 2008. Ireland, Portugal and Cyprus were also forced to take international bailouts. But Greece had it the worst, requiring three rescue packages from 2010 to 2015, totaling 320 billion euros, or $343 billion, with bitter austerity terms. Household incomes and pensions were slashed. The economy shrank by a quarter, and hundreds of thousands of businesses collapsed as banks shuttered. By 2013, nearly a third of Greeks were unemployed.

''We would have liked the austerity to be milder, but the measures were the Greek contribution to saving itself,'' said Yannis Stournaras, a former finance minister who is the governor of Greece's central bank and a member of the European Central Bank board. ''Greece had to take these tough steps to survive.''

Greece exited the bailout programs' strict fiscal controls in 2018, and the government's actions since then have earned confidence from the European Union. In 2021, Brussels policymakers approved another ?30 billion for climate investments in Greece, part of a broader effort to bolster E.U. economies after Covid-19 lockdowns.

This month, DBRS Morningstar, a global credit rating agency recognized by the European Central Bank, raised Greece's debt rating to investment grade, a move that opens the door for pensions and other big investors to buy bonds issued by the government. And that will lower borrowing costs for households, businesses and the government after the E.C.B. has been raising interest rates to fight inflation.

Moody's, one of the largest credit ratings agencies, raised Greece's debt rating on Sept. 15 by two notches, just short of investment grade, citing ''profound structural change'' in the country's economy, finances and banking system.

Investors are jumping in. Microsoft is building a ?1 billion data center east of Athens. Farther north, Pfizer is anchoring a ?650 million research hub. American, Chinese and European companies are pitching renewable-energy deals. And investments by Cisco, JPMorgan, Meta and other multinationals are projected to have an economic impact worth billions of euros over the next few years.

Well over 10 million tourists swarmed into Greece this summer despite a spate of wildfires, bringing estimated revenues of over ?21 billion. Construction has climbed on the mainland and on popular Greek islands, driven by a surging demand for hotels, Airbnb rentals and a program that lets foreigners get a visa to live in E.U. states if they buy at least ?500,000 in real estate in Greece.

The activity has buoyed businesses like the one run by Mr. Skouros. The company, which he manages with his brother, John, was founded by their father in 1965. When orders dried up during the economic crisis, they pulled through by servicing elevators they had already installed around Athens.

Today, it has orders for elevators in 10 buildings, up from none during the crisis and Covid lockdowns. At around ?20,000 per elevator, the firm is profitable again. Mr. Skouros raised salaries 10 percent and hired five more employees. He needs more technicians, but in a hot economy, he is no longer finding takers.

The comeback is moving so quickly that Mr. Skouros is worried about a real estate bubble forming. So he is steering clear of new high-rise construction that he fears could go bust, and targeting smaller residential buildings with sound finances.

For others, the economic upturn has yet to heal the scars from austerity.

Dmitris Mitrofinakis, 67, has struggled to bounce back from shuttering the home décor store that he ran for over 40 years, after draining his personal savings during the crisis to try to salvage it. When he retired in 2015, the pension that he had long paid into was slashed to ?1,300 a month from the ?2,400 he was supposed to get.

''The austerity imposed on Greece was too strict,'' said Mr. Mitrofinakis, who lives in a modest apartment with his wife in a ***working-class*** neighborhood, adding that he has little money left at the end of the month.

He sees signs that the economy is improving. ''When you look around, people have more work and higher salaries,'' Mr. Mitrofinakis said. ''But a lot of other people haven't recovered,'' he said, adding that many of his retired neighbors are struggling to make ends meet.

Roula Skouros, a hotel manager in the city of Tripoli, doesn't expect Greece's investment grade rating to improve her life. ''Someone who maybe works at the bank or at the stock market probably is affected, but I'm not,'' said Ms. Skouros, who is not related to Paris Skouros.

Her paycheck has always hovered around the minimum wage, she said. But with inflation running rampant at the gas pump and grocery store, an improved economy ''doesn't mean anything if you can't afford gas and food,'' Ms. Skouros said.

In a recent speech, Mr. Mitsotakis acknowledged the challenges and vowed to spread the recovery's benefits more widely. ''We're not hiding behind investment grade, saying, 'We achieved an important goal -- let's turn to autopilot,''' he said.

His government announced that it aimed to raise the monthly minimum wage to ?950 by the end of its four-year term after lifting it to ?780 in April. Public-sector salaries will also increase for the first time since a 20 percent cut during the crisis to pay Greece's debts.

For Konstantinos Kanderakis, 62, a supervisor at Greece's digital services agency, the gains are meaningful. He earns ?1,300 a month after a 35-year career in government, and he will get a ?100 monthly increase after a decade in which his income had fallen.

''It's a big psychological boost,'' he said. ''Greece is stable again, and what I am happy about is that things will be better for my children.''

Niki Kitsantonis contributed reporting from Athens.Niki Kitsantonis contributed reporting from Athens.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/25/business/greece-economy-eurozone.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/25/business/greece-economy-eurozone.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Saddled with debt, Greece nearly broke the eurozone a decade ago. Today, it is one of Europe's fastest-growing economies. But it still faces risks like nonperforming loans, inflation and Russia's war in Ukraine. (B1)

A restaurant in Plaka, a tourist area of Athens. Over 10 million tourists visited Greece this summer despite a spate of wildfires, bringing in estimated revenues of over 21 billion euros. Hotels and Airbnb rentals are in high demand.

Yannis Stournaras, governor of Greece's central bank, said that after surviving the crisis, Greece was now growing faster than the rest of the eurozone. Unemployment, while still high at 11 percent, is the lowest in over a decade. (B6)

Greece, which became the center of Europe's debt crisis after Wall Street imploded in 2008, is now experiencing a boom. Construction is resuming in Athens, left, and the Greek tourism sector has been revived, as seen at the port of Piraeus and an Athenian fish market, below. But some people, such as retirees, are still struggling from the effects of past austerity measures. (B6-B7)

John and Paris Skouros, brothers who manage Skouros & Sons, at their offices in Athens. Greece's economic upswing has revived once-stricken companies like theirs. ''Now we're profitable,'' Paris Skouros said.

Tourism is skyrocketing, stoking a construction frenzy for hotels, Airbnbs and other lodging on the mainland and Greek islands like Mykonos. Multinational companies, like Microsoft and Pfizer, have been investing as well. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY MARCO ARGUELLO FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page B1, B6, B7.

**Load-Date:** September 30, 2023

**End of Document**



[***Beijing Dispels Economic Pain Felt on Streets***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:692C-78X1-JBG3-600W-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

August 30, 2023 Wednesday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; Foreign Desk; Pg. 1

**Length:** 1400 words

**Byline:** By Vivian Wang

**Body**

Beijing has characterized concerns about the economic slowdown as being inflated by Western critics. Widespread anxiety and pessimism paint a different picture.

To the residents and business owners of Chedun, a ***working-class*** neighborhood in the southwestern outskirts of Shanghai, the signs of an anemic economy are all around. The factories that once drew workers from around the country have moved away. Those that remain have slashed wages. Around the affordable eateries and motley shops where workers once crowded, employees eagerly latch onto anyone passing by.

''No one has money now, it's obvious,'' Cherry Qian, 25, said as she sat inside the electronics store she manages, which on Sunday afternoon had seen only one customer.

But there's one place the downturn isn't as obvious: in the government's account of it.

A gulf has emerged between the Chinese economy as many Chinese are experiencing it, and Beijing's narrative of it -- and that gulf is only widening. For many ordinary Chinese, one of the worst economic slowdowns the country has faced in decades has translated into widespread pessimism and resignation. But state media and officials continue to declare that any challenges are blips.

Concerns about the economy, propaganda outlets have insisted, have been inflated by Western politicians and media outlets engaged in ''cognitive warfare.'' One social media account backed by China's state broadcaster released a video that purported to investigate how foreign news outlets had cherry-picked statistics that predicted higher economic growth, just so they could later say China fell short. ''At the end of the day, they are fated to be slapped in the face by reality,'' a spokesman for China's foreign ministry said this month about the purported Western naysayers.

When the reality has proved too inconvenient, another approach has simply been to conceal it, as when Beijing this month stopped publishing the youth unemployment rate, which had been at a record high. The decision was widely mocked by Chinese social media users, who joked that the government had finally landed on an effective fix.

Differing official and on-the-ground narratives are hardly new in China, with its tightly controlled censorship apparatus. But the contrast is especially stark now, when the public's gloom is so widespread, from the wealthy elite to factory workers.

A housing crisis has left many middle-class Chinese who poured their life savings into apartments reeling. Government crackdowns on various white-collar sectors, from education to technology, have spurred layoffs at major corporations. Foreign companies have pulled back from investments in China, leading to less work for factories, plunging paychecks for workers and falling consumer demand.

''I tried many times and just couldn't find one I wanted,'' Zhu Xunyang, 19, said of his search for a summer job at a factory in Chedun while home from university. Either the salary was too low, or the factories didn't want him, he said.

''So I kind of wanted to just give up,'' he said as he played games on his phone in the metalware shop his parents run. ''And I did.''

Many skeptical or outright scornful comments about the economy on social media have escaped the censors, perhaps because they are so common.

''That sense of insecurity is almost universally shared within China now, across all walks of life,'' said Chen Zhiwu, a professor of finance at the University of Hong Kong. ''And that is why the government has been using all the official media and all other tools to convey a positive, optimistic message.''

The malaise is especially striking compared to the optimism many Chinese felt earlier this year, after Beijing finally abandoned coronavirus restrictions that for three years had left many people unable to leave home and unwilling to spend.

Ms. Qian, the electronics store manager, had hoped to buy a new car before her wedding later this year. But after seeing how business had flagged -- she saw around 20 customers a day last year, she said -- she abandoned that idea.

''It's to prevent risk,'' she said. ''Before, you could buy a house as an investment. Now, nobody dares buy a house, or to casually buy anything big.''

A few blocks away, Zhang Jiaojuan and her husband were wondering whether people would venture to buy anything small, either, as they mixed chives and meat for orders that had yet to materialize at their dumpling store.

They had not planned to be entrepreneurs: Last year, they worked at an auto parts factory, earning between $800 and $1,000 a month, about the average per capita income in Shanghai. But this spring, wages fell to about $550, so low that the couple decided they might as well try to start their own business. They invested their life savings of about $27,000, thinking of the lively crowds that had filled the cramped storefronts hawking noodles, spicy duck necks and roast meat in the prepandemic years.

''And then we found out business is bad here, too,'' said Ms. Zhang's husband, who gave only his surname, Xue.

''People don't spend money like they did before the pandemic, where they'd buy whatever they want,'' Ms. Zhang said, as their teenage son slouched at one of the empty tables, playing with his phone.

They had cut back on their own spending, too. Mr. Xue said he had essentially stopped buying fruit, limiting himself to staples and vegetables. ''We thought if we just got through those three years, and worked hard, there would definitely be hope,'' he said. ''And then it turned out that when the pandemic ended, things just got worse.''

Officials have acknowledged that the economy is facing new challenges, describing the recovery as ''wavelike'' while maintaining that the overall outlook is positive. But the remedies they have offered are unlikely to be effective, economists said.

Despite urging consumers to spend more, the government has rejected the idea of cash handouts to households, calling it too costly. It has brandished tax incentives for purchases of new homes, even as it has continued to erode the already weak social safety net that makes many Chinese leery of big purchases.

On Monday, the Ministry of Finance halved the tax on stock transactions, in an attempt to boost investor confidence. But that would not remedy how unwilling people are to buy stocks in the first place, given a lack of faith that they would grow in value, said Professor Chen: ''When the future is so uncertain, then it does not matter what kind of transaction costs you charge.''

''Detachment'' between the top leadership and the reality of many Chinese, he added, ''is clearly there.''

The government's blame of external forces for the slowdown does have supporters. Wang Ainian, a barber in Chedun, pointed to news reports about the trade war with the United States and Japanese restrictions on the export of computing chips, when asked why business had slowed at local factories.

The economic pain has also been spread unevenly across the country. The wealthy, more insulated from uncertainties, continue to spend on luxury goods. Many malls and train stations are bustling again, though most shoppers and travelers are spending less and choosing cheaper destinations. Among some lower-income Chinese, familiarity with hardship has also blunted the pessimism of the recent downturn.

But even for Mr. Wang, no matter who is responsible for the economic pain, he had little hope that it would reverse itself soon. He was seeing only about two-thirds of the customers that he had the year before, and half of prepandemic levels. And that was in a world-class city like Shanghai, not his hometown in inland Anhui Province.

''Shanghai is a place people dream of, and the population was always growing,'' he said of Chedun. ''But now it's not.''

For others, the official explanations hardly register. A few blocks away, a 33-year-old clothing shop owner who gave her surname, Tang, said she did not pay attention to news about the economy. But she did spend a lot of time on Xiaohongshu, a Chinese social media platform similar to Instagram, where she tried to collect business tips from other clothing store owners. Most of the posts from them, though, were lamenting how bad their own business was.

Li You contributed research from Shanghai and Siyi Zhao from Seoul.Li You contributed research from Shanghai and Siyi Zhao from Seoul.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/29/world/asia/china-economic-gloom.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/29/world/asia/china-economic-gloom.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Top, a screen in Shanghai displaying stock exchange data. Above right, food shopping in Beijing. Left, university graduates at a job fair in Wuhan. The Chinese government has stopped reporting the youth unemployment rate, which had soared to a record high. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY ALEX PLAVEVSKI/EPA, VIA SHUTTERSTOCK

PEDRO PARDO/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE -- GETTY IMAGES

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE -- GETTY IMAGES) (A6) This article appeared in print on page A1, A6.

**Load-Date:** August 30, 2023

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[***What Lies at the Heart of the American Dream***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:678H-3YR1-JBG3-64XX-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

January 8, 2023 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section SR; Column 0; Sunday Review Desk; Pg. 10; GUEST ESSAY

**Length:** 1225 words

**Byline:** By Costica Bradatan

**Body**

I wrote a book in praise of failure, which is like a fish praising water. I've been swimming in failure for as long as I can remember -- even before that. Quite a lot of who we are, what we do and especially what we cannot do is determined well before we are born, by history, geography, the rise and fall of empires, that farcical god we call luck. I came into this world with failure in my blood and bones. Sometimes I wonder if there is anything else there.

I come from Romania, a country as insignificant as it seems cursed, a place that has been submerged in failure for as long as it has been in existence. Failure seems to be everywhere: in the air people breathe, in the water they drink, even in the language they speak. Especially in the language. Romanian is any linguist's dream: Layer piles upon linguistic layer like geological strata, indicating the foreign armies and empires that have at one time or another colonized the place, exploited it at length or merely marched through it -- raping it in haste: Greek, Roman, Byzantine, Ottoman, Hungarian, Russian, Austro-Hungarian, then Soviet.

As with the local cuisine, which is so rich because it combines all the neighboring culinary traditions but has no clear identity of its own, the Romanian language is a purely Babelian affair: a dozen tongues in one. There are countless words for ''failure'' in Romanian, of different origins and verbal constructions so exquisite that you want to fail only for the pleasure of putting your experience into words. Coming from such a place, how could I not write in praise of failure?

At the time I was born, in the 1970s, the country was in the middle of an intense affair with utopia. Nothing breeds more failure than an obsessive quest for purity. The closer you get to perfection, the more abject the failure. We were supposed to reach the communist paradise any day, even as people's lives were becoming progressively more hellish. The state was supposed to wither away, per Friedrich Engels's prophecy, yet it was becoming more and more oppressive. Everything was owned in common, even though there was nothing much to be owned. For good measure, the utopian experiment was run largely by a gang of thugs. That strikes me now as a logical arrangement. You had to be either incurably idealistic or rotten to the core to believe in utopia, and idealism was never a plant to grow roots in that part of the world.

The Romanian state did everything -- from the repression and surveillance to the police beatings and windows broken in the middle of the night -- in the name of the ***working class***. The regime was called ''the dictatorship of the proletariat,'' but that must have been a grammatical error: It was most obviously a dictatorship over the proletariat. The workers were kept deep in misery, ignorance and poverty. They were treated like beasts of burden and told that they were lucky, that under capitalism, their lives would be so much worse. In school, many subjects were covered, but the discipline most widely taught was the art of cognitive dissonance: how to look at all of this and pretend to see none of it. If you mastered the craft, you could survive, even though you were left seriously broken inside. I lived in ''1984,'' knew it like the back of my hand, long before I discovered the book.

Books. It took me a while to discover them. For if there was one social class even worse off than the ***working class*** in the communist utopia, it was the peasant class.

I came into the world in a family of barely literate peasants, and there was not one book in the home where I grew up. Later in life, I would collect books compulsively, thousands of them, in an impossible effort to fill up the haunting emptiness of my bookless childhood and adolescence. You could, in principle, borrow books from the village's library, but it was risky. You could get punished if you were caught reading. That was precious time stolen from productive work; child labor was routine in that quasi-paradise.

In the home in which I grew up, few words were spoken. The use of words was a too-demanding affair for people whose main job was sheer biological survival. An angry look, a jolt or the occasional beating were much more effective means of communication. Intellectual atrophy in that environment was a social epidemic. My early socialization was largely with the cows I attended. Later in life, I embraced the craft of words in a desperate effort to fix, retroactively, all that was wrong with my wordless childhood.

By the late 1980s, some of the thugs got bored with the communist experiment and realized that it would be more fun if they turned capitalist. That's how the regime collapsed, under the weight of its own absurdity, catching us, the children of utopia, amid its ruins. Not that this hurt us (by that point, we were too damaged to be hurt by anything), but it left us with a privileged relationship with failure, an affinity for it, even a special flair for it. Once in utopia, you are doomed; you carry its nothingness in your bones wherever you go.

In Romania, with its masochistic history, a venerable tradition has taken root: You do everything you can to distance yourself from the country, to shed it as a serpent sheds its skin and adopt a new identity, any identity. The philosopher E.M. Cioran, a brilliant exemplar of Romanianness, in his book ''The Trouble With Being Born,'' wrote: ''I have spent my whole life wanting to be something else: Spanish, Russian, cannibal -- anything, except what I was.'' In other writings, he admitted that he loved Romania ''with a heavy hatred'' and that leaving it for France in his late 20s was ''by far the most intelligent thing'' he had ever done.

Apart from a remarkable gift for failing, Romanians have a knack for living in a state of painful separation, leaving a place and missing it unbearably. ''Dor'' (from the Latin ''dolor,'' or ''pain''), the word used to express that state, is one of the most defining in the Romanian vocabulary. Many a folk song, countless poems and even works of philosophy have been built around this one word.

When my turn came to follow this tradition, it was a relatively simple decision. I would emigrate to the United States. For I knew right away that America's noisy worshiping of success, its mania for ratings and rankings, the compulsive celebration of perfection in everything served only as a facade. Behind the optimistic veneer there lies an extraordinary fear of failure: the horror of going down and going under, of losing face and respectability, of exclusion and marginalization. It's not success but failure -- the savage fear of it -- that lies at the heart of the American dream. The country is custom made for an aficionado of failure like me.

Costica Bradatan is a professor of humanities in the Honors College at Texas Tech University and the author of ''In Praise of Failure: Four Lessons in Humility.'' His essay ''Democracy Is for the Gods'' appears in the new anthology ''Question Everything: A Stone Reader.''

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[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/01/02/opinion/failure-romania-america.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/01/02/opinion/failure-romania-america.html)

**Graphic**

This article appeared in print on page SR10.

**Load-Date:** January 8, 2023

**End of Document**



[***What Does a Good Economy Look Like?; Ross Douthat***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:695V-VTD1-DXY4-X04R-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

September 15, 2023 Friday 17:07 EST

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 1515 words

**Byline:** Ross Douthat

**Highlight:** Putting President Biden’s record in context.

**Body**

In the past couple of weeks, I’ve written [*one column*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/02/opinion/should-right-wing-populists-despair.html) arguing that the economic situation for ***working class*** America is now better, relative to a decade ago, than some pessimistic populists make it sound, [*and another*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/09/opinion/joe-biden-unpopular.html) arguing that the eating-away at American wages because of inflation explains some important measure of President Biden’s political difficulties.

I think both of these points are true, but there’s at least a hint of a tension between them, one that’s worth exploring as we try to figure out the actual condition of our economy as we head into 2024.

Let’s start with [*a chart*](https://twitter.com/swinshi/status/1701682283017576504) from Scott Winship at the American Enterprise Institute (where I am a nonresident fellow), who is a longtime skeptic of the more dire populist diagnoses of our ills. It shows, along various different methods of estimation, the median income for American men — whose difficulties are of particular concern to conservative populists worried about marriageability, family formation and relations between the sexes:

What you see here is a story that doesn’t match a narrative of economic carnage or plutocratic domination. By any of Winship’s listed metrics, men earn more today than in 1995 and earned more in 2000 than 1975. But the chart does show a serious period of stagnation from the end of the dot-com era through the mid-2010s. Meaning that at the time of Trump’s first campaign, the populists had a point about economic disappointment, and the 21st century economy seemed to be letting workers down.

But then in the 2015-2020 zone, the stagnation gives way to rapid growth — growth, as I noted in my column on populism, that also became more equitably shared, with the rate of gains for the 50th percentile and the 10th percentile of income [*converging*](https://www.noahpinion.blog/p/inequality-might-be-going-down-now) with the gains for the 90th percentile. And this last pattern, notably, has continued through Covid and beyond: The Biden economy has [*performed better for the lowest-wage workers*](https://twitter.com/JustinWolfers/status/1677106660198830080) than for either the upper-middle or the middle class.

Clearly class stratification persists, but those trends form a solid basis for thinking that the American economy is not as ruthlessly rigged against the working man as some populist writers seem to suggest, and — as I suggested in a counter to Sohrab Ahmari recently — for privileging culture over economics in explaining some of the troubling social trends of recent years. (Birthrates and marriage rates fell through this period of wage growth, [*young people’s unhappiness*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/02/18/opinion/depression-teen-social.html) has intensified, and so on.)

But then in the corner of Winship’s chart you can see the problem for the Biden era, where income growth stops and drops in the 2020s as inflation kicks in. This is not a great trend if you became president in January 2021! And indeed, when I noted the Biden economy has been better for low-wage workers, what that actually meant in 2021 or 2022 was that real hourly wages for the 10th percentile rose modestly while falling meaningfully for both the middle class and well-to-do — reducing inequality in the least ideal and least politically palatable way.

2023 has been a better year, with wage growth finally [*outpacing*](https://www.axios.com/2023/07/12/real-wage-gains-inflation) inflation. But in [*this chart*](https://twitter.com/jasonfurman/status/1701962980605186128) from former Obama administration official Jason Furman, you can see the continuing political challenge for Bidenomics:

Note that these figures are for “production and nonsupervisory workers.” As Furman notes, wage growth for managers has actually been worse — further evidence, perhaps, that the professional-managerial class isn’t simply hoarding the gains from economic growth.

And note, too, that just as Winship’s chart shows multiple ways of measuring income trends, there are more optimistic analyses and estimates than Furman’s — like [*this one*](https://twitter.com/arindube/status/1702003592054419654) from Arin Dube of UMass Amherst, for instance, showing workers regaining more ground.

But the [*sourness*](https://www.cnn.com/2023/08/03/politics/cnn-poll-economic-pessimism-joe-biden/index.html) of public opinion on the economy seems to match up pretty well with Furman’s estimates. At the very least, no matter where we stand relative to the late Obama or early Trump economy, some further improvement seems necessary to convince the public that the Biden economy is actually in good shape.

So then the question for the Biden administration becomes: What counts as a good wage trend? Remember that the economic trends before 2020 were the best of the last few decades, so just returning to that dotted line in Furman’s chart would be great news. But does Biden need that scale of success to get credit for a good economy, or does he just need wage growth at any pace? What do his re-election odds look like, for instance, if we spend the next year on a slightly more disappointing economic path than we were on in 2018, but a slightly better one than what we were tracing under Barack Obama and George W. Bush?

And then finally, what is the impact on expectations of that wild income spike at the outset of the pandemic? Because the grimmest scenario for Biden would be that the outpouring of Covid spending reset expectations so high that people will be sour with just about any economy until the memory of that weird subsidy fades out.

Finally, a note on the position of right-wing populists in this landscape. I don’t think the possibility that the economy has improved, especially for lower-wage workers, relative to the landscape of 10 or 15 years ago, proves that they should just fold up their arguments and re-embrace low-tax libertarianism. That’s because the arguments for a more interventionist conservative economic policy don’t necessarily depend on the view that the American economy is unjust to wage-earners on the scale that, for instance, Ahmari’s new book, “Tyranny, Inc.,” sometimes seems to assume.

Rather, the case for populist interventions can hold if you just think low-tax libertarianism is failing to sustain some more specific good. For instance, a general increase in prosperity might not be creating the conditions necessary for above-replacement fertility, because the costs of child rearing are largely fixed and can’t drop in the same way as, say, consumer goods, and families are in a positional competition that makes them over-invest in one or two kids rather than having three or four. Or an increase in household income might be achieved through free-trade policies that also hollow out our industrial capacity and leave us vulnerable in a new age of great-power competition.

In these and other cases, conservatives could have good reasons to look for policy innovations even if Winship’s relatively optimistic take on the economic situation is correct. Though as Winship himself might then say, some of those innovations might themselves be libertarian — e.g., making family more affordable by the traditional capitalist expedient of building more housing.

My own mild point, though, is just that there’s a lot of space between Bernie Sanders and The Wall Street Journal editorial board — and thus a lot of room for an agenda with culturally conservative goals, an openness to experimentation, but a non-catastrophic view of the economic situation in which those experiments might take place.

Breviary

Louise Perry [*on a repaganizing West*](https://www.firstthings.com/article/2023/10/we-are-repaganizing).

Christopher Caldwell [*on the 1990s*](https://www.firstthings.com/article/2023/10/the-fateful-nineties).

Ferdinand Mount [*on England’s forgotten king*](https://www.lrb.co.uk/the-paper/v45/n18/ferdinand-mount/frisking-the-bishops).

Micah Meadowcroft [*on evangelicalism’s years in power*](https://www.theamericanconservative.com/we-were-eight-years-in-power/).

Samuel Hughes [*on “easy” architecture*](https://worksinprogress.co/issue/making-architecture-easy).

Der Spiegel covers [*the collapse of South Africa*](https://www.spiegel.de/international/world/gangs-corruption-and-collapse-the-slow-and-steady-demise-of-south-africa-a-7ed1fcd1-a2e8-446a-9ff9-074718215281).

This Week in Anti-Decadence

People living through scientific revolutions are usually unaware of them — and, if they are, they don’t think about them in the same way that later generations do … The history of the first scientific revolution — the one that began in the famously terrible 17th century — suggests that the positive impacts of scientific innovation, in particular, are not always felt by the people living through the period of innovation.

… [Robert] Boyle was not hoping for the invention of steam engines, or telegraphs, or power looms, or many of the other famous breakthroughs of the age of industrialization that followed him. He was hoping for things like “the cure of wounds at a distance” and drugs that “exalt imagination.”

Boyle clearly knew he was living through a period of rapid change — as a leading member of the Royal Society of London, he was directly contributing to it. But we make a mistake if we assume that Boyle saw himself as a pioneering scientist (the word would not be invented until over a century after his death) and still less as a participant in a Scientific Revolution or [*inspiration*](https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_Economics_of_the_Industrial_Revoluti/UYRlDwAAQBAJ?hl=en&amp;gbpv=1&amp;dq=robert%20boyle%20%22industrial%20revolution%22&amp;pg=PA11&amp;printsec=frontcover) for a looming machine age.

Throughout his career, Robert Boyle described himself as a natural philosopher or a naturalist; his frenemy Isaac Newton was an alchemist through and through. To truly understand them, we need to remember that they did not believe they were pioneering science, as such.

… When we quantify scientific innovation, then, it’s worth remembering that the ways we think about the science of the 2020s might seem as epistemologically foreign to people in the future as the self-conceptions of Boyle and Newton seem to people of today.

— Benjamin Breen, “[*Experiencing scientific revolutions*](https://resobscura.substack.com/p/experiencing-scientific-revolutions): the 1660s and the 2020s” (Aug. 9)

PHOTO: (PHOTOGRAPH BY Alain Pilon FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** September 15, 2023

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[***'The 2024 Issue: Democracy or Autocracy?'***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68RD-FWK1-DXY4-X2RT-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

July 19, 2023 Wednesday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; Editorial Desk; Pg. 21; LETTERS

**Length:** 1162 words

**Body**

To the Editor:

Re ''Trump and Allies Seeking Vast Increase of His Power'' (front page, July 17):

Donald Trump plans, if elected next year, to revamp the administrative state, also known to conservatives as the deep state, also known to Mr. Trump as the warmongers, the globalists, the ''communists, Marxists and fascists,'' ''the political class that hates our country.''

Once revamped, this new state would be much more under Mr. Trump's control, without those pesky independent agencies that are beyond his reach.

We had a state like that in the past, headed by King George III, and decided that we did not like it, which is why we have what are quaintly known as ''checks and balances,'' designed precisely to prevent the president from amassing too much power.

Are we really ready to replace ''Hail to the Chief'' with ''Hail to the King''?

John T. DillonWest Caldwell, N.J.

To the Editor:

If someone told Donald Trump that he is merely a tool of the Republican Party, he would be livid. But tool he is, and also a tool of the Federalist Society, the Heritage Foundation and all the billionaires who stand to gain from longstanding Republican tenets, if implemented.

Going back to the Nixon era, conservative Republicans would often say, ''The best government is the least government.'' During several Republican administrations there have been efforts to reduce the size and the role of government. They have sought a smaller I.R.S., so that earnings of wealthy people would not be audited, and reduced regulation by federal agencies, maximizing the profits of businesses that would otherwise be regulated, at the expense of the health and safety of American citizens.

Mr. Trump is a useful tool to the Republicans, who hope he can normalize discussion about a reduced government in a strongman executive branch. Even if another Republican is elected president in 2024, he will follow the Republican blueprint for the executive branch, and we can kiss our seminal experiment in democracy goodbye.

Ben MyersHarvard, Mass.

To the Editor:

Those supporters of broader powers for a re-elected President Donald Trump should keep in mind the proverb ''what goes around comes around.''

If Republicans are successful in broadening a president's executive branch powers, those powers could just as easily be used, and abused, by a future liberal Democratic president.

Bert ElyAlexandria, Va.

To the Editor:

This article about Donald Trump and his allies seeking a vast increase in power for the president almost makes this anti-Trumper want to vote for him. What the article suggests that Mr. Trump will do is long overdue. I just wish he'd shut up and quit social media.

Tom BrownKansas City, Mo.

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Donald Trump has said, ''I have an Article 2, where I have the right to do whatever I want as president.'' This is as clear a statement of intent as Mussolini's in 1936: ''We do not argue with those who disagree with us, we destroy them.''

The common goal is to establish an autocracy. With his militarized acolytes, media allies and anti-regulation donors, Mr. Trump presents a clear threat to democracy, rule of law and any hope for equity or equality.

This is the 2024 issue: democracy or autocracy?

Brian KellyRockville Centre, N.Y.

To the Editor:

If people weren't scared before, they should be after reading this. How fascism comes to the United States.

People of good conscience know what must be done. Save our democracy! Vote!

Alison Goodwin SchiffNew York

Trump as Target: Is Another Indictment Coming?

To the Editor:

Re ''Trump Says He's a Target in Special Counsel's Capitol Attack Investigation'' (news update, nytimes.com, July 18):

Donald Trump announced that on Sunday he received a notice that he is a target in the ongoing federal investigation into the Jan. 6 uprising being conducted by the special counsel Jack Smith. Such notices are almost always followed by an actual indictment.

This is huge news. It felt like a lock that the Justice Department would indict Mr. Trump for his flagrant mishandling of classified documents. But it was far from certain that the evidence would be deemed compelling enough to indict him on charges related to Jan. 6.

In the past it has often seemed as if Mr. Trump was shrouded in an impenetrable Teflon coating and nothing could pierce that protective barrier. Perhaps this, an indictment on charges he helped to incite the Jan. 6 insurrection at the Capitol, will prove to be his final undoing.

Whether the news affects his strong front-runner status in the Republican presidential race remains to be seen. But what does seem certain is that it will erode his support in the 2024 general election if he is the Republican nominee and help to ensure that this man never again resides in the White House.

Ken DerowSwarthmore, Pa.

The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

To the Editor:

Re ''The Hysteria Over Jayapal's 'Racist State' Gaffe,'' by Michelle Goldberg (column, July 18):

I write to thank Ms. Goldberg for calling attention to an important point: Israel's defenders must face the reality that its policies are deeply destructive to the Palestinian people and ultimately to the state of Israel itself.

It is impossible to choose to oppress a people without morally implicating oneself. This is true for a single human and true for any state in our complex and conflicted world.

Unless Israel acknowledges the humanity of the Palestinian people and changes its policies, it is doomed to fail by its own hand.

Marea Siris WexlerNorthampton, Mass.

To the Editor:

Michelle Goldberg's thoughtful column does not mention the reason the Israeli people and government have turned rightward. The Palestinians refuse to recognize the right of the Israeli nation to exist and have been lax in preventing Palestinian attacks, including murders of Israeli citizens.

Albert MarshakAtlantic Beach, N.Y.

Student Loans, and the Purpose of College

To the Editor:

Re ''Who Repays Student Loans?,'' by Laura Beamer and Marshall Steinbaum (Opinion guest essay, July 16):

Proposed policies to fund or defund public colleges based on students' labor market outcomes will merely reinforce the notion that colleges are job-training institutions and will further damage liberal arts education at institutions serving minorities and the ***working class***.

Having students rack up more debt will ultimately damage the economy when those indebted former students cannot afford to buy cars or homes, marry or have children.

We should revisit how the interest on student loans is compounded, which forces former students to pay two or three times the original amount of their loans as interest accrues over time.

But in the larger sense, we must rethink the whole system of higher education to see it as a public good rather than a privilege reserved for those who can best afford it.

Max HermanBloomfield, N.J.The writer is an associate professor of sociology at New Jersey City University.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/07/18/opinion/trump-executive-power.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/07/18/opinion/trump-executive-power.html)

**Graphic**

This article appeared in print on page A21.

**Load-Date:** July 19, 2023

**End of Document**



[***China’s Economic Outlook: Pep Talks Up Top, Gloom on the Ground***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6925-FVY1-JBG3-60TR-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

August 29, 2023 Tuesday 11:39 EST

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**Section:** WORLD; asia

**Length:** 1460 words

**Byline:** Vivian Wang

**Highlight:** Beijing has characterized concerns about the economic slowdown as being inflated by Western critics. Widespread anxiety and pessimism paint a different picture.

**Body**

Beijing has characterized concerns about the economic slowdown as being inflated by Western critics. Widespread anxiety and pessimism paint a different picture.

To the residents and business owners of Chedun, a ***working-class*** neighborhood in the southwestern outskirts of Shanghai, the signs of an anemic economy are all around. The factories that once drew workers from around the country have moved away. Those that remain have slashed wages. Around the affordable eateries and motley shops where workers once crowded, employees eagerly latch onto anyone passing by.

“No one has money now, it’s obvious,” Cherry Qian, 25, said as she sat inside the electronics store she manages, which on Sunday afternoon had seen only one customer.

But there’s one place the downturn isn’t as obvious: in the government’s account of it.

A gulf has emerged between the Chinese economy as many Chinese are experiencing it, and Beijing’s narrative of it — and that gulf is only widening. For many ordinary Chinese, one of the worst [*economic slowdowns*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/01/16/business/china-gdp-fourth-quarter-2022.html) the country has faced in decades has translated into widespread pessimism and resignation. But state media and officials continue to declare that any challenges are blips.

Concerns about the economy, propaganda outlets have insisted, have been inflated by Western politicians and media outlets engaged in “[*cognitive warfare.*](https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/THfo0mfrWCGxMj0QwMy92A)” One social media account backed by China’s state broadcaster released a [*video*](https://weibo.com/7040797671/Nfs3dDkNH?pagetype=profilefeed&amp;layerid=4936827519374753) that purported to investigate how foreign news outlets had cherry-picked statistics that predicted higher economic growth, just so they could later say China fell short. “At the end of the day, they are fated to be slapped in the face by reality,” a spokesman for China’s foreign ministry [*said*](https://www.mfa.gov.cn/web/wjdt_674879/fyrbt_674889/202308/t20230816_11127582.shtml) this month about the purported Western naysayers.

When the reality has proved too inconvenient, another approach has simply been to conceal it, as when Beijing this month [*stopped publishing the youth unemployment rate*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/15/business/china-youth-unemployment.html), which had been at a record high. The decision was widely mocked by Chinese social media users, who joked that the government had finally landed on an effective fix.

Differing official and on-the-ground narratives are hardly new in China, with its tightly controlled censorship apparatus. But the contrast is especially stark now, when the public’s gloom is so widespread, from the wealthy elite to factory workers.

A housing crisis has left many middle-class Chinese who poured their [*life savings into apartments*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/01/24/world/asia/china-unfinished-apartments.html) reeling. Government crackdowns on various white-collar sectors, from education to technology, have spurred layoffs at major corporations. Foreign companies have pulled back from investments in China, leading to less work for factories, plunging paychecks for workers and falling consumer demand.

“I tried many times and just couldn’t find one I wanted,” Zhu Xunyang, 19, said of his search for a summer job at a factory in Chedun while home from university. Either the salary was too low, or the factories didn’t want him, he said.

“So I kind of wanted to just give up,” he said as he played games on his phone in the metalware shop his parents run. “And I did.”

Many skeptical or outright scornful comments about the economy on social media have escaped the censors, perhaps because they are so common.

“That sense of insecurity is almost universally shared within China now, across all walks of life,” said Chen Zhiwu, a professor of finance at the University of Hong Kong. “And that is why the government has been using all the official media and all other tools to convey a positive, optimistic message.”

The malaise is especially striking compared to the optimism many Chinese felt earlier this year, after Beijing finally abandoned coronavirus restrictions that for three years had left many people unable to leave home and unwilling to spend.

Ms. Qian, the electronics store manager, had hoped to buy a new car before her wedding later this year. But after seeing how business had flagged — she saw around 20 customers a day last year, she said — she abandoned that idea.

“It’s to prevent risk,” she said. “Before, you could buy a house as an investment. Now, nobody dares buy a house, or to casually buy anything big.”

A few blocks away, Zhang Jiaojuan and her husband were wondering whether people would venture to buy anything small, either, as they mixed chives and meat for orders that had yet to materialize at their dumpling store.

They had not planned to be entrepreneurs: Last year, they worked at an auto parts factory, earning between $800 and $1,000 a month, about the average per capita income in Shanghai. But this spring, wages fell to about $550, so low that the couple decided they might as well try to start their own business. They invested their life savings of about $27,000, thinking of the lively crowds that had filled the cramped storefronts hawking noodles, spicy duck necks and roast meat in the prepandemic years.

“And then we found out business is bad here, too,” said Ms. Zhang’s husband, who gave only his surname, Xue.

“People don’t spend money like they did before the pandemic, where they’d buy whatever they want,” Ms. Zhang said, as their teenage son slouched at one of the empty tables, playing with his phone.

They had cut back on their own spending, too. Mr. Xue said he had essentially stopped buying fruit, limiting himself to staples and vegetables. “We thought if we just got through those three years, and worked hard, there would definitely be hope,” he said. “And then it turned out that when the pandemic ended, things just got worse.”

Officials have acknowledged that the economy is facing new challenges, describing the recovery as “wavelike” while maintaining that the overall outlook is positive. But the remedies they have offered are unlikely to be effective, economists said.

Despite [*urging consumers to spend more*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/07/31/business/china-economy-consumer-stimulus.html), the government has rejected the idea of cash handouts to households, calling it [*too costly*](https://m.thepaper.cn/baijiahao_24249464). It has brandished tax incentives for purchases of new homes, even as it has continued to [*erode the already weak social safety net*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/24/business/china-economy-safety-net.html) that makes many Chinese leery of big purchases.

On Monday, the Ministry of Finance [*halved the tax*](https://english.news.cn/20230828/e2461398293d403baa96f8d16d4bbbe7/c.html) on stock transactions, in an attempt to boost investor confidence. But that would not remedy how unwilling people are to buy stocks in the first place, given a lack of faith that they would grow in value, said Professor Chen: “When the future is so uncertain, then it does not matter what kind of transaction costs you charge.”

“Detachment” between the top leadership and the reality of many Chinese, he added, “is clearly there.”

The government’s blame of external forces for the slowdown does have supporters. Wang Ainian, a barber in Chedun, pointed to news reports about the trade war with the United States and Japanese [*restrictions*](https://asia.nikkei.com/Business/Tech/Semiconductors/Japan-s-new-chip-equipment-export-rules-take-effect-Sunday) on the export of computing chips, when asked why business had slowed at local factories.

The economic pain has also been spread unevenly across the country. The wealthy, more insulated from uncertainties, continue to spend on [*luxury goods*](https://www.reuters.com/business/retail-consumer/sharp-chinese-rebound-pushes-lvmh-sales-up-17-second-quarter-2023-07-25/). Many malls and train stations are bustling again, though most shoppers and travelers are spending less and [*choosing cheaper destinations*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/21/world/asia/zibo-barbecue.html). Among some lower-income Chinese, familiarity with hardship has also blunted the pessimism of the recent downturn.

But even for Mr. Wang, no matter who is responsible for the economic pain, he had little hope that it would reverse itself soon. He was seeing only about two-thirds of the customers that he had the year before, and half of prepandemic levels. And that was in a world-class city like Shanghai, not his hometown in inland Anhui Province.

“Shanghai is a place people dream of, and the population was always growing,” he said of Chedun. “But now it’s not.”

For others, the official explanations hardly register. A few blocks away, a 33-year-old clothing shop owner who gave her surname, Tang, said she did not pay attention to news about the economy. But she did spend a lot of time on Xiaohongshu, a Chinese social media platform similar to Instagram, where she tried to collect business tips from other clothing store owners. Most of the posts from them, though, were lamenting how bad their own business was.

Li You contributed research from Shanghai and Siyi Zhao from Seoul.

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PHOTOS: Top, a screen in Shanghai displaying stock exchange data. Above right, food shopping in Beijing. Left, university graduates at a job fair in Wuhan. The Chinese government has stopped reporting the youth unemployment rate, which had soared to a record high. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY ALEX PLAVEVSKI/EPA, VIA SHUTTERSTOCK; PEDRO PARDO/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE — GETTY IMAGES; AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE — GETTY IMAGES) (A6) This article appeared in print on page A1, A6.

**Load-Date:** August 30, 2023

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[***Costly Race, Still Not Over, Could Decide Senate Control***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:66TW-Y6J1-DXY4-X153-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

November 10, 2022 Thursday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section P; Column 0; National Desk; Pg. 13

**Length:** 425 words

**Byline:** By Ben Shpigel

**Body**

The duel between Catherine Cortez Masto, the Democratic incumbent, and Adam Laxalt, her Republican challenger, serves as a referendum on voters' concerns nationwide over inflation and the economy.

The duel in Nevada between Senator Catherine Cortez Masto, one of the Democratic Party's more vulnerable incumbents, and Adam Laxalt, a Republican who helped to spearhead former President Donald J. Trump's effort to overturn the state's 2020 election results, is the most expensive political contest in state history -- with good reason.

The outcome of the race, where candidates have built their campaigns on broader narratives over the state of the economy and the threat to abortion access, may tip control of the Senate.

As of early Wednesday afternoon, Mr. Laxalt led Ms. Cortez Masto, the nation's first Latina senator, by 2.7 percentage points with 75 percent of the vote counted. But most of the remaining votes were expected to come from Democratic-leaning mail ballots and provisional ballots, including from same-day registrants.

The race in Nevada has embodied Republicans' robust hopes of regaining a Senate majority and Democrats' fight to preserve the vestiges of a party juggernaut forged there by the late Harry M. Reid, who spent 30 years in the Senate before retiring in 2017.

That political machine long relied on favorable demographics to maintain its momentum, but the economic downturn has posed a steep challenge. Mr. Laxalt seized on the issue, blaming Democrats and President Biden for the grim financial outlook. Just last weekend, Mr. Laxalt condemned Mr. Biden for the state's 15 percent inflation rate, while noting that Mr. Biden had not visited Nevada to campaign.

With Democrats' troubles in Nevada reflecting those around the nation, Ms. Cortez Masto, herself a protégée of Mr. Reid, focused her campaign on abortion rights in the wake of the Supreme Court ruling overturning Roe v. Wade.

Nevada allows abortion up to 24 weeks, and after that in cases where the mother's health is at risk. Mr. Laxalt has said he would support banning abortions in the state after 13 weeks, or the first trimester, and was caught saying during a breakfast with pastors that ''Roe v. Wade was always a joke.''

For years, even with Democrats representing a minority among registered voters, Nevada maintained its blue-state status. Their chances of retaining that distinction hinges, in part, on the turnout of ***working-class*** and Latino voters -- voters who Democrats have long relied on, and who Republicans have feverishly courted.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2022/11/09/us/politics/senate-control-nevada-race.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/11/09/us/politics/senate-control-nevada-race.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Nevada Senate With a quarter of the vote still to be counted, the challenger led the nation's first Latina senator.

Adam Laxalt Republican

Catherine Cortez Masto Democrat This article appeared in print on page P13.

**Load-Date:** November 10, 2022

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[***‘The 2024 Issue: Democracy or Autocracy?’; letters***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68R8-35W1-DXY4-X2HH-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

July 18, 2023 Tuesday 23:27 EST

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 1147 words

**Highlight:** Readers react to Donald Trump’s plan to strengthen presidential powers. Also: The Jan. 6 inquiry; the Israeli-Palestinian conflict;

**Body**

To the Editor:

Re “[*Trump and Allies Seeking Vast Increase of His Power*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/07/17/us/politics/trump-plans-2025.html)” (front page, July 17):

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Mr. Trump is a useful tool to the Republicans, who hope he can normalize discussion about a reduced government in a strongman executive branch. Even if another Republican is elected president in 2024, he will follow the Republican blueprint for the executive branch, and we can kiss our seminal experiment in democracy goodbye.

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New York

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Max Herman

Bloomfield, N.J.

The writer is an associate professor of sociology at New Jersey City University.

This article appeared in print on page A21.

**Load-Date:** July 18, 2023

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[***Union's Actions in Georgia Aim to Raise the Heat On Biden and Automakers***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:691Y-8WP1-DXY4-X0N8-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

August 28, 2023 Monday

Late Edition - Final

Copyright 2023 The New York Times Company

**Section:** Section A; Column 0; National Desk; Pg. 17

**Length:** 1414 words

**Byline:** By Jonathan Weisman

**Body**

A coalition of unions and civic groups is pushing one of the world's largest automakers to protect and train workers in return for federal money under President Biden's signature laws.

A coalition of labor unions and civic groups in Georgia and Alabama will launch a pressure campaign on Monday targeting Hyundai's electric vehicle plants and its clean energy suppliers, an effort that could also push the Biden administration to make good on its oft-repeated pledge to create not just jobs but ''good union jobs.''

By focusing on the shift to electric vehicles at Hyundai, a nonunion carmaker expected to reap huge benefits from Mr. Biden's prized initiatives, the coalition hopes to make inroads at other automakers, such as B.M.W. in South Carolina and Mercedes-Benz in Alabama, which similarly chose union-hostile territory for their American manufacturing bases.

The campaign could also raise the heat on domestic automakers in the middle of contract negotiations with the newly aggressive United Automobile Workers union, which is focused on raising wages at electric vehicle suppliers like battery makers.

For Mr. Biden, the Hyundai campaign has political ramifications, in setting specific demands on one of the largest automakers in the world in one of the most important swing states in the 2024 presidential election, Georgia.

''The people in the community should be able to come to work in these plants, with a livable wage and good jobs,'' said Yvonne T. Brooks, president of the Georgia State A.F.L.-C.I.O., adding that ''to bring jobs here but not provide a livable wage kind of defeats the purpose.''

Mr. Biden has campaigned on the sheer number of jobs created by his three signature laws, a $1 trillion infrastructure package, a $280 billion measure to rekindle a domestic semiconductor industry, and the Inflation Reduction Act, which included $370 billion for clean energy to combat climate change. A $25 million advertising blitz announced by his campaign last week kicked off with a one-minute spot that proclaims, ''Manufacturing jobs are coming home,'' and ''America is leading the world in clean energy.''

But despite low unemployment, tempering inflation and steady job creation, Mr. Biden's overall approval ratings have been dragged down by voters' refusal to give him credit for the good economic news. Clifford Young, who oversees U.S. public opinion research at Ipsos, a polling company, said that last year's 8.5 percent inflation and the ensuing interest rate hikes and slower economic growth might have sealed Mr. Biden's fate with the voting public.

''The dirty secret is a bad economy hurts a president more than a good economy helps,'' he said.

White House officials, who were notified of the Hyundai effort ahead of time, said Thursday that Mr. Biden fully backs the aims of the coalition in Georgia. And labor leaders have generally supported Mr. Biden as the most pro-union president ever.

But in a notable shift, those leaders also say the volume of jobs created on his watch may not be enough to win worker loyalties if those jobs are low-paid, dangerous and insecure. That is especially true if substandard jobs are underwritten by the taxpayer.

''I know the president can't make stipulations that all new jobs have to go to union workers, but there have to be fair labor standards for jobs that are supported by tax dollars,'' said David Green, the United Automobile Workers' regional director for Ohio and Indiana. ''Members are a little frustrated with it. It's our tax dollars, too.''

Such concerns have led the U.A.W. to withhold its endorsement of Mr. Biden as the union's new leadership threatens to strike over wages and benefits at electric vehicle suppliers. Mr. Biden has responded with support, tapping a senior adviser and Democratic veteran, Gene B. Sperling, as liaison between the union and the automakers and backing the U.A.W. this month in contract negotiations.

But union leaders are worried about the transition that Mr. Biden has set in motion with his push to address climate change with federal money funding the shift from fossil fuels. They are pressing automakers shifting to electric vehicles to ''honor the right to organize,'' take necessary steps to avoid plant closings, and provide training programs to help workers transition into new jobs at comparable wages.

A letter to the chief executive of Hyundai's American subsidiary, José Muñoz, signed by coalition members including the U.A.W., the A.F.L.-C.I.O., the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (which is particularly close to Mr. Biden), and religious, community and environmental groups, maps key labor demands.

Such letters, demanding ''community benefits agreements'' enforced with binding arbitration systems, have been trotted out in the past to little effect. But union leaders said the Hyundai effort is more focused and forward-looking, hinting at the strategy of organizers in the South as unions across the country have become much more aggressive.

The letter pushes for Hyundai and its subsidiaries to hire locally, train workers from the communities around the plants, bolster safety standards, and protect the environment around the plants, which are expected to employ more than 30,000 Georgians and Alabamians. Of those, 12,750 are expected to work at or around Hyundai's new electric vehicle ''megasite'' in Bryan County near Savannah, the largest economic development project in Georgia's history.

The coalition is seeking a binding agreement modeled on one reached last year with the electric bus maker New Flyer, which promised, among other things, that at least 45 percent of new hires and 20 percent of promotions would be women, minorities and U.S. military veterans.

''These facilities will transform our communities, and we are faced with a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to ensure that this transformation is for the best,'' the coalition wrote, demanding that Hyundai and its suppliers come to the bargaining table to make ''highroad commitments to workers and their communities.''

A spokesman for Hyundai U.S.A., Michael Stewart, said in a statement that the company's ''top priority is the safety and well-being of the more than 114,000 individuals we employ, directly and indirectly, whose market-leading skills and expertise are driving America's auto industry forward.''

Daniel Flippo, director of the United Steelworkers southeast district, cautioned that community agreements might not have the teeth of union contracts.

At a recent meeting with Energy Department officials about the electric vehicle transition, Mr. Flippo said, he told them, ''Look, all this going in to protect workers and worker rights looks good on paper, but if you don't follow up, it shouldn't be up to the union organizers to do it for you.''

Democrats secured a raft of provisions in Mr. Biden's three signature laws to encourage labor organizing, raise wages and favor union apprenticeships and training programs. In May, the administration used those provisions to apply pressure to a Georgia electric bus company, Blue Bird, and support workers trying to unionize its Fort Valley, Ga., plant. The United Steelworkers won that vote.

Mr. Flippo credited a rule in the electric school bus grants that said no federal money could be used to oppose union organizing, such as in hiring union-busting law firms during an organizing drive.

''They did use some of those tactics,'' he said, ''but all we had to say was we were going to notify the government and request an audit of where their money was going, and it went away.''

The Biden administration has had some successes with clean energy companies, securing commitments by a Danish wind energy giant to use union labor on its offshore wind projects and by a North Dakota metals company to stay neutral in any union drive at its new battery plant.

But union leaders have only so much influence over the rank and file -- and against the pull of Donald J. Trump, who has made ***working-class*** appeals central to his political movement. Mr. Green pointed to the former president's promise to revive a General Motors plant in Lordstown, Ohio, by enticing an untested start-up to buy the facility. That start-up, Lordstown Motors, filed for bankruptcy protection in late June.

''I will not, could not support any endorsement of Donald Trump,'' he said. ''But we've got a lot of members. Do I think that Trump's rhetoric is contagious among our members? Absolutely.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/27/us/politics/georgia-hyundai-labor-biden.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/27/us/politics/georgia-hyundai-labor-biden.html)

**Graphic**

This article appeared in print on page A17.

**Load-Date:** August 28, 2023

**End of Document**



[***A Wilting Climate Response***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65YC-ND71-DXY4-X4DP-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

July 18, 2022 Monday 06:06 EST

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**Section:** BRIEFING

**Length:** 1868 words

**Byline:** David Leonhardt

**Highlight:** As another heat wave descends, the U.S. federal government is pulling back from the climate fight. What now?

**Body**

As another heat wave descends, the U.S. federal government is pulling back from the climate fight. What now?

Weather forecasters say that Britain this week may experience [*its highest temperature*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2022/07/18/world/europe-uk-heat-weather/the-uk-has-declared-a-national-emergency-because-of-the-heat?smid=url-share) on record — more than 40 degrees Celsius, or about 105 degrees Fahrenheit. In response, officials in London [*have asked people to stay home*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/07/17/world/europe/britain-heat-wave-records.html), saying that vehicles may overheat and rail tracks may buckle.

In France, Greece, Spain and other parts of Europe, the same heat wave [*has sparked dozens of wildfires*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/07/16/world/europe/uk-europe-heat-wave.html).

In the U.S., parts of the Southwest and the Central Plains are bracing for temperatures that could reach 110 degrees this week. Already, the city of Tulsa has experienced [*more days above 100 degrees this summer*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/06/25/us/heat-wave-texas-oklahoma-plains.html) than it historically has in an entire summer on average.

Yet in the face of these mounting signs and costs of climate change, the U.S. federal government is choosing not to address the problem. Last week, President Biden’s package of policies to reduce climate-warning pollution collapsed, after Senator Joe Manchin of West Virginia withdrew his support. Last month, the Supreme Court restricted the Environmental Protection Agency’s authority to reduce pollution at power plants.

As my colleagues Jonathan Weisman and Jazmine Ulloa [*write*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/07/17/us/politics/climate-change-manchin-biden.html):

Climate change remains an issue with little political power, either for those pressing for dramatic action or for those standing in the way.

“People are exhausted by the pandemic, they’re terribly disillusioned by the government,” said Anusha Narayanan, climate campaign director for Greenpeace USA, the environmental group known for its guerrilla tactics but now struggling to mobilize supporters. She added: “People see climate as a tomorrow problem. We have to make them see it’s not a tomorrow problem.”

The lack of U.S. action on climate change has alarmed many experts. Without American leadership, the world will probably struggle to limit warming to levels that scientists have urged, for the sake of preventing much worse damage than the planet is already on course to experience. The U.S. remains a major emitter of greenhouse gases, and it also has the geopolitical sway [*to persuade China and India to do more*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/04/23/briefing/spacex-launch-JJ-vaccine-biden-tax.html) than they are now doing — if the U.S. is also acting.

Today’s newsletter looks at what this country can still do to address climate change, even with Washington seeming to withdraw from the fight.

Sum of the parts

California is on the verge of requiring that all new cars sold there be electric or zero-emission by 2035. Colorado and New York have sharply cut their electricity emissions in recent years. About 20 other states have also taken aggressive steps to slow global warming, as have some local governments and companies.

“States are really critical to helping the country as a whole achieve our climate goals,” said Kyle Clark-Sutton of RMI, a clean-energy think tank. “They have been leading.”

None of these changes has nearly the impact that federal action would. But smaller changes can still add up — and even foster broader changes. Consider the vehicle market: By mandating electric vehicles, California and other states will lead automakers to build many more of them, likely spurring innovations and economies of scale that will reduce costs for everybody and thereby increase their use around the country.

It’s a reminder that climate change is one of those issues on which activists may be able to make more progress by focusing on grass-roots organizing than top-down change from Washington, especially in the current era of polarization. Locally, the politics of climate change can sometimes be less partisan than they are nationally, as Maggie Astor, a climate reporter at The Times, [*has written*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/07/01/climate/climate-policies-cities-states-local.html).

Executive action

After Manchin seemed [*to doom the climate legislation last week*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/07/15/climate/manchin-climate-change-democrats.html), Biden vowed to “take strong executive action to meet this moment.” His authority is much narrower than it would be if Congress passed new legislation, especially given the current Supreme Court’s hostility to many kinds of environmental regulation. But Biden does have several tools he can use.

Among them:

* He has directed the E.P.A. to write new rules to reduce pollution from vehicles — the nation’s largest source of planet-warming pollution — and accelerate the transition to electric vehicles.

1. Even with the recent Supreme Court ruling, the E.P.A. [*still has the authority*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/07/01/briefing/supreme-court-epa-ruling-climate.html) to issue narrow rules that would affect coal-and-gas-fired power plants, the second-largest source of greenhouse gas emissions.
2. The E.P.A. also plans to issue regulations this year to curb leaks of methane from oil and gas wells, another significant source of greenhouse gases.

(The Times’s Coral Davenport has explained [*each of these in more detail*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/07/15/climate/climate-change-action-united-states.html), as well as the potential legal challenges to them.)

Getting to 51

There are two basic reasons that a single senator — Manchin — has had the power to block climate legislation.

First, the chamber is split evenly between Democrats and Republicans (with Vice President Kamala Harris breaking ties), giving Democrats no margin for losing a vote. Second, no Republican senators are willing to vote for major climate legislation. Over the longer term, changing either of these situations could lead to more aggressive U.S. policies to slow climate change.

On the Republican side, some conservatives have been pushing their party to follow the lead of many other center-right parties around the world, which help pass and shape climate policies. [*Carlos Curbelo*](https://e360.yale.edu/features/how-one-lawmaker-is-breaking-the-bipartisan-barrier-on-climate-change), a former congressman from South Florida, has pointed out that climate change is already creating daily problems for many Americans. [*Jay Faison*](https://www.politico.com/magazine/politico50/2015/jay-faison/) is a North Carolina business executive who created a foundation to promote conservative climate solutions. [*The Niskanen Center*](https://www.niskanencenter.org/what-changed-my-mind-about-climate-change/), a Washington policy group, is doing similar work.

If even a small number of congressional Republicans supported policies to slow climate change, it could transform the politics of the issue, creating bipartisan, pro-climate majorities in Congress.

On the Democratic side, the main question is how to prevent Manchin from being the deciding vote in future years — that is, by winning more seats in purple and red states. As I’ve described in [*previous*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/04/briefing/democrats-election-working-class-voters.html) [*newsletters*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/12/07/briefing/democratic-party-covid-georgia.html), Democrats struggle to win in these states partly because the party has alienated ***working-class*** voters who are moderate or conservative on many social issues and see Democrats as the party of liberal college graduates.

[*A recent poll analysis by Echelon Insights*](https://theliberalpatriot.substack.com/p/working-class-and-hispanic-voters) offered some fascinating details, contrasting the views of strongly progressive voters with ***working-class*** Americans on immigration, patriotism, policing and other subjects. The poll also found that views of Hispanic voters tended to be similar to ***working-class*** views — and very different from the progressive views. One example: Asked if America were the greatest country in the world, 70 percent of Hispanic voters and 69 percent of ***working-class*** voters said yes, but only 28 percent of “strong progressives” did.

For a party to win over new voters, it usually can’t simply change a couple of policy positions. Politics is more complex than that. But it is clear that many blue-collar voters don’t feel at home in the Democratic Party — and that their alienation is a major impediment to the U.S. doing more to slow climate change.

More on the climate

* Here’s [*how to stay cool*](https://www.nytimes.com/article/excessive-heat-stay-cool.html) in a heat wave.

1. [*Track the dangerous heat in the U.S.*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2022/us/heat-wave-map-tracker.html)
2. This year, a Times story documented [*Manchin’s personal stake in the coal industry*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/03/27/climate/manchin-coal-climate-conflicts.html).

THE LATEST NEWS

War in Ukraine

* Volodymyr Zelensky, Ukraine’s president, [*fired his country’s two top law enforcement officials*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2022/07/18/world/russia-ukraine-war-news/zelensky-fires-top-officials-venediktova-bakanov?smid=url-share).

1. On Donetsk’s front line, Ukraine’s [*army pays a heavy toll for small gains*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/07/17/world/europe/ukraine-russia-donetsk-front-line.html).

Other Big Stories

* A report found [*“systemic failures” in the police response*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/07/17/us/uvalde-shooting-report.html) to the deadly Uvalde school shooting.

1. Since the reversal of Roe v. Wade, some patients have [*had trouble obtaining miscarriage treatments*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/07/17/health/abortion-miscarriage-treatment.html), which are identical to those for abortions.
2. A gunman killed three people in an Indiana mall before an armed [*bystander fatally shot the assailant*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/07/17/us/greenwood-mall-shooting-indiana.html).
3. For monkeypox patients, [*pain can be brutal and care is often lacking*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/07/18/nyregion/new-york-monkeypox-vaccine.html).
4. “We flew to Vegas, stood in line for a license with four other couples”: [*Ben Affleck and Jennifer Lopez got married*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/07/17/arts/jennifer-lopez-ben-affleck-married.html).

Opinions

Gail Collins and Bret Stephens discuss [*Manchin, space and Ivana Trump*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/07/18/opinion/trump-biden-webb-space.html).

MORNING READS

Shrek: Online obsessions with the ogre turned into [*a real-life party*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/07/16/style/shrek-memes-brooklyn-rave.html).

Blockbuster: Netflix is [*betting big on “The Gray Man,”*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/07/17/business/media/netflix-the-gray-man-subscribers.html) starring Ryan Gosling and Chris Evans as C.I.A. employees.

Metropolitan Diary: A cool ride home after a breakup, and [*more tales from the city*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/07/17/nyregion/metropolitan-diary.html).

A Times classic: [*Lasik gone wrong*](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/06/11/well/lasik-complications-vision.html).

Advice from Wirecutter: [*Gifts for coffee lovers*](https://www.nytimes.com/wirecutter/gifts/best-gifts-for-coffee-lovers/).

Lives Lived: Jak Knight, a stand-up comedian, writer and actor, attracted attention as a voice actor and writer on “Big Mouth.” [*He died at 28*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/07/16/arts/television/jak-knight-dead.html).

SPORTS NEWS FROM THE ATHLETIC

Rory’s disappointment: Cameron Smith charged past Rory McIlroy yesterday to win the Open Championship with an eight-under 64, a round fit for legend, [*as Brendan Quinn writes*](https://theathletic.com/3428834/2022/07/17/cameron-smith-open-championship/). Smith wondered out loud afterward how many beers he could fit into the Claret Jug.

An M.L.B. draft surprise: The Texas Rangers [*selected pitcher Kumar Rocker*](https://theathletic.com/news/orioles-jackson-holliday-mlb-draft/KX4hEr1ihmIs/) — the Mets’ first-round pick last season — at No. 3, much higher than experts predicted. New York chose not to offer Rocker a contract after evaluating his medicals. Did they make a mistake? The Rangers [*think he’s worth the risk*](https://theathletic.com/3430173/2022/07/17/kumar-rocker-rangers-draft-pick/).

Are the Mariners legit? Seattle won its 14th straight game Sunday, entering the All-Star break on a high as the hottest team in baseball. [*They’re one win shy of the franchise record*](https://theathletic.com/news/mariners-win-14th-straight/Y0fdx6Tq1JRg/).

ARTS AND IDEAS

A Gen X icon

You may not have heard much about the comedian Janeane Garofalo, 57, in a while. She has no social media presence, not even a smartphone.

But she’s still performing across New York, often sharing bills with young unknown comedians, even as she eschews online life or even doing a television special. That prompted the Times critic Jason Zinoman to ask: [*Is this what not selling out looks like*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/07/14/movies/janeane-garofalo.html)

“It would be easy to see Garofalo performing with comics half her age to a sparse Brooklyn crowd as a portrait of decline,” Jason writes. “But to my Generation X eyes, it looks like a kind of triumph.”

PLAY, WATCH, EAT

What to Cook

Cherry tomatoes provide a strong flavor to [*this cold noodle dish*](https://cooking.nytimes.com/recipes/1022543-cold-noodles-with-tomatoes).

What to Watch

These [*comedy specials from veteran stand-ups*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/07/15/arts/television/comedy-specials-streaming.html) are ideal for summer viewing.

What to Listen to

Revisit The Times Magazine’s music issue, [*featuring songs that get us through it*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2022/03/11/magazine/best-songs.html).

Now Time to Play

The pangram from yesterday’s Spelling Bee was telepathy. Here is [*today’s puzzle*](https://www.nytimes.com/puzzles/spelling-bee).

Here’s [*today’s Mini Crossword*](https://www.nytimes.com/crosswords/game/mini), and a clue: Praiseful poems (four letters).

And here’s [*today’s Wordle*](https://www.nytimes.com/games/wordle/index.html). After, [*use our bot*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2022/upshot/wordle-bot.html) to get better.

Thanks for spending part of your morning with The Times. See you tomorrow. — David

P.S. The Times’ revamped and [*renamed Sunday Opinion section*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/07/16/opinion/sunday-review-redesign.html) debuted yesterday.

Here’s [*today’s front page*](https://static01.nyt.com/images/2022/07/18/nytfrontpage/scan.pdf).

“[*The Daily*](https://www.nytimes.com/thedaily)” is about Biden’s meeting with M.B.S.

Matthew Cullen, Claire Moses, Ian Prasad Philbrick and Ashley Wu contributed to The Morning. You can reach the team at [*themorning@nytimes.com*](mailto:themorning@nytimes.com).

[*Sign up here to get this newsletter in your inbox*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing).

PHOTO: Heat in Nice, France, yesterday. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Valery Hache/Agence France-Presse — Getty Images FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** July 18, 2022

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[***Zadie Smith Makes 1860s London Feel Alive, and Recognizable; Fiction***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6921-DNB1-DXY4-X042-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

August 28, 2023 Monday 09:29 EST

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**Section:** BOOKS; review

**Length:** 1406 words

**Byline:** Karan Mahajan

**Highlight:** Her new novel, “The Fraud,” is based on a celebrated 19th-century criminal trial, but it keeps one eye focused clearly on today’s political populism.

**Body**

THE FRAUD, by Zadie Smith

This was one of the Book Review’s [*10 best books of 2023*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/28/books/review/best-books-2023.html).

All over the dorm in California glinted pale-orange and tabasco-red and steel-blue copies of Zadie Smith’s “White Teeth,” with their hard white bright lettering. The year was 2001, and “White Teeth” had been assigned as incoming reading for my freshman dorm. I remember loving the sprawling, rude, funny, slapdash narration, the magical way in which Smith brought it all together in the figure of a genetically engineered mouse.

But Smith’s age at the time — 26 — must have felt positively geriatric to me. It was only when I started publishing in my 20s that I could appreciate what a prodigy Smith was; and throughout my career she has remained a startling (and despair-inducing) beacon of what a writer can achieve at a young age. An undergraduate when she embarked on “White Teeth,” she was not yet 30 when she published — to my mind — her masterpiece, “On Beauty,” a wise, sad and hilarious book about American race relations that would have justly been called a great American social novel had the American literary scene at that time been more attuned to race as a theme.

Now, at the ripe old age of 47, Smith, having long since entered History herself, has written her first historical novel, “The Fraud.” It offers a vast, acute panoply of London and the English countryside, and successfully locates the social controversies of an era in a handful of characters.

The “fraud” of the title refers to several figures, but primarily to a scamster in 1860s England who claims to be Sir Roger Tichborne, the inheritor of a great title and fortune who was considered dead at sea. Suing to take over the Tichborne estate, the Claimant, as he is called, is clearly a fraud — he has none of the trappings of an aristocrat and everything about his past suggests that he is an English butcher who has been living in Australia to escape bad debts. But strangely, in his quest for “justice,” the Claimant amasses an adoring swarm of fans who believe he is telling the truth and are ready to go to the death to prove that he — and no one else — is Sir Roger. The only reason the Claimant is being denied his due, these supporters say, is that the elite — the gentry, the press, the “papists” — are in conspiracy against him.

The echoes of mindless Trumpism are clear, and it is evidently why Smith was drawn to this trial, which was a cause célèbre in England at the time and was a bottomless well of populist nuttiness. The diverse crowd of the Claimant’s supporters at a fund-raiser, Smith writes, consisted of “clerks and schoolteachers, dissenters of all stripes, shopkeepers and foremen, ladies’ maids, cooks, governesses.” The Claimant was a “man with no center” who “moved as the wind moved,” a “fun-loving, beer-swilling, aristocratic man of the people.” What better way to write about Trump and Trumpism than to avoid flattering Trump with another Trump portrait?

But. This is a novel, and the novelist’s intelligence is drawn in idiosyncratic directions. What makes “The Fraud” a book by Zadie Smith and not, say, a transcript of the trial is that the central characters are not the jury or the judged, but a 60-ish Scottish widow named Eliza Touchet and an elderly, formerly enslaved Jamaican named Andrew Bogle who is serving as a witness for the Claimant.

Touchet is the most morally intelligent character Smith has written — a “spiky,” questing, watchful, death-haunted individual who is funny without being comic. A housekeeper and editor to her bumbling, graphomaniac novelist cousin (modeled and named after a real writer, William Ainsworth), she spends her days in the countryside protecting Ainsworth’s fragile ego — his reputation is in decline while his opportunistic friend Charles Dickens has been buried in Westminster Abbey — and arguing about the Tichborne case with Ainsworth’s new, much younger, ***working-class***, barely literate, former-maid wife, Sarah, who is as pro-Claimant as one can get.

These mealtime debates about the Tichborne trial, while fun to follow, lack the preternatural precision of the dialogue in Smith’s more contemporary novels — she is working with the past, and can’t rely on her superb ear — and so the novel really takes off when Eliza accompanies Sarah to the Tichborne fund-raiser in London and finds her mind blown by the riotous circumstances and, by contrast, the sobering figure of the white-haired, neatly dressed Andrew Bogle up on the stage.

Many idiots are compelled to defend the Claimant, including an Irish lawyer who appears to be modeled on Rudy Giuliani. But of all his defenders, no one is more believable, cautious or intelligent than Bogle, who knew the Claimant in Australia and has maintained, mysteriously, even in the face of legal blows to the Claimant, that the Claimant is who he says he is. As an abolitionist and student of humanity, Touchet is inexorably drawn to Bogle and begins interviewing him with the hope — after years of being on the sidelines of literary dinner conversations — of, heaven forbid, writing her own book.

More so than any other novel Smith has written, this is a book about novelists, and it is in lambasting the egos of male writers that Smith has the most fun. “God preserve me from that tragic indulgence, that useless vanity, that blindness!” Touchet thinks, years before she takes the plunge into novel-writing herself. While discussing Dickens with Ainsworth, she exclaims: “Oh, what does it matter what that man thinks of anything? He’s a novelist!” One of her cousin’s orotund historical fictions about the court of Queen Anne is described as being “almost as dull as the reign of Queen Anne itself.”

More movingly, Smith explains in one passage why Ainsworth became a bad writer of historical fiction after a major controversy around his early, successful, contemporary novel “Jack Sheppard” drove him “off into the distant, storied past — where he felt safest … where nothing is real and nothing matters.” It is less easy, from this point, to see Ainsworth as a buffoon. And it is a way for Smith to signal to us why she, too, may wish to navigate the storms of the present on a raft fashioned from the timber of the past.

Bogle, meanwhile, tells Eliza his harrowing tale of being raised on a brutal Jamaican plantation and making his way to England as a valet. “My life has had many parts,” he says, sounding like a Naipaul narrator. It is in this section that the odd structure of the novel, cutting between time periods and characters in very short chapters, has its biggest payoff, with decades racing by in bite-size passages that yield first-rate observations about colonialism like this: “England was not a real place at all. England was an elaborate alibi.”

More often, though, the book’s structure is uneven. One wishes, for instance, that the chapters would signal their time jumps more consistently, so that one wasn’t wondering if one was with the Eliza of the 1830s or the 1870s. But these infelicities stop mattering when we are deep into the trial and the book turns into a portrait of people with thwarted ambitions, of people who, like Ainsworth, become frauds without knowing it.

In all of her books Smith has paid attention to a mixed-up London and particularly to Willesden, where she grew up. In this novel, she is quite actively digging into London’s history, trying to understand how a person like her, with European and Jamaican ancestry, came to exist here in the first place. What forces deposited Black people on these shores? With her multicultural eye she also gives us a London that is more racially mixed than that found in other novels about the period, a London of Lascar Indians, Africans, Chinese, Turks, “Black maids-of-all-work and Black cooks and housekeepers” and “Carib boys in livery at the threshold of fine houses, got up like Princes of Arabia.”

As always, it is a pleasure to be in Zadie Smith’s mind, which, as time goes on, is becoming contiguous with London itself. Dickens may be dead, but Smith, thankfully, is alive.

THE FRAUD | By Zadie Smith | 454 pp. | Penguin Press | $29

Karan Mahajan’s most recent novel, “The Association of Small Bombs,” was a finalist for the National Book Award.

Karan Mahajan is a novelist, essayist, and critic. His second novel, The Association of Small Bombs, was a finalist for the 2016 National Book Award for Fiction. Need approved bio.

This article appeared in print on page BR9.

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[***Two Vintage Clothing Dealers’ Greatest Find: Their House***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68WX-6TR1-DXY4-X1DD-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Section:** T-MAGAZINE

**Length:** 1275 words

**Byline:** Eviana Hartman, Dean Kaufman and Colin King

**Highlight:** The pair behind the boutique Desert Vintage have made a home in an 1860s adobe-brick bungalow in Tucson, Ariz.

**Body**

The pair behind the boutique Desert Vintage have made a home in an 1860s adobe-brick bungalow in Tucson, Ariz.

THOUGH SALIMA BOUFELFEL and Roberto Cowan are known in the fashion world as the owners of the influential vintage clothing boutique Desert Vintage, they’re historians at heart. Tucson natives, they met as college students while working at an outpost of the used clothing chain Buffalo Exchange across the street from the University of Arizona. Boufelfel, 36, grew up in a family of artists and academics and developed an affinity for styling while costuming school plays; Cowan, 33, comes from a long line of seamstresses and taught himself to sew around age 13. Both knew early on that they wanted to work with historical fashion so, in 2012, after the owner of a Tucson vintage boutique that Boufelfel frequented put the business up for sale, they took it over, keeping the name and stocking it with pieces not only obscure (Jean Varon and Michael Vollbracht evening gowns; an ’80s jumpsuit from a label called Workers for Freedom) but also rare (Fortuny Delphos dresses, a Victorian-era matador jacket). Eleven years later, their collection of some 5,000 items — spanning Edwardian London to Y2K Tokyo — has drawn a global following of designers and stylists, who turn to Desert Vintage both to inform their work and to fill their personal wardrobes.

Yet even as they’ve traveled the world to source stock from dealers, archives and private collectors — they opened a second storefront on New York’s Lower East Side last year — Boufelfel and Cowan have remained in their hometown. For many years, they were romantically involved but are now best friends, professional partners and housemates, sharing an 1860s Territorial Style adobe-brick bungalow built using millenniums-old techniques. Situated just south of downtown Tucson in Barrio Viejo, one of the city’s oldest neighborhoods, the two-bedroom structure functions as a source of inspiration for the pair. “It’s like living inside a piece of folk art,” Boufelfel says.

The two have rented the 2,000-square-foot house for the past five years from friends, the interior designers Gary Patch and Darren Clark, who bought and restored the place in the 1990s. It sits just a few blocks away from a similar home that had been owned, until 2011, by Cowan’s grandfather’s family since the late 1800s. Developed in the latter half of the 19th century, Barrio Viejo has been home to successive waves of new Americans — ***working-class*** Mexicans, Chinese railway workers and European farmers and craftspeople. But in the years since Boufelfel and Cowan moved in, the neighborhood has seen an influx of gentrifiers. Even though Cowan didn’t grow up in Barrio Viejo himself, he felt it was important to remain there in the face of rising prices and a proliferation of Airbnbs. “I’m holding it down for my family,” he says.

When it came to furnishing the single-story house, Boufelfel and Cowan took a restrained approach. The 14-foot-tall ceilings are traversed by rough pine structural beams called vigas, which were likely harvested from nearby Madera Canyon and then overlaid with tightly packed rows of unfinished latillas, dried saguaro cactus ribs with variegated textures. (The adobe-specific technique dates back to an era before railroads, which enabled the import of cheaper materials.) Instead of decorations, there are richly patinated plaster-coated walls, original molded fireplaces and inset display niches that they often fill with simple beeswax candles.

THE HOUSE’S FLOOR plan unfolds in a spiral pattern, with a series of spaces arranged around a central pathway paved with herringbone brick. Boufelfel likens the layout to a meditation labyrinth. “To be able to just walk through the house in a circular way is really important, energy-wise,” she says. The smaller of the two bedrooms is walled off from the main living space by a series of raw pine shelves filled with books. On the other side of that room, an interior window opens onto the dining area, a vestige of the original footprint; large bundles of olive and eucalyptus branches gathered from the property serve as a natural curtain.

The living and dining areas and the mottled yellow plaster-walled primary bedroom are outfitted sparingly with mostly 20th-century and contemporary furniture, including a ’70s Milo Baughman shearling sofa and a simple, wood-framed daybed made by a friend. Many of the artworks and textiles were gifts or trades, such as tapestries by Boufelfel’s sibling Kam’s label, Community Handweaving, and a patchwork bunny made by their friend Emily Adams Bode Aujla, the designer of the upcycled fashion brand Bode. Throughout the house are antique objects that double as found sculptures: A 13-foot-tall, tufted spire leaning in a living room corner is actually an old Mexican cobweb duster, while the rough-hewn iron cones arranged in a vignette on the dining-area mantel are antique Laotian rice-farming tools.

The house’s lone bathroom was carved out of the original kitchen by the owners, with small, eye-shaped windows and a shower floor covered with Mexican beach pebbles. (“They massage your feet,” Cowan says.) The claw-foot tub was relegated to the large cactus garden out back, where it sits beneath a chinaberry tree. During the milder months, Boufelfel and Cowan often work and host alfresco dinner parties there, accompanied by their cat, Cléo, and, until two years ago, a pet tortoise, Flora, who came with the place. (She moved in with another tortoise across town.) When the heat gets too intense, Boufelfel and Cowan retreat to the narrow study, where art and design books are stacked on a 1920s burl wood table, and inspirational garments, such as a smocked silk dress and a caftan embroidered with Venetian glass beads, hang overhead like mobiles. It was there that they dreamed up their recently launched clothing collection, Ténéré, a series of seasonless, everyday pieces inspired by beloved early 20th-century favorites in their own wardrobes, including an Edwardian sailor blouse and a slouchy 1920s silk suit.

For all its visual appeal, though, the most notable feature of the house is the way it feels: The two-foot-thick mud walls keep the air cool, while providing a rare, almost churchlike silence. “People stay here and say, ‘I had the best night of sleep of my life,’” Boufelfel says. Hushed and still, the house, she adds, “is like an extension of us and how we live our lives, in a quieter way.”

PHOTOS: In the primary bedroom of the vintage clothing dealers Roberto Cowan and Salima Boufelfel’s Tucson, Ariz., home, the walls are original plaster, the bedside tables are vintage record holders and the painting and wooden snake sculpture are by the artist Ishi Glinsky. Opposite: the back door leads to a cactus-filled garden. From left: in the kitchen, a collection of cast-iron pans and a white metal basket by Ishi Glinsky; in the living room, a Charlotte Perriand daybed, an Art Deco club chair, a long-handled duster from Oaxaca, Mexico, and Cléo, their cat. The 1970s shearling-covered couch is by Milo Baughman and the glass coffee table is by Ludwig Mies van der Rohe. The Moroccan rug was a gift from the set designer Scott Pask. From left: in the study, an Art Deco burl wood table and an aluminum chair sourced from local shops, and a stuffed green pony from the designer Emily Adams Bode Aujla on an antique love seat upholstered in silk moiré; a door hidden in the double-sided bookshelf leads to one of the bedrooms. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY DEAN KAUFMAN; PRODUCED BY COLIN KING) This article appeared in print on page M2154, M2155, M2156, M2157, M2158, M2159.

**Load-Date:** August 17, 2023

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[***Senate Control Comes Down to a Few Races, and Nevada Is One of Them.***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:66TR-HHD1-DXY4-X0PR-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Highlight:** The duel between Catherine Cortez Masto, the Democratic incumbent, and Adam Laxalt, her Republican challenger, serves as a referendum on voters’ concerns nationwide over inflation and the economy.

**Body**

The duel between Catherine Cortez Masto, the Democratic incumbent, and Adam Laxalt, her Republican challenger, serves as a referendum on voters’ concerns nationwide over inflation and the economy.

The [*duel in Nevada*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2022/11/08/us/elections/results-nevada.html) between Senator Catherine Cortez Masto, one of the Democratic Party’s more vulnerable incumbents, and Adam Laxalt, a Republican who helped to spearhead former President Donald J. Trump’s effort to overturn the state’s 2020 election results, is the most expensive political contest in state history — with good reason.

The outcome of the race, where candidates have built their campaigns on broader narratives over the state of the economy and the threat to abortion access, may tip control of the Senate.

As of early Wednesday afternoon, Mr. Laxalt led Ms. Cortez Masto, the nation’s first Latina senator, by 2.7 percentage points with 75 percent of the vote counted. But most of the remaining votes were expected to come from Democratic-leaning mail ballots and provisional ballots, including from same-day registrants.

The race in Nevada has embodied Republicans’ robust hopes of regaining a Senate majority and Democrats’ fight to preserve the vestiges of a party juggernaut forged there by the late Harry M. Reid, who spent 30 years in the Senate before retiring in 2017.

That political machine long relied on favorable demographics to maintain its momentum, but the economic downturn has posed a steep challenge. Mr. Laxalt seized on the issue, blaming Democrats and President Biden for the grim financial outlook. Just last weekend, Mr. Laxalt condemned Mr. Biden for the state’s 15 percent inflation rate, while noting that Mr. Biden had not visited Nevada to campaign.

With Democrats’ troubles in Nevada reflecting those around the nation, Ms. Cortez Masto, herself a protégée of Mr. Reid, focused her campaign on abortion rights in the wake of the Supreme Court ruling overturning Roe v. Wade.

Nevada allows abortion up to 24 weeks, and after that in cases where the mother’s health is at risk. Mr. Laxalt has said he would support banning abortions in the state [*after 13 weeks*](https://www.rgj.com/story/opinion/voices/2022/08/02/setting-record-straight-adam-laxalt/10187587002/), or the first trimester, and was caught saying during a breakfast with pastors that “[*Roe v. Wade was always a joke*](https://thenevadaindependent.com/article/laxalt-calls-1973-roe-v-wade-decision-a-joke-bemoans-nevadas-abortion-protections).”

For years, even with Democrats representing a minority among registered voters, Nevada maintained its blue-state status. Their chances of retaining that distinction hinges, in part, on the turnout of ***working-class*** and Latino voters — voters who Democrats have long relied on, and who Republicans have feverishly courted.

PHOTOS: Nevada Senate With a quarter of the vote still to be counted, the challenger led the nation’s first Latina senator.; Adam Laxalt Republican; Catherine Cortez Masto Democrat This article appeared in print on page P13.

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[***Full Transcript of Biden’s State of the Union Speech***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BH3-DHM1-JBG3-622M-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Body**

In an address that previewed the issues his campaign will focus on in the November election, President Biden made the case for a second term.

President Biden delivered his annual [*State of the Union address*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/03/01/us/politics/biden-sotu.html) on Thursday to a joint session of Congress. The following is a transcript of his remarks, as recorded by The New York Times.

Good evening. Good evening. If I were smart, I would go home now.

Mr. Speaker, Madam Vice President, members of Congress, my fellow Americans, in January 1941, Franklin Roosevelt came to this chamber to speak to the nation, and he said, “I address you in a moment, unprecedented in the history of the union.”

Hitler was on the march. War was raging in Europe. President Roosevelt’s purpose was to wake up Congress and alert the American people that this was no ordinary time. Freedom and democracy were under assault in the world.

Tonight, I come to the same chamber to address the nation. Now, it’s we who face unprecedented moment in the history of the union. And yes, my purpose tonight is to wake up the Congress and alert the American people that this is no ordinary moment either. Not since President Lincoln and the Civil War have freedom and democracy been under assault at home as they are today.

What makes our moment rare is that freedom and democracy are under attack both at home and overseas at the very same time. Overseas, Putin of Russia is on the march, invading Ukraine and sowing chaos throughout Europe and beyond. If anybody in this room thinks Putin will stop at Ukraine, I assure you, he will not.

But Ukraine, Ukraine can stop Putin. Ukraine can stop Putin, if we stand with Ukraine and provide the weapons they need to defend itself. That is all — that is all Ukraine is asking. They’re not asking for American soldiers. In fact, there are no American soldiers at war in Ukraine, and I’m determined to keep it that way.

But now, assistance to Ukraine is being blocked by those who want to walk away from our world leadership. Wasn’t long ago when a Republican president named Ronald Reagan thundered, “Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall.”

Now, now my predecessor, a former Republican president, tells Putin, quote, do whatever the hell you want. That’s a quote. A former president actually said that, bowing down to a Russian leader. I think it’s outrageous, it’s dangerous, and it’s unacceptable.

America is a founding member of NATO, the military alliance of democratic nations created after World War II to prevent, to prevent war and keep the peace.

And today, we’ve made NATO stronger than ever. We welcomed Finland to the alliance last year, and just this morning, Sweden officially joined, and their minister is here tonight. Stand up. Welcome. Welcome, welcome, welcome. And they know how to fight.

Mr. Prime Minister, welcome to NATO, the strongest military alliance the world has ever seen.

I say this to Congress: We have to stand up to Putin. Send me a bipartisan national security bill. History is literally watching. History is watching. If the United States walks away, it will put Ukraine at risk. Europe is at risk. The free world will be at risk, emboldening others to what they wish to do us harm.

My message to President Putin, who I have known for a long time, is simple: We will not walk away. We will not bow down. I will not bow down.

In a literal sense, history is watching. History is watching. Just like history watched three years ago on Jan. 6, when insurrectionists stormed this very Capitol and placed a dagger to the throat of American democracy.

Many of you were here on that darkest of days. We all saw with our own eyes. The insurrectionists were not patriots. They had come to stop the peaceful transfer of power, to overturn the will of the people.

Jan. 6 lies about the 2020 election, and the plots to steal the election, posed a great, gravest threat to U.S. democracy since the Civil War.

But they failed. America stood. America stood strong and democracy prevailed.

We must be honest. The threat to democracy must be defended. My predecessor and some of you here seek to bury the truth about Jan. 6.

I will not do that.

This is a moment to speak the truth and to bury the lies. Here’s the simple truth: You can’t love your country only when you win.

As I’ve done ever since being elected to office, I ask all of you, without regard to party, to join together and defend democracy. Remember your oath of office and defend against all threats foreign and domestic.

Respect free and fair elections. Restore trust in our institutions. And make clear — political violence has absolutely no place, no place in America. Zero place.

Again, it’s not, it’s not hyperbole to suggest history is watching. We’re watching. Your children, your grandchildren will read about this day and what we do.

History is watching another assault on freedom.

Joining us tonight is Latorya Beasley, a social worker from Birmingham, Ala. Fourteen months, 14 months ago, she and her husband welcomed a baby girl thanks to the miracle of I.V.F.

She scheduled treatments to have that second child, but the Alabama Supreme Court shut down I.V.F. treatments across the state, unleashed by a Supreme Court decision overturning Roe v. Wade.

She was told her dream would have to wait. What her family got through should never have happened. Unless Congress acts, it could happen again, so tonight, let’s stand up for families like hers.

To my friends across the aisle, don’t keep this waiting any longer. Guarantee the right to I.V.F. Guarantee it nationwide.

Like most Americans, I believe Roe v. Wade got it right. I thank Vice President Harris for being an incredible leader, defending reproductive freedom and so much more.

But my predecessor came to office determined to see Roe v. Wade overturned. He’s the reason it was overturned. And he brags about it. Look at the chaos that has resulted.

Joining us tonight is Kate Cox, a wife and mother from Dallas. She’d become pregnant again, and had a fetus with a fatal condition. Her doctor told Kate that her own life and her ability to have children in the future were at risk if she didn’t act.

Because Texas law banned her ability to act, Kate and her husband had to leave the state to get the what she needed. What her family got through should have never happened as well. But it is happening to too many others.

There are state laws banning the freedom to choose, criminalizing doctors, forcing survivors of rape and incest to leave their states to get the treatment they need.

Many of you in this chamber and my predecessor are promising to pass a national ban on reproductive freedom. My God, what freedom else would you take away?

Look, in its decision to overturn Roe v. Wade, the Supreme Court majority wrote the following, and with all due respect justices, “Women are not without electoral, electoral power” — excuse me — “electoral or political power.” You’re about to realize just how much you got right about that.

Clearly, clearly, those bragging about overturning Roe v. Wade have no clue about the power of women. But they found out when reproductive freedom was on the ballot. We won in 2022 and 2023, and we will win again in 2024.

If you, the American people, send me a Congress that supports the right to choose, I promise you, I will restore Roe v. Wade as the law of the land again.

Folks, America cannot go back. I am here tonight to show what I believe the way forward. Because I know how far we’ve come. Four years ago next week, before I came to office, the country was hit by the worst pandemic and the worst economic crisis in a century.

Remember the fear, record losses. Remember the spikes in crime and the murder rate, raging virus that took more than one million American lives of loved ones, millions left behind, a mental health crisis of isolation and loneliness.

A president, my predecessor, failed the most basic presidential duty that he owes to American people: the duty to care. I think that’s unforgivable.

I came to office determined to get us through one of the toughest periods in the nation’s history. We have. It doesn’t make new, news — in a thousand cities and towns, the American people are writing the greatest comeback story never told.

So let’s tell the story here. Tell it here and now.

America’s comeback is building a future of American possibilities, building an economy from the middle out and the bottom up, not the top down, investing in all America, in all Americans, to make sure everyone has a fair shot and we leave no one, no one behind.

The pandemic no longer controls our lives. The vaccines that saved us from Covid are now being used to beat cancer.

Turning setback into comeback — that’s what America does. That’s what America does.

Folks, I inherited an economy that was on the brink. Now our economy is literally the envy of the world. Fifteen million new jobs in just three years — a record, a record. Unemployment at 50-year lows. A record 16 million Americans are starting small businesses, and each one is a literal act of hope.

With historic job growth and small business growth for Black, Hispanic and Asian Americans, 800,000 new manufacturing jobs in America and counting.

Where is it written that we can’t be the manufacturing capital of the world? We are. We will.

More people have health insurance today; more people have health insurance today than ever before. The racial wealth gap is the smallest it’s been in 20 years.

Wages keep going up. Inflation keeps coming down. Inflation has dropped from 9 percent to 3 percent — the lowest in the world and trending lower. The landing is and will be soft.

And now instead of importing, importing foreign products and exporting American jobs, we’re exporting American products and creating American jobs — right here in America where they belong.

And it takes time, but the American people are beginning to feel it. Consumer studies show consumer confidence is soaring.

“Buy America” has been the law of the land since the 1930s. Past administrations including my predecessor, including some Democrats as well in the past, failed to buy American. Not anymore.

On my watch, federal projects that you fund, like helping build American roads, bridges and highways, will be made with American products and built by American workers — creating good-paying American jobs.

And thanks to our CHIPS and Science Act, the United States is investing more in research and development than ever before.

During the pandemic, a shortage of semiconductors, chips that drove up prices for everything from cellphones to automobiles. And by the way, we invented those chips right here in America.

Well instead of having to import them, private companies are now investing billions of dollars to build new chip factories here in America, creating tens of thousands of jobs, many of those jobs paying $100,000 a year and don’t require a college degree.

In fact, my policies have attracted $650 billion in private-sector investment, in clean energy, advanced manufacturing, creating tens of thousands of jobs here in America.

And thanks to our bipartisan infrastructure law, 46,000 new projects have been announced all across your communities. And by the way, I notice, some of you strongly voted against it are there cheering on that money coming on. I’m with you. I’m with you. If any of you don’t want that money in your district, just let me know.

Modernize our roads and bridges, ports and airports, public transit systems. Removing poisonous lead pipes so every child can drink clean water without risk of brain damage. Providing affordable high-speed internet for every American no matter where you live: urban, suburban or rural communities — in red states and blue states. Record investments in tribal communities.

Because of my investment in family farms, because of my investment in family farms led by my secretary of agriculture who knows more about this than anybody I know, we’re better able to stay in the family for those farms, and their children and grandchildren won’t have to leave home to make a living.

It’s transformative.

A great comeback story is Belvidere, Ill., home to an auto plant for nearly 60 years. Before I came to office the plant was on its way to shutting down. Thousands of workers feared for their livelihoods. Hope was fading.

Then I was elected to office and we raised the Belvidere repeatedly with auto companies knowing unions would make all the difference.

The U.A.W. worked like hell to keep the plant open and get these jobs back. And together, we succeeded. Instead of auto factories shutting down, auto factories reopening. A new state-of-the art battery factory is being built to power those cars there at the same —

Folks, to the folks of Belvidere, I say, instead of your town being left behind, your community is moving forward again. Because instead of watching auto jobs of the future go overseas, 4,000 union jobs with higher wages are building the future in Belvidere, right here in America.

Here tonight is U.A.W. President Shawn Fain, a great friend and a great labor leader. Shawn, where are you? Stand up. And Dawn Simms, a third generation worker, U.A.W. worker in Belvidere.

Shawn, I was proud to be the first president to stand in a picket line, and today, Dawn has a job in her hometown providing stability for her family and pride and dignity as well.

Showing once again, Wall Street didn’t build America. They’re not bad guys, they didn’t build it though. The middle class built this country. And unions built the middle class.

I say to the American people, when America gets knocked down, we get back up. We keep going. That’s America! That’s you, the American people.

It’s because of you America is coming back. It’s because of you, our future is brighter. It’s because of you that tonight we can proudly say the state of our union is strong and getting stronger.

Tonight, I want to talk about the future of possibilities that we can build together, a future where the days of trickle-down economics are over, and the wealthy and biggest corporations no longer get all the tax breaks.

And by the way, I understand corporations. I come from a state that has more corporations invested than every one of your states in the United States combined. And I represented it for 36 years. I’m not anti-corporation, but I grew up in a home where trickle-down economics didn’t put much on my dad’s kitchen table.

That’s why I determined to turn things around so middle class does well. When they do well, the poor have a way up and the wealthy still do very well. We all do well.

And there’s more to do to make sure you’re feeling the benefits of all we’re doing. Americans pay more for prescription drugs than anywhere in the world. It’s wrong and I’m ending it.

With a law that I proposed and signed — not one of you Republican buddies voted for it — we finally beat Big Pharma. Instead of paying $400 a month or thereabouts for insulin with diabetes, it’ll only costs ten bucks to make — they only get pay 35 a month now and still make a healthy profit. And now I want to cap the cost of insulin at $35 a month for every American who needs it — everyone.

For years, people have talked about it, but finally we got it done and gave Medicare the power to negotiate lower prices on prescription drugs, just like the V.A.’s able to do for veterans.

That’s not just saving seniors money. It’s saving taxpayers money. We cut the federal deficit by $160 billion because Medicare will no longer have to pay those exorbitant prices to Big Pharma.

This year Medicare is negotiating lower prices for some of the costliest drugs on the market that treat everything from heart disease to arthritis. It’s now time to go further and give Medicare the power to negotiate lower prices for 500 different drugs over the next decade.

They are making a lot of money, guys. And they are still going to be extremely profitable. That will not only save lives; it will save taxpayers another $200 billion.

Starting next year, that same law caps total prescription drug costs for seniors on Medicare at $2,000 a year, even for expensive cancer drugs that can cost $10,000, $12,000, $15,000.

Now I want to cap prescription drug costs at $2,000 a year for everyone. Folks, I am going to get in trouble for saying this, but maybe you want to get into Air Force One with me and fly to Toronto, Berlin, Moscow — I mean, excuse me — well even in Moscow, probably. And bring your prescription with you, and I promise you I’ll get it for you for 40 percent the cost you are paying now. Same company, same drug, same place. Folks, the Affordable Care Act, the old Obamacare, is still a very big deal.

Over 100 million of you can no longer be denied health insurance because of pre-existing conditions. But my predecessor, and many in this chamber, want to take those prescription drugs away by repealing the Affordable Care Act. I am not going to let that happen.

We stopped you 50 times before and we will stop you again. In fact, I am not only protecting it, I am expanding it.

I enacted tax credits that save $800 per person per year, reduce health care cost for millions of working families. That tax credit expires next year. I want to make that savings permanent.

To state the obvious, women are more than half of our population, but research on women’s health has always been underfunded. That’s why we’re launching the first-ever White House Initiative on Women’s Health Research, led by Jill doing an incredible job as first lady.

Pass my plan for $12 billion to transform women’s health research and benefit millions of lives across America.

I know the cost of housing is so important to you. If inflation keeps coming down, mortgage rates will come down as well. And the Fed acknowledges that. But I’m not waiting.

I want to provide an annual tax credit that will give Americans $400 a month for the next two years as mortgage rates come down, to put toward their mortgage when they buy a first home or trade up for a little more space. That’s for two years.

And my administration is also eliminating title insurance on federally backed mortgages. When you refinance your home, you can save $1,000 or more as a consequence.

For millions of renters, we’re cracking down on big landlords who use antitrust laws — who break antitrust laws by price-fixing and driving up rents. We’ve cut red tape so builders can get federally financing, which is already helping build a record 1.7 million new housing units nationwide.

Now pass and build and renovate two million affordable homes, and bring those rents down.

To remain the strongest economy in the world, we need to have the best education system in the world. And I’d, like I’d suspect all of you, want to give a child, every child, a good start by providing access to preschool for 3- and 4-years-old.

You know, I think I pointed out last year — I think I pointed out last year that children coming from broken homes where there’s no books, not read to, not spoken to very often, start school — kindergarten or first grade — hearing, having heard a million fewer words spoken.

Well, studies show that children who go to preschool are nearly 50 percent more likely to finish high school and go on to earn a two- or four-year degree no matter what their background is.

I met a year and a half ago with the leaders of a business round table. They were mad that I — they were angry — well, they were discussing why I wanted to spend money on education.

I pointed out to them as vice president. I met with over — I think it was 182 of those folks. Don’t hold me to the exact number. And I asked them what they need the most, the C.E.O.s. And you have had the same experience on the both sides of the aisle: They said a better educated work force.

So I looked at them, and I say, I come from Delaware. DuPont used to be eighth-largest corporation in the world. And every new enterprise they bought, they educated the work force to that enterprise. But none of you do that anymore. Why are you angry with me, providing you the opportunity for the best-educated work force in the world? They all looked at me and said, I think you’re right.

I want to expand high-quality tutoring and summer learning time and see to it that every child learns to read by third grade.

I’m also connecting local businesses and high schools so students get hands-on experience and a path to a good-paying job whether or not they go to college. And I want to make sure that college is more affordable.

Let’s continue increasing Pell Grants to working- and middle-class families and increase record investments in H.B.C.U.s and minority-serving institutions, including Hispanic institutions.

When I was told I couldn’t universally just change the way in which we dealt with student loans, I fixed two student loan programs that already existed to reduce the burden of student debt for nearly four million Americans, including nurses, firefighters and others in public service like Keenan Jones, a public educator in Minnesota. Keenan, where are you? Keenan, thank you.

He’s educated hundreds of students so they can go to college. Now he’s able to help, after debt forgiveness, get his own daughter to college.

Folks, look. Such relief is good for the economy because folks are now able to buy a home, start a business, start a family. While we’re at it, I want to give public-school teachers a raise.

By the way, for the first couple of years, we cut the deficit.

Now let me speak to the question of fundamental fairness for all Americans. I’ve been delivering real results in fiscally responsible ways. We’ve already cut the federal deficit — we’ve already cut the federal deficit by over a trillion dollars.

I signed a bipartisan deal that will cut another trillion dollars over the next decade. It’s my goal to cut the federal deficit $3 trillion more by making big corporations and the very wealthy finally beginning to pay their fair share.

Look, I’m a capitalist. If you want to make, you can make a million or millions of bucks, that’s great. Just pay your fair share in taxes.

A fair tax code is how we invest in the things and make this country great: health care, education, defense and so much more.

But here’s the deal: The last administration enacted a $2 trillion tax cut, overwhelmingly benefited the top 1 percent — the very wealthy and the biggest corporations — and exploded the federal deficit.

They added more to the national debt than in any presidential term in American history. Check the numbers. For folks at home, does anybody really think the tax code is fair?

Do you really think the wealthy and big corporations need another $2 trillion tax break? I sure don’t. I’m going to keep fighting like hell to make it fair. Under my plan nobody earning less than $400,000 a year will pay an additional penny in federal taxes. Nobody. Not one penny. And they haven’t yet.

In fact, the child tax credit I passed during the pandemic cut taxes for millions of working families and cut child poverty in half. Restore that child tax credit. No child should go hungry in this country.

The way to make the tax code fair is to make big corporations and the very wealthy begin to pay their fair share. Remember, in 2020, 55 of the biggest companies in America made $40 billion in profits and paid zero in federal income taxes. Zero. Not anymore.

Thanks to the law I wrote and signed, big companies now have to pay a minimum of 15 percent. But that’s still less than working people pay in federal taxes.

It’s time to raise the corporate minimum tax to at least 21 percent so every big corporation finally begins to pay their fair share.

I also want to end the tax breaks for Big Pharma, Big Oil, private jets and massive executive pay. They can pay 20 million if they want but deduct a million. End it now.

You know, there are 1,000 billionaires in America. You know what the average federal tax is for these billionaires? They are making great sacrifices: 8.2 percent.

That’s far less than the vast majority of Americans pay. No billionaire should pay a lower federal tax rate than a teacher, a sanitation worker or a nurse.

I propose a minimum tax for billionaires of 25 percent, just 25 percent. You know what that would raise? That would raise $500 billion over the next 10 years.

Imagine what that could do for America. Imagine a future with affordable child care. Millions of families can get — they need to go to work to help grow the economy.

Imagine a future with paid leave because no one should have to choose between working and taking care of a sick family member.

Imagine a future of home care and elder care and peoples living with disabilities so they can stay in their homes and family caregivers can finally get the pay they deserve. Tonight, let’s all agree once again to stand up for seniors.

Many of my friends on the other side of the aisle want to put Social Security on the chopping block. If anyone here tries to cut Social Security or Medicare or raise the retirement age, I will stop you.

The working people who built this country pay more into Social Security than millionaires and billionaires do. It’s not fair.

We have two ways to go: Republicans can cut Social Security and give more tax breaks to the wealthy. I will — That’s the proposal. Oh no. You guys don’t want another $2 trillion tax cut? I kind of thought that’s what your plan was. Well, that’s good to hear. You’re not going to cut another $2 trillion for the super wealthy? That’s good to hear.

I will protect and strengthen Social Security and make the wealthy pay their fair share. Look, too many corporations raise prices to pad their profits, charging more and more for less and less.

That’s why we’re cracking down on corporations that engage in price-gouging and deceptive pricing, from food to health care to housing.

In fact, the snack companies think you won’t notice if they change the size of the bag and put a hell of a lot fewer — same size bag — put fewer chips in it. No I’m not joking. It’s called shrinkflation.

Pass Bobby Casey’s bill and stop this. I really mean it.

You probably all saw that commercial on Snickers bars. You get charged the same amount and you got about, I don’t know, 10 percent fewer Snickers in it.

Look, I’m also getting rid of junk fees, those hidden fees at the end of your bill that are there without your knowledge. My administration announced we’re cutting credit card late fees from $32 to $8.

Banks and credit card companies are allowed to charge what it would cost them to instigate the collection. And that’s more, a hell of a lot, like $8 than 30-some dollars.

They don’t like it. The credit card companies don’t like it. But I’m saving American families $20 billion a year with all of the junk fees I’m eliminating. Folks at home, that’s why the banks are so mad. It’s $20 billion in profit.

I’m not stopping there. My administration has proposed rules to make cable, travel, utilities and online ticket sellers tell you the total price up front so there are no surprises. It matters. It matters.

And so does this: In November, my team began serious negotiations with a bipartisan group of senators. The result was a bipartisan bill with the toughest set of border security reforms we’ve ever seen. Oh, you don’t think so? Oh, you don’t like that bill, huh? That conservatives got together and said was a good bill? I’ll be darned, that’s amazing.

That bipartisan deal would hire 1,500 more security agents and officers, 100 more immigration judges to help tackle the backload of two million cases, 4,300 more asylum officers and new policies so they can resolve cases in six months instead of six years now. What are you against?

One hundred more high-tech drug detection machines to significantly increase the ability to screen and stop vehicles smuggling fentanyl into America that’s killing thousands of children.

This bill would save lives and bring order to the border. It would also give me and any new president new emergency authority to temporarily shut down the border when the number of migrants at the border is overwhelming.

The Border Patrol union has endorsed this bill. The federal Chamber of Commerce has — yeah, yeah, you’re saying. Look at the facts. I know you know how to read.

I believe that given the opportunity, for a majority in the House and Senate would endorse the bill as well — a majority right now. But unfortunately, politics have derailed this bill so far.

I’m told my predecessor called members of Congress and the Senate to demand they block the bill. He feels, political win — he viewed it would be a political win for me and a political loser for him. It’s not about him. It’s not about me. I’d be a winner, not really.

Lincoln Riley, an innocent young woman who was killed by an illegal, that’s right. But how many thousands of people are being killed by legals?

To her parents, I say, my heart goes out to you having lost children myself. I understand.

But look, if we change the dynamic at the border — people pay these smugglers 8,000 bucks to get across the border because they know if they get by, if they get by and let into the country, it’s six to eight years before they have a hearing. And it’s worth the taking a chance for the $8,000.

But if it’s only six weeks, the idea is it’s highly unlikely that people will pay that money and come all that way knowing that they’ll be able to be kicked out quickly.

Folks, I would respectfully suggest my Republican friends owe it to the American people: Get this bill done. We need to act now.

And if my predecessor is watching instead of playing politics and pressuring members of Congress to block the bill, join me in telling the Congress to pass it.

We can do it together. But that’s — he apparently hears what he will not do.

I will not demonize immigrants saying they are “poison in the blood of our country.” I will not separate families. I will not ban people because of their faith.

Unlike my predecessor, on my first day in office I introduced a comprehensive bill to fix our immigration system. Take a look at it. It has all these and more: secure the border, provide a pathway to citizenship for Dreamers and so much more.

But unlike my predecessor, I know who we are as Americans.

We are the only nation in the world with a heart and soul that draws from old and new.

Home to Native Americans whose ancestors have been here for thousands of years. Home to people from every place on Earth.

They came freely. Some came in chains. Some came when famine struck, like my ancestral family in Ireland. Some to flee persecution, to chase dreams that are impossible anywhere but here in America. That’s America, and we all come from somewhere, but we’re all Americans.

Look, folks, we have a simple choice. We can fight about fixing the border, or we can fix it. I’m ready to fix it. Send me the border bill now.

A transformational moment in history happened 58, 59 years ago today in Selma, Ala. Hundreds of foot soldiers for justice marched across the Edmund Pettus Bridge, named after the Grand Dragon of the Ku Klux Klan, to claim their fundamental right to vote.

They were beaten. They were bloodied and left for dead. Our late friend and former colleague John Lewis was on that march. We miss him.

Joining us tonight are other marchers, both in the gallery and on the floor, including Bettie Mae Fikes, known as the “Voice of Selma.”

The daughter of gospel singers and preachers, she sang songs of prayer and protest on that Bloody Sunday, to help shake the nation’s conscience. Five months later, the Voting Rights Act passed and was signed into law.

Thank you. Thank you, thank you, thank you.

But 59 years later, there are forces taking us back in time: voter suppression, election subversion, unlimited dark money, extreme gerrymandering.

John Lewis was a great friend to many of us here. But if you truly want to honor him and all the heroes who marched with him, then it’s time to do more than talk.

Pass the Freedom to Vote Act, the John Lewis Voting Right Act!

And stop, stop denying another core value of America: our diversity across American life. Banning books — it’s wrong! Instead of erasing history, let’s make history. I want to protect fundamental rights.

Pass the Equality Act, and my message to transgender Americans: I have your back.

Pass the PRO Act for workers’ rights! Raise the federal minimum wage because every worker has a right to a decent living, more than seven bucks an hour!

We are also making history by confronting the climate crisis, not denying it. I don’t think any of you think there’s no longer a climate crisis. At least I hope you don’t. I’m taking the most significant action ever on climate in the history of the world.

I am cutting our carbon emissions in half by 2030. Creating tens of thousands of clean-energy jobs, like the I.B.E.W. workers building and installing 500,000 electric vehicle charging stations. Conserving 30 percent of America’s lands and waters by 2030.

I’m taking action on environmental justice, fence-line communities smothered by the legacy of pollution.

And patterned after the Peace Corps and America Corps, I launched the Climate Corps to put 20,000 young people to work in the forefront of our clean energy future. I’ll triple that number in a decade.

To state the obvious, all Americans deserve the freedom to be safe, and America is safer today than when I took office.

The year before I took office, murder rates went up 30 percent, 30 percent they went up, the biggest increase in history. It was then.

Through my American Rescue Plan, which every American voted against, I might add, we made the largest investment in public safety ever.

Last year, the murder rate saw the sharpest decrease in history. Violent crime fell to one of its lowest levels in more than 50 years. But we have more to do.

We have to help cities invest in more community police officers, more mental health workers, more community violence intervention.

Give communities the tools to crack down on gun crime, retail crime and carjacking.

Keep building trust, as I’ve been doing by taking executive action on police reform, and calling for it to be the law of the land. Directing my cabinet to review the federal classification of marijuana and expunging thousands of convictions for the mere possession, because no one should be jailed for simply using or have it on their record.

Take on crimes of domestic violence. I am ramping up the federal enforcement of the Violence Against Women Act that I proudly wrote when I was a senator, so we can finally, finally end the scourge against women in America.

There are other kinds of violence I want to stop. With us tonight is Jazmin, whose 9-year-old sister, Jackie, was murdered with 21 classmates and teachers in elementary school in Uvalde, Texas.

Very soon after that happened, Jill and I went to Uvalde for a couple days. We spent hours and hours with each of the families.

We heard their message, so everyone in this room and this chamber could hear the same message. The constant refrain, and I was there for hours meeting with every family, they said, “Do something.”

“Do something!”

Well, I did do something by establishing the first-ever Office of Gun Violence Prevention in the White House that the vice president is leading the charge.

Meanwhile, my predecessor told the N.R.A. he’s proud he did nothing on guns when he was president. Oof. After another shooting in Iowa recently, he said when asked what to do about it, he said, “Just get over it.” There’s his quote. “Just get over it.”

I say stop it. Stop it, stop it, stop it.

I’m proud we beat the N.R.A. when I signed the most significant gun safety law in nearly 30 years because of this Congress. We now must beat the N.R.A. again. I’m demanding a ban on assault weapons and high-capacity magazines. Pass universal background checks.

None of this, none of this — I taught the Second Amendment for 12 years — none of this violates the Second Amendment or vilifies responsible gun owners.

You know, as we manage challenges at home, we’re also managing crises abroad, including in the Middle East.

I know the last five months have been gut-wrenching for so many people, for the Israeli people, for the Palestinian people and so many here in America.

This crisis began on Oct. 7 with a massacre by the terrorist group called Hamas, as you all know.

Twelve hundred innocent people, women and girls, men and boys slaughtered, after enduring sexual violence. The deadliest day for the Jewish people since the Holocaust. And 250 hostages taken.

Here in this chamber tonight are American families whose loved ones are still being held by Hamas. I pledge to all the families that we will not rest until we bring every one of your loved ones home.

We will also work around the clock to bring home Evan and Paul: Americans being unjustly detained by the Russians, and others around the world.

Israel has a right to go after Hamas. Hamas ended this conflict by releasing the hostages, laying down arms — could end it — by releasing the hostages, laying down arms and surrendering those responsible for Oct. 7.

But Israel has an added burden because Hamas hides and operates among the civilian population like cowards, under hospitals, day care centers and all the like. Israel also has a fundamental responsibility, though, to protect innocent civilians in Gaza.

This war has taken a greater toll on innocent civilians than all previous wars in Gaza combined. More than 30,000 Palestinians have been killed, most of whom are not Hamas.

Thousands and thousands of innocents, women and children. Girls and boys also orphaned.

Nearly two million more Palestinians under bombardment or displacement. Homes destroyed, neighborhoods in rubble, cities in ruin. Families without food, water, medicine. It’s heartbreaking.

I’ve been working nonstop to establish an immediate cease-fire that would last for six weeks to get all the prisoners released — all the hostages released. It would get the hostages home, and ease the intolerable humanitarian crisis, and build toward an enduring, something more enduring.

The United States has been leading international efforts to get more humanitarian assistance into Gaza. Tonight, I’m directing the U.S. military to lead an emergency mission to establish a temporary pier in the Mediterranean on the coast of Gaza that can receive large shipments carrying food, water, medicine and temporary shelters.

No U.S. boots will be on the ground. A temporary pier will enable a massive increase in the amount of humanitarian assistance getting into Gaza every day.

And Israel must do its part. Israel must allow more aid into Gaza and ensure humanitarian workers aren’t caught in the crossfire. They’re announcing they’re going to have a crossing to northern Gaza.

To the leadership of Israel I say this: Humanitarian assistance cannot be a secondary consideration or a bargaining chip. Protecting and saving innocent lives has to be a priority. As we look to the future, the only real solution to the situation is a two-state solution over time.

And I say this as a lifelong supporter of Israel: My entire career, no one has a stronger record with Israel than I do, I challenge any of you here. I’m the only American president to visit Israel in wartime.

But there is no other path that guarantees Israel’s security and democracy. There is no other path that guarantees Palestinians can live with peace and dignity. And there is no other path that guarantees peace between Israel and all of its neighbors, including Saudi Arabia, with whom I’m talking.

Creating stability in the Middle East also means containing the threat posed by Iran. That’s why I built a coalition of more than a dozen countries to defend international shipping and freedom of navigation in the Red Sea. I’ve ordered strikes to degrade the Houthi capability and defend U.S. forces in the region. As commander in chief, I will not hesitate to direct further measures to protect our people and our military personnel.

For years, I’ve heard many of my Republican and Democratic friends say that China is on the rise and America is falling behind. They’ve got it backwards. I’ve been saying it for over four years, even when I wasn’t president.

America is rising. We have the best economy in the world. And since I’ve come to office, our G.T.P. is up; our trade deficit with China is down to the lowest point in over a decade.

And we’re standing up against China’s unfair economic practices. We’re standing up for peace and stability across the Taiwan Straits.

I’ve revitalized our partnerships and alliance in the Pacific. India. Australia. Japan. South Korea. Pacific islands. I’ve made sure that the most advanced American technologies can’t be used in China, not allowing to trade them there.

Frankly, for all his tough talk on China, it never occurred to my predecessor to do any of that.

I want competition with China, not conflict. We’re in a stronger position to win the conflict of the 21st century against China than anyone else for that matter. Than any time as well.

Here at home, I’ve signed over 400 bipartisan bills. But there’s more to pass my unity agenda.

Strengthen penalties on fentanyl trafficking. You don’t want to do that, huh?

Pass bipartisan privacy legislation to protect our children online. Harness, harness the promise of A.I. to protect us from peril. Ban A.I. voice impersonations and more.

And keep our truly sacred obligation, to train and equip those we send into harm’s way and care for them and their families when they come home, and when they don’t. That’s why with the strong support and help of Denis from the V.A., I signed the PACT Act, one of the most significant laws ever, helping millions of veterans exposed to toxins who now are battling more than 100 different cancers.

Many of them don’t come home. But we owe them and their families support. We owe it to ourselves to keep supporting our new health research agency called ARPA-H and remind us, remind us that we can do big things like end cancer as we know it. And we will.

Let me close with this. Yay! I know you don’t want to hear any more, Lindsey, but I got to say a few more things.

I know I may not look like it, but I’ve been around awhile. When you get to my age, certain things become clearer than ever before.

I know the American story. Again and again I’ve seen the contest between competing forces in the battle for the soul of our nation. Between those who want to pull America back to the past and those who want to move America into the future.

My lifetime has taught me to embrace freedom and democracy. A future based on core values that have defined America. Honesty, decency, dignity, equality. To respect everyone. To give everyone a fair shot. To give hate no safe harbor.

Now other people my age see it differently.

The American story of resentment, revenge and retribution — that’s not me.

I was born amid World War II, when America stood for the freedom of the world. I grew up in Scranton, Penn. and Claymont, Del., among ***working-class*** people who built this country.

I watched in horror as two of my heroes, like many of you did — Dr. King and Bobby Kennedy — were assassinated, and their legacies inspired me to pursue a career of service.

I left a law firm, became a public defender because my city of Wilmington was the only city in America occupied by the National Guard after Dr. King was assassinated because of the riots.

I became a county councilman almost by accident. I got elected to the United States Senate when I had no intention of running at age 29, then vice president to our first Black president, now president to our first woman vice president.

In my career I’ve been told I was too young. By the way, they didn’t let me on the Senate elevator for votes sometimes, not a joke. And I’ve been told I am too old. Whether young or old, I’ve always been known — I’ve always known what endures. I’ve known our North Star.

The very idea of America is that we are all created equal, deserves to be treated equally throughout our lives. We’ve never fully lived up to that idea, but we’ve never walked away from it either.

And I won’t walk away from it now. I’m optimistic. I really am, I’m optimistic, Nancy.

My fellow Americans, the issue facing our nation isn’t how old we are, it’s how old are our ideas.

Hate, anger, revenge, retribution are the oldest of ideas. But you can’t lead America with ancient ideas that only take us back.

To lead America, the land of possibilities, you need a vision for the future and what can and should be done. Tonight you’ve heard mine.

I see a future where defending democracy, you don’t diminish it. I see a future where we restore the right to choose and protect other freedoms, not take them away.

I see a future where the middle class finally has a fair shot and the wealthy have to pay their fair share in taxes.

I see a future where we save the planet from the climate crisis and our country from gun violence.

Above all, I see a future for all Americans. I see a country for all Americans. And I will always be a president for all Americans because I believe in America.

I believe in you, the American people.

You’re the reason we’ve never been more optimistic about our future than I am now. So let’s build the future together. Let’s remember who we are.

We are the United States of America!

And there is nothing, nothing beyond our capacity when we act together.

God bless you all, and may God protect our troops. Thank you, thank you, thank you.

PHOTO: President Biden delivered his State of the Union address on Thursday night. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Doug Mills/The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** March 8, 2024

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[***Uvalde, Texas, is a small city not far from the U.S. southern border.***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65HR-CWP1-DXY4-X3HS-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** Robert Gebeloff and Jacey Fortin

**Highlight:** The city of about 15,200 people is in a region with a large Mexican American population.

**Body**

The city of about 15,200 people is in a region with a large Mexican American population.

Uvalde is a small, ***working-class*** city about 80 miles west of San Antonio, about midway between that city and the border with Mexico.

The city of about 15,200 people is in a region with a large Mexican American population, according to census data. Many of its residents were born in the U.S. or have lived in the region for decades.

The city is also home to a U.S. Customs and Border Protection station.

In the neighborhood around Robb Elementary, more than 40 percent of residents have lived in the same house for at least 30 years, according to the American Community Survey, a census report that has more detailed information than the traditional census.

Its population skews young. More than a quarter of city residents are children, far above the national average, and more than a third live at or barely above the federal poverty line. Representative Joaquin Castro [*described Uvalde*](https://twitter.com/JoaquinCastrotx/status/1529200741574922241?s=20&amp;t=K8KOKoPu5mX_JfphFwDW4g) on Twitter as a “wonderful, tight-knit community.”

George Santizo said that Uvalde is so small that even though he recently moved there, he recalls seeing the suspect around town.

“In this town, everybody knows everybody,” Mr. Santizo said. “I’ve seen him around because this town is a small town.”

Alyssa Lukpat contributed.

Alyssa Lukpat contributed.

PHOTO: Anguish outside the Civic Center in Uvalde, Texas, where students were transported after a shooting at Robb Elementary School on Tuesday. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Marco Bello/Reuters FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** May 24, 2022

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[***In Ohio, Democrats Pin Senate Hopes on Suburbs***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65CT-7PX1-JBG3-64RF-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** By Jazmine Ulloa and Jonathan Weisman

**Body**

J.D. Vance, the Republican nominee, enters the general election as the favorite. For Representative Tim Ryan, the Democrat, Ohio's sprawling metro areas offer a possible path to victory.

LORAIN, Ohio -- J.D. Vance's convincing victory Tuesday in the Republican Senate primary in this red-tinged state may have put an exclamation point on the power of former President Donald J. Trump's imprimatur among conservative activist voters.

But Mr. Vance, the shape-shifting author and venture capitalist -- once a Never-Trump antagonist, then an acolyte of the former president -- has one possible battlefield left for the general election: the suburbs.

That is where Representative Tim Ryan, a Democrat hoping to appeal to establishment Republicans and ***working-class*** voters, will have to drive up the vote to overcome conservative shifts in more rural parts of the state. The suburbs are also the places here and across the country where demographics are the most racially and ethnically diverse -- and where Republicans are slightly more split, centrists often feel without a party, and many voters are only now awakening to the 2022 midterm cycle.

In Lorain, a ***working-class***, industrial city west of Cleveland, some of that budding interest was elicited by Mr. Trump's sway in this week's primary elections, and by news of a draft Supreme Court opinion that would overturn a woman's right to abortion. At her desk at Dye's Appliances, Tara Ortiz, 43, a co-owner and manager, shuddered over the thought that her daughters were on the verge of losing control over their bodies that she had long taken for granted.

The abortion news made the November election more intriguing, said Ms. Ortiz, who added that she was planning to vote when the time comes but had not yet chosen a Senate candidate. Her husband is a major Trump supporter, she added, but she leans Democrat.

''I'm for whatever is going to make a better life for my children, and my Tom,'' she said, referring to her husband.

A 20-minute drive east toward Cleveland, where wood-paneled homes give way to mansions alongside Lake Erie, Bay Village is among the suburbs and historically Republican communities across Ohio that have seen something of a liberal shift. Heading into a pharmacy with his 9-year-old son, Michael Edelman, 43, said Mr. Vance's groundswell of support across the state was ''a little terrifying.'' But he said he believed Mr. Ryan could still have a path to victory if enough people show up at the ballot box in Ohio's eight large urban centers.

''If rural counties carry the state, he doesn't stand a chance,'' said Mr. Edelman, the director of education at Ideastream Public Media, which runs several local public television and radio stations.

To be sure, Mr. Vance enters the general election season heavily favored against Mr. Ryan. Mr. Trump carried Ohio twice in far less favorable political climates, and with inflation surging and gas prices over $4 a gallon, the Buckeye State is not sheltered from the political winds.

In Ohio's old battlegrounds, where union families voted Democratic for generations, and Appalachian voters tended to shift their allegiances and parties, the Trump era appears to have locked down Republican support. Blue-collar counties that hug the Pennsylvania border to the east and Appalachian regions along the West Virginia and Kentucky state lines -- which starred in Mr. Vance's best-selling memoir, ''Hillbilly Elegy'' -- were walls of support for him.

''Trump changed the game here,'' said Tom McCabe, chairman of the Republican Party in Mahoning County, where a decade ago Republicans were scarce and now they dominate.

Four years ago, Mr. Vance, working as a venture capitalist, was all smiles as he hitched a ride on a three-day bus trip, scouting investment opportunities in Youngstown and Akron, Ohio; Detroit and Flint, Mich.; and South Bend, Ind. -- a tour that was organized by none other than Mr. Ryan. Mr. Ryan, at the time, was the popular congressman from Mahoning and Trumbull Counties, eager to show off progress, like the electric vehicle batteries being built in what he called Voltage Valley.

That same year, 2018, Senator Sherrod Brown, a Democrat running for re-election, beat his Republican challenger, Jim Renacci, by 21 percentage points in Mahoning County.

But in a very short span, the tables have turned. As president, Mr. Trump effectively stole what differentiated Ohio Democrats like Mr. Ryan from their national party -- protectionism and heated anti-China rhetoric -- while winning over social conservatives, especially conservative Catholics, with his opposition to abortion rights and attacks on immigrants and transgender people.

Mr. Trump slipped by Joseph R. Biden Jr. in Mahoning County 50 percent to 48 percent in 2020, and Mr. Vance slid into Mr. Trump's wake with scalding attacks on the free-trade policies of both parties as well as with anti-China rhetoric every bit as heated as Mr. Ryan's. Mr. Vance's biography -- the son of a drug-addicted mother, he was raised by his grandmother in hardscrabble Ohio, joined the military and went on to college and Yale Law School -- is every bit as compelling as Mr. Ryan's tales of high school football stardom and a union mother who raised him on her own.

''J.D. Vance is the worst possible candidate for the Democrats to go up against,'' said Paul Sracic, a political scientist at Youngstown State University who specializes in the voting patterns of blue-collar Ohioans. ''Democrats like Ryan because they think he can talk to these ***working-class*** voters and get them back. They're not coming back.''

Not everyone likes Mr. Vance in the Mahoning Valley.

''He says whatever he has to say to get done whatever he wants to do,'' said Hank Zimmerman, 73, a retired union carpenter sipping a $1.25 glass of Genesee beer at the bar of the 90-year-old Golden Dawn on the weathered outskirts of Youngstown. ''That's J.D. Vance.''

Tex Fischer, the youthful communications director of the Mahoning County G.O.P., who said he voted on Tuesday for Josh Mandel, freely admitted a strong distaste for Mr. Vance. ''Personally, I hated his guts,'' he said. ''I didn't see him as authentic.''

But Mr. Fischer said he was now all in for Mr. Vance.

If Mr. Ryan's own backyard is lost, that leaves Democrats battling for Ohio's fast-growing suburbs, especially around Cincinnati and Columbus, said Justin Barasky, a Democratic consultant from Cleveland. The hope for Democrats is that Mr. Vance's hard-right pivot in the primary, his embrace of Mr. Trump and his Trump-style use of vulgarisms like ''scumbag'' will turn off the suburban voters who once were the core supporters of lower-key conservatives, like Gov. Mike DeWine and Senator Rob Portman, who is retiring from the seat that Mr. Vance and Mr. Ryan both want.

In Lorain County, which Mr. Brown carried for the Democrats in 2018 but which voted for Mr. Trump in 2020, Jeffrey Yates, 44, a janitor at a Ford plant and a onetime Republican who said he voted twice for Barack Obama, said he had grown skeptical of a newer wave of Democrats who, he argued, seemed hellbent on taking away people's guns and shaming those who offended them. He said those Democrats did not seem to be thinking through the costs of sweeping progressive policies for people in lower-income tiers like himself.

Yet, Mr. Yates said that Mr. Trump's rise had halted his drift back to the Republican Party. Republicans seem ''almost like fundamentalists, almost like cultish'' about the former president, he said. That scared him, he said, and he was weighing whether to vote for Mr. Ryan or to not vote at all.

But Republicans, even those who remain leery of Mr. Trump's influence, say the state has simply been trending more conservative. Even Mr. DeWine has been pushed to the right, signing legislation to permit people to carry concealed weapons without licenses, and asking two Ohio State Board of Education members to resign after they declined to vote against an antiracism resolution criticized by conservatives.

There is also the matter of electability.

Chris Gagin, the former G.O.P. chairman of Belmont County, along the West Virginia border, said he was not fond of Mr. Vance personally but admired his political skills.

''He's already outflanked Ryan with Trump's blue-collar base,'' Mr. Gagin said. ''But in the suburbs, he'll be the Yale-educated lawyer, author and venture capitalist. He can pull it off.''

Indeed, Kristi Woolard, 56, brought her copy of ''Hillbilly Elegy'' to a recent meet-and-greet for Mr. Vance in an exurb of Columbus -- the kind of affluent area that is supposed to be trending away from Republicans.

''I loved this book,'' she said. ''He had so many things going against him, and he made it. He gives people confidence to know, if you press forward, if you just keep going, life can be good.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/05/us/politics/ohio-senate-race-tim-ryan-democrats.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/05/us/politics/ohio-senate-race-tim-ryan-democrats.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Tim Ryan and J.D. Vance will fight for votes in places like Lorain, Ohio, a ***working-class*** city.

Tara Ortiz, a co-owner of Dye's Appliances, said she had not yet chosen a Senate candidate.

Jeffrey Yates, a janitor at Ford, was weighing whether to vote for Mr. Ryan or to not vote. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY BRIAN KAISER FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

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[***Labor Groups Target Hyundai, and Biden, Over Transition to Electric***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:691S-5XM1-DXY4-X00X-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** Jonathan Weisman

**Highlight:** A coalition of unions and civic groups is pushing one of the world’s largest automakers to protect and train workers in return for federal money under President Biden’s signature laws.

**Body**

A coalition of unions and civic groups is pushing one of the world’s largest automakers to protect and train workers in return for federal money under President Biden’s signature laws.

A coalition of labor unions and civic groups in Georgia and Alabama will launch a pressure campaign on Monday targeting Hyundai’s electric vehicle plants and its clean energy suppliers, an effort that could also push the Biden administration to make good on its oft-repeated pledge to create not just jobs but [*“good union jobs.”*](https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2023/05/16/biden-harris-administration-roadmap-to-support-good-jobs/)

By focusing on the shift to electric vehicles at Hyundai, a nonunion carmaker expected to reap huge benefits from Mr. Biden’s prized initiatives, the coalition hopes to make inroads at other automakers, such as B.M.W. in South Carolina and Mercedes-Benz in Alabama, which similarly chose union-hostile territory for their American manufacturing bases.

The campaign could also raise the heat on domestic automakers in the middle of contract negotiations with the newly aggressive United Automobile Workers union, which is focused on raising wages at electric vehicle suppliers like battery makers.

For Mr. Biden, the Hyundai campaign has political ramifications, in setting specific demands on one of the largest automakers in the world in one of the most important swing states in the 2024 presidential election, Georgia.

“The people in the community should be able to come to work in these plants, with a livable wage and good jobs,” said Yvonne T. Brooks, president of the Georgia State A.F.L.-C.I.O., adding that “to bring jobs here but not provide a livable wage kind of defeats the purpose.”

Mr. Biden has campaigned on the sheer number of jobs created by his three signature laws, a [*$1 trillion infrastructure package*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/15/us/politics/biden-signs-infrastructure-bill.html), a $280 billion measure to [*rekindle a domestic semiconductor industry*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/09/us/politics/biden-semiconductor-chips-china.html), and the [*Inflation Reduction Act*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/16/business/biden-climate-tax-inflation-reduction.html), which included $370 billion for clean energy to combat climate change. A $25 million advertising blitz announced by his campaign last week [*kicked off with a one-minute spot*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TbRY7MA1brk) that proclaims, “Manufacturing jobs are coming home,” and “America is leading the world in clean energy.”

But despite low unemployment, tempering inflation and steady job creation, Mr. Biden’s overall approval ratings have been dragged down by voters’ refusal to give him credit for the good economic news. Clifford Young, who oversees U.S. public opinion research at Ipsos, a polling company, said that last year’s [*8.5 percent inflation*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/04/13/briefing/inflation-forty-year-high-gas-prices.html) and the ensuing interest rate hikes and slower economic growth might have sealed Mr. Biden’s fate with the voting public.

“The dirty secret is a bad economy hurts a president more than a good economy helps,” he said.

White House officials, who were notified of the Hyundai effort ahead of time, said Thursday that Mr. Biden fully backs the aims of the coalition in Georgia. And labor leaders have generally supported Mr. Biden as the most pro-union president ever.

But in a notable shift, those leaders also say the volume of jobs created on his watch may not be enough to win worker loyalties if those jobs are low-paid, dangerous and insecure. That is especially true if substandard jobs are underwritten by the taxpayer.

“I know the president can’t make stipulations that all new jobs have to go to union workers, but there have to be fair labor standards for jobs that are supported by tax dollars,” said David Green, the United Automobile Workers’ regional director for Ohio and Indiana. “Members are a little frustrated with it. It’s our tax dollars, too.”

Such concerns have led the U.A.W. to withhold its endorsement of Mr. Biden as the union’s new leadership threatens to strike over wages and benefits at electric vehicle suppliers. Mr. Biden has [*responded with support*](https://uaw-newsroom.prgloo.com/press-release/remarks-by-uaw-president-shawn-fain-on-president-bidens-statement-today-on-big-three-negotiations-issued-one-month-before-the-contract-expires-on-sept-14), tapping a senior adviser and Democratic veteran, Gene B. Sperling, as liaison between the union and the automakers and backing the U.A.W. this month in contract negotiations.

But union leaders are worried about the transition that Mr. Biden has set in motion with his push to address climate change with federal money funding the shift from fossil fuels. They are pressing automakers shifting to electric vehicles to “honor the right to organize,” take necessary steps to avoid plant closings, and provide training programs to help workers transition into new jobs at comparable wages.

A [*letter*](https://jobstomoveamerica.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/Coalition-Letter-to-Hyundai_Aug-27-2023.pdf) to the chief executive of Hyundai’s American subsidiary, José Muñoz, signed by coalition members including the U.A.W., the A.F.L.-C.I.O., the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (which is particularly close to Mr. Biden), and religious, community and environmental groups, maps key labor demands.

Such letters, demanding “community benefits agreements” enforced with binding arbitration systems, have been trotted out in the past to little effect. But union leaders said the Hyundai effort is more focused and forward-looking, hinting at the strategy of organizers in the South as [*unions across the country have become much more aggressive*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/16/business/economy/union-leaders-teamsters-uaw-hollywood.html).

The letter pushes for Hyundai and its subsidiaries to hire locally, train workers from the communities around the plants, bolster safety standards, and protect the environment around the plants, which are expected to employ more than 30,000 Georgians and Alabamians. Of those, 12,750 are expected to work at or around Hyundai’s new electric vehicle “megasite” in Bryan County near Savannah, the largest economic development project in Georgia’s history.

The coalition is seeking a binding agreement modeled on one reached last year with the [*electric bus maker New Flyer*](https://www.washingtonpost.com/transportation/2022/05/26/new-flyer-benefits-bus-equity/), which promised, among other things, that at least 45 percent of new hires and 20 percent of promotions would be women, minorities and U.S. military veterans.

“These facilities will transform our communities, and we are faced with a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to ensure that this transformation is for the best,” the coalition wrote, demanding that Hyundai and its suppliers come to the bargaining table to make “highroad commitments to workers and their communities.”

A spokesman for Hyundai U.S.A., Michael Stewart, said in a statement that the company’s “top priority is the safety and well-being of the more than 114,000 individuals we employ, directly and indirectly, whose market-leading skills and expertise are driving America’s auto industry forward.”

Daniel Flippo, director of the United Steelworkers southeast district, cautioned that community agreements might not have the teeth of union contracts.

At a recent meeting with Energy Department officials about the electric vehicle transition, Mr. Flippo said, he told them, “Look, all this going in to protect workers and worker rights looks good on paper, but if you don’t follow up, it shouldn’t be up to the union organizers to do it for you.”

Democrats secured [*a raft of provisions*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/02/10/us/politics/democrats-biden-unions.html) in Mr. Biden’s three signature laws to encourage labor organizing, raise wages and favor union apprenticeships and training programs. In May, the administration used those provisions to apply pressure to a Georgia electric bus company, Blue Bird, and support workers trying to unionize its Fort Valley, Ga., plant. The [*United Steelworkers won*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/12/us/politics/clean-energy-unions.html) that vote.

Mr. Flippo credited a rule in the electric school bus grants that said no federal money could be used to oppose union organizing, such as in hiring union-busting law firms during an organizing drive.

“They did use some of those tactics,” he said, “but all we had to say was we were going to notify the government and request an audit of where their money was going, and it went away.”

The Biden administration has had some successes with clean energy companies, securing commitments by a Danish wind energy giant to use union labor on its offshore wind projects and by a North Dakota metals company to stay neutral in any union drive at its new battery plant.

But union leaders have only so much influence over the rank and file — and against the pull of Donald J. Trump, who has made ***working-class*** appeals central to his political movement. Mr. Green pointed to the former president’s promise to revive a General Motors plant in Lordstown, Ohio, by [*enticing an untested start-up*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/06/14/business/lordstown-motors-steve-burns-julio-rodriguez.html) to buy the facility. That start-up, Lordstown Motors, filed for [*bankruptcy protection*](https://www.wfmj.com/story/49127465/local-leaders-react-to-lordstown-motors-filing-for-bankruptcy) in late June.

“I will not, could not support any endorsement of Donald Trump,” he said. “But we’ve got a lot of members. Do I think that Trump’s rhetoric is contagious among our members? Absolutely.”

This article appeared in print on page A17.

**Load-Date:** August 27, 2023

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[***How This Climate Activist Justifies Political Violence***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B54-38N1-JBG3-6060-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** By David Marchese and Bráulio Amado

**Body**

With the 2021 publication of his unsettling book, ''How to Blow Up a Pipeline,'' Andreas Malm established himself as a leading thinker of climate radicalism. The provocatively titled manifesto, which, to be clear, does not actually provide instructions for destroying anything, functioned both as a question -- why has climate activism remained so steadfastly peaceful in the face of minimal results? -- and as a call for the escalation of protest tactics like sabotage. The book found an audience far beyond that of texts typically published by relatively obscure Marxist-influenced Swedish academics, earning thoughtful coverage in The New Yorker, The Economist, The Nation, The New Republic and a host of other decidedly nonradical publications, including this one. (In another sign of the book's presumed popular appeal, it was even adapted into a well-reviewed movie thriller.) Malm's follow-up, ''Overshoot: How the World Surrendered to Climate Breakdown,'' written with Wim Carton and scheduled to be published this year, examines the all-consuming pursuit of fossil-fuel profits and what the authors identify as the highly dubious and hugely dangerous new justifications for that pursuit. But, says Malm, who is 46, ''the hope is that humanity is not going to let everything go down the drain without putting up a fight.''

It's hard for me to think of a realm outside of climate where mainstream publications would be engaging with someone, like you, who advocates political violence.1 Why are people open to this conversation? If you know something about the climate crisis, this means that you are aware of the desperation that people feel. It is quite likely that you feel it yourself. With this desperation comes an openness to the idea that what we've done so far isn't enough. But the logic of the situation fundamentally drives this conversation: All attempts to rein in this problem have failed miserably. Which means that, virtually by definition, we have to try something more than we've tried.

How confident are you that when you open the door to political violence, it stays at the level of property and not people? You've written about the need to be careful, but the emotions that come with violence are not careful emotions. Political history is replete with movements that have conducted sabotage without taking the next step. But the risk is there. One driver of that risk is that the climate crisis itself is exacerbating all the time. It's hard-wired to get worse. So people might well get more desperate. Now, in the current situation, in every instance that I know of, climate movements that experiment with sabotage steer clear of deliberately targeting people. We might smash things, which people are doing here and there,2 but no one is seriously considering that you should get a gun and shoot people. Everyone knows that would be completely disastrous. The point that's important to make is that the reason that people contemplate escalation is that there are no risk-free options left.

I know you're saying historically this is not the case, but it's hard to think that deaths don't become inevitable if there is more sabotage. Sure, if you have a thousand pipeline explosions per year, if it takes on that extreme scale. But we are some distance from that, unfortunately.

Don't say ''unfortunately.'' Well, I want sabotage to happen on a much larger scale than it does now. I can't guarantee that it won't come with accidents. But what do I know? I haven't personally blown up a pipeline, and I can't foretell the future.

The prospect of even accidental violence against people -- But the thing we need to keep in mind is that existing pipelines, new pipelines, new infrastructure for extracting fossil fuels are not potentially, possibly -- they are killing people as we speak. The more saturated the atmosphere is with CO2, putting more CO2 into the atmosphere causes more destruction and death. In Libya in September, in the city of Derna, you had thousands of people killed in floods in one night. Scientists could conclude that global warming made these floods 50 times as likely as if there hadn't been such warming.3 We need to start seeing these people as victims of the violence of the climate crisis. In the light of this, the idea of attacking infrastructure and closing down new pipelines is a disarmament. It's about taking down a machine that actually kills people.

I'm curious: How do you communicate with your kids4 about climate? I'm not sure that I've had any deliberate plan, but it has been inevitable, with my 9-year-old at least, that we've had conversations.

Do you anticipate having the conversation where you explain the radical nature of your ideas? Well, yeah. Both of them have watched the film, ''How to Blow Up a Pipeline.''5

Your 4-year-old? Yes. There were a couple of scenes that stayed with them, particularly when people were wounded. They found this fascinating. They know that their father is a little politically crazy, if I can put it that way.

Generally we teach kids that violence or breaking people's things is bad. Do you feel you can honestly give your kids the same message? I hope that I communicate through my parenting that generally you shouldn't break things. But I hope that they get the impression that I consider there to be exceptions to this rule. My 4-year-old, for instance, when we were biking around Malmo,6 where we live, he would be on the lookout for S.U.V.s. He knows these are the bad cars. I think they have an awareness of the tactic of deflating S.U.V. tires.7

Is there not a risk that smashing things would cause a backlash that would actually impede progress on climate? I fundamentally disagree with the idea that there is progress happening and that we might ruin it by escalating. In 2022, we had the largest windfall of profits in the fossil-fuel industry8 ever. These profits are reinvested into expanded production of fossil fuels. The progress that people talk about is often cast in terms of investment in renewables and expansion in the capacity of solar and wind power around the world. However, that is not a transition. That is an addition of one kind of energy on top of another. It doesn't matter how many solar panels we build if we also keep building more coal power plants, more oil pipelines, and on that crucial metric there simply is no progress. I struggle to see how anyone could interpret the trends as pointing in the right direction. Now, on the question of what kind of reaction would we get from society if we as a climate movement radicalized: There might be more repression of the movement. There might be more aggressive defense of fossil-fuel interests. We also see signs that radical forms of climate protest alienate popular audiences. But the kind of tactic that mostly pisses people off, and I'm talking about the European context, is random targeting of commuters by means of road blockades. Sabotage of particular installations for fossil-fuel extraction can gain more support from people because these actions make sense. The target is obviously the source of the problem, and it doesn't necessarily hurt ordinary people in their daily lives. We have to be careful about not doing things that alienate the target audience, which is ordinary working people.

Don't you think, with companies as wealthy as the oil giants, if activists smash their stuff, they'll just fix it and get back to business? Here's a big problem that we deal with quite extensively in the ''Overshoot'' book: stranded assets. ExxonMobil and Aramco and these giants exude this worry that a transition would destroy their capital and that this shift could happen quickly. So in this context, the rationale of sabotage is to bring home the message to these companies: Yes, your assets are at risk of destruction. When something happens that makes the threat of stranded assets credible, investors will suddenly realize, there's a real risk that if I invest a lot of money, I might lose everything.

Explain the term ''overshoot.'' The simplest definition of ''overshoot'' is that you shoot past the limits that you have set for global warming. So you go over 1.5 or 2 degrees. But the term has come to mean something more in climate science and policy discourse, which is that you can go over and then go back down. So you shoot past 1.5 or 2, but then you return to 1.5 or 2, primarily by means of carbon-dioxide removal. I think this is extremely implausible. But the idea is that you can exceed a temperature limit but respect it at a later point by rolling out technologies for taking it down.

And your argument is that overshoot just provides a cover for business as usual? Yes. What's happening now is that you see ExxonMobil or Occidental or ADNOC9 -- these companies are at the forefront of expanding DAC10 capacity. What Al Jaber11 is talking about all the time is that the problem isn't fossil fuels; the problem is emissions. So we can continue to have fossil fuels; we're just going to take down the CO2 that we emit by DAC. It isn't a reality. It's like an ideological promise that we're going to be able to clean up the mess while continuing to create the same mess.

A few minutes ago, you said you've never blown up a pipeline. If that's what you think is necessary, why haven't you? I have engaged in as much militant climate activism as I have had access to in my activist communities and contexts. I've done things that I can't tell you or that I wouldn't tell others publicly. I live my life in Malmo, pretty isolated from activist communities. Let's put it this way: If I were part of a group where something like blowing up a pipeline was perceived as a tactic that could be useful for our struggle, then I would gladly participate. But this is not where I am in my life.

I don't want to encourage you, but if people did only the activism that was congruent with where they were at in their life, hardly anybody who lives a comfortable life would do anything. Like I said, I've participated in things that I can't tell you about because they've been illegal and they've been militant. I've done it recently. But I can do that only as part of a collective of people who do something that they have decided on together. We shouldn't think of activism as something that is invented out of thin air, deduced from abstract principles, and then you just shoot off and do something crazy. I can't tell you what things I have done, but the things that I do and that any other climate activist should be doing cannot be an individual project.

Greta Thunberg went by herself and sat in front of a building instead of going to school.12 Sure, sure, sure, and she became the person she became thanks to the millions who joined her. Maybe I should do something similar.

In ''Overshoot,'' you write this about the very wealthy: ''There is no escaping the conclusion that the worst mass killers in this rapidly warming world are the billionaires, merely by dint of their lifestyles.'' That doesn't feel like a bathetic overstatement when we live in a world of terrorist violence and Putin turning Ukraine into a charnel house? Why is that a useful way of framing the problem? Precisely for the reason I tried to outline previously, which is that spewing CO2 into the atmosphere at an excessive scale -- and when it comes to luxury emissions, it is completely excessive -- is an act that leads to the death of people.

But by that logic, unless we live a carbon-neutral lifestyle, we should all be looking in the mirror and saying, I am a killer. I don't live a zero-carbon lifestyle. No one who lives in a capitalist society can do so. But the people on top, they are the ones who have power when it comes to investment. Are they going to invest the money in fossil fuels or in renewables? The overwhelming decision they make is to invest it in fossil fuels. They belong to a class that shapes the structure, and in their own private consumption habits, they engage in completely extravagant acts of combustion of fossil fuels.13 On the level of private morals: Do I practice what I preach? I try to avoid flying. I don't have a car. I should be vegan, but I'm just a vegetarian. I'm not claiming to be any climate angel in my private consumption, and that's problematic. But I don't think that is the issue -- that each of us in the middle strata or ***working class*** in advanced capitalist countries, through our private consumption choices, decide what's going to happen with this society. This is not how it works.

We live in representative democracies where certain liberties are respected. We vote for the policies and the people we want to represent us. And if we don't get the things we want, it doesn't give us license to then say, ''We're now engaging in destructive behavior.'' Right? Either we're against political violence or not. We can't say we're for it when it's something we care about and against it when it's something we think is wrong. Of course we can. Why not?

That is moral hypocrisy. I disagree.

Why? The idea that if you object to your enemy's use of a method, you therefore also have to reject your own use of this method would lead to absurd conclusions. The far right is very good at running electoral campaigns. Should we thereby conclude that we shouldn't run electoral campaigns? This goes for political violence too, unless you're a pacifist and you reject every form of political violence -- that's a reasonably coherent philosophical position. Slavery was a system of violence. The Haitian revolution was the violent overthrow of that system. It is never the case that you defeat an enemy by renouncing every kind of method that enemy is using.

But I'm specifically thinking about our liberal democracy, however debased it may be. How do you rationalize advocacy for violence within what are supposed to be the ideals of our system? Imagine you have a Trump victory in the next election -- doesn't seem unimaginable -- and you get a climate denialist back in charge of the White House and he rolls back whatever good things President Biden has done. What should the climate movement do then? Should it accept this as the outcome of a democratic election and protest in the mildest of forms? Or should it radicalize and consider something like property destruction? I admit that this is a difficult question, but I imagine that a measured response to it would need to take into account how democracy works in a country like the United States and whether allowing fossil-fuel companies to wreck the planet because they profit from it can count as a form of democracy and should therefore be respected.

Could you give me a reason to live?14 What do you mean?

Your work is crushing. But I have optimism about the human project. I'm not an optimist about the human project.

So give me a reason to live. Well, here's where we enter the virgin territories of metaphysics.

Those are my favorite territories. Wonderful.

I'm not joking. Yeah, I'm not sure that I have the qualifications to give people advice about reasons to live. My daily affective state is one of great despair about the incredible destructive forces at work in this world -- not only at the level of climate. What has been going on in the Middle East just adds to this feeling of destructive forces completely out of control. The situation in the world, as far as I can tell, is incredibly bleak. So how do we live with what we know about the climate crisis? Sometimes I think that the meaning of life is to not give up, to keep the resistance going even though the forces stacked against you are overwhelmingly strong. This often requires some kind of religious conviction, because sometimes it seems irrational.

I think all you need to do is look at your children. Yes, but I have to admit to some kind of cognitive dissonance, because, rationally, when you think about children and their future, you have to be dismal. Children are fundamentally a source of joy, and psychologically you want to keep them that way. I try to keep my children in the category of the nonapocalyptic. I'm quite happy to go and swim with my son and be in that moment and not think, Ah, 30 years from now he's going to lie dead on some inundated beach. You know what I mean?

Which of your arguments are you most unsure of? I cannot claim to have a good explanation for what is essentially a mystery, namely that humanity is allowing the climate catastrophe to spiral on. One of my personal intellectual journeys in recent years has been psychoanalysis. Once you start looking into the psychic dimensions of a problem like the climate crisis, you have to open yourself to the fundamental difficulty in understanding what's happening.

Is it possible for you to summarize your psychoanalytic understanding of the climate crisis? Not simply, because it's so complex. On the far right, you see this aggressive defense of cars and fossil fuels that verges on a desire for destruction, which of course is part of Freud's latent theory of the two categories of drives: eros and thanatos.15 Another fundamental category in the psychic dimension of the climate crisis is denial. Denial is as central to the development of the climate crisis as the greenhouse effect.

What about you, psychoanalytically speaking? I have my weekly therapy on Thursday.

But what's your deal? You mean in my private life?

Yeah. On a deeper level, the point for the psychoanalysis is that you go back to your childhood and try to process your relation to your parents and how they have constituted you. Do you really want me to go there?

Yes. I have to try to figure out how this ties in with my climate activism. I guess this is some sort of a superego part of it: a strong sense of duty or obligation; that I have to try to do what I can to intervene in this situation. That's a very strong affective mechanism. For instance, I constantly give up on an intellectual project that would be far more satisfying, a nerdy historical project,16 because I feel that I cannot with good conscience do this when the world is on fire.

But I'm asking what caused your impulses. Now we're into the deep psychoanalytic stuff. I had a vicious Oedipal conflict with my father. One way that this came to express itself was that in the preteen years, I clashed with my father -- even more violently during my teenage years. My way to defend myself against what I perceived as his tyranny was to become as proficient as he was in arguing and beat him in his own game by rhetorically defeating him. I think I did. I think he accepted that I'm his superior when it comes to writing and arguing. Psychoanalytically, of course, the things that I've continued to do can be understood as an extension of my formative rebellion against my authoritarian father in a classically Oedipal setting, if you see what I mean.17

I asked why you aren't blowing up pipelines, and you gave this answer about how action has to happen in the context of a community and ''Oh, but I have done very serious stuff'' -- there's something fishy. You have actually engaged in property destruction? Or are you just scared of somebody calling you a hypocrite? There are things that I have done when it comes to militant activism recently that I, as a matter of principle and political expediency, do not reveal. Part of the whole point of it is to not reveal it. Sure, someone could accuse me of being a hypocrite because I don't offer evidence that I have done anything militant. But those close to me know. That's good enough for me.

I also said, ''Give me a reason to live.'' I will always remember this. No one ever asked me this before.

And I said that one of the reasons to keep going is kids. But you said their future is rationally going to be terrible. If you think your children's future is going to be terrible, why keep going? One of the arguments in this ''Overshoot'' book is that the technical possibilities are all there. It's a matter of the political trends. This feeling that my kids will face a terrible future isn't based on the idea that it's impossible to save us by technical means. It's just, to quote Walter Benjamin, the enemy has never ceased to be victorious18 -- and it's more victorious than ever. That's how it feels.

Opening illustration: Source photograph by Jeremy Chan/Getty Images

This interview has been edited and condensed for clarity from two conversations.

1. Just to be explicit about this: Malm does not endorse or advocate any political violence that targets people. His aim is violence against property.

2. To cite one example, last March in western France, thousands of people arrived at a site of a ''megabasin'' water reservoir for agricultural use and sabotaged a pump. The action was against what the protesters believe is water hoarding. Malm has been particularly influential in France, where the authorities have questioned arrested activists about their feelings on his work.

3. To reach this conclusion, scientists working with the World Weather Attribution research group employed computer simulations to compare weather events today, including the Libyan flooding, with the weather that was most likely to have occurred if the climate had not already warmed, as it has, by 1.2 degrees Celsius above the average preindustrial temperature.

4. I knew Malm had children because in setting up our discussions, he explained that we had to talk in the evening on Swedish time, after he had put his kids to bed.

5. The film, directed by Daniel Goldhaber, uses Malm's book as a launching pad for a story about young radicals who plan to blow up a pipeline in Texas. From The Times's review: ''A truly radical film wouldn't go out of its way to concoct sympathetic motives, or to keep its plotting so clean.''

6. Malm teaches at Lund University, near Malmo, where he's an associate professor of human geography.

7. Malm was among a group of activists who used this protest tactic in Stockholm in 2007. Deflating S.U.V. tires in protest has not been uncommon in Europe. In 2022, the tires of roughly 900 S.U.V.s were deflated in a single night of coordinated protest, according to the protesters.

8. For 2022, the Saudi state-controlled Aramco reported a record profit of $161.1 billion; Exxon reported a record profit of $56 billion; BP reported a record profit of nearly $28 billion. (Full 2023 profits have not been reported yet.)

9. The Abu Dhabi National Oil Company.

10. Direct air capture, a technology to remove carbon dioxide from the air.

11. Sultan Ahmed Al Jaber, the chief executive of ADNOC, who somewhat counterintuitively was president of the recent COP28 climate conference. (Where, it must be said, more than 200 countries agreed to a pact that calls for ''transitioning away from fossil fuels.'') Al Jaber was criticized for saying, shortly before COP28, that ''there is no science out there, or no scenario out there, that says that the phaseout of fossil fuel is what's going to achieve 1.5.''

12. In 2018, rather than go to school, Greta Thunberg, then 15, sat alone in front of the Swedish Parliament with a sign announcing that she was on a school strike for the climate. The act is widely credited for kicking off a global wave of peaceful climate activism.

13. According to a 2023 report by Oxfam, The Guardian and the Stockholm Environment Institute, the richest 1 percent of humanity is responsible for more carbon emissions than the poorest two-thirds. The report drew on data from 2019.

14. I just blurted this out. I don't even think Malm's pessimism is wrong, but I find it suffocating. People need hope.

15. In Freud's writings, he argued that individuals wrestle with the desire to live, eros, and the desire to die, widely known as thanatos.

16. That project is about what Malm calls a ''people's histories of wilderness,'' with a focus on how some have withdrawn ''into the wild to get away from oppression and potentially fight back.''

17. Malm also wanted to point out the following: ''My father and I have generally been on good terms and have become quite close in our worldview -- with remaining differences -- over the past decade or two.''

18. This is a paraphrase of a line from the visionary German-Jewish cultural critic's 1940 essay ''On the Concept of History.'' Benjamin died from suicide that same year.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/16/magazine/how-this-climate-activist-justifies-political-violence.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/01/16/magazine/how-this-climate-activist-justifies-political-violence.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: PHOTO (PHOTOGRAPH BY JEREMY CHAN/GETTY IMAGES) (MM11)

Below: A scene from the film ''How to Blow Up a Pipeline,'' adapted from Andreas Malm's book. Opposite page: At the protest against the ''megabasin'' reservoir project in western France last March. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY UGO AMEZ/SIPA, VIA ASSOCIATED PRESS

NEON.) (MM12

MM13) This article appeared in print on page MM11, MM12, MM13.

**Load-Date:** January 21, 2024

**End of Document**



[***Michigan Democrats Rise, and Try to Turn a Battleground Blue***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67WK-8MW1-DXY4-X43T-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** Katie Glueck

**Highlight:** With a strong governor, a Legislature passing a raft of liberal measures and a looming early presidential primary, Democrats are testing the promise and pitfalls of complete control of the state.

**Body**

With a strong governor, a Legislature passing a raft of liberal measures and a looming early presidential primary, Democrats are testing the promise and pitfalls of complete control of the state.

The governor of Michigan is considered one of her party’s brightest stars. Her state’s Democratic-controlled Legislature is rapidly approving a [*raft of ambitious priorities*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/09/us/michigan-democrats-right-to-work-lgbtq-guns.html). The Democratic Party is [*planning to host*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/02/04/us/politics/democrats-vote-primary-calendar.html) one of its earliest presidential primaries in Michigan, while the state’s Republican Party is in chaos.

Seven years after [*Michigan helped cement*](https://www.nytimes.com/2016/11/28/us/donald-trump-officially-wins-michigan.html) Donald J. Trump’s presidential victory, the state has transformed into a new — if fragile — focal point of Democratic power, testing the promise and pitfalls of complete Democratic governance in one of the nation’s pre-eminent political battlegrounds.

Michigan’s Democratic leaders, however, recoil at the idea that their state — once a reliable stronghold for the party in [*presidential years*](https://www.mlive.com/politics/2012/11/election_results_2012_obama_wi.html) — is turning blue once more.

“No! Michigan’s not a blue state,” Gov. Gretchen Whitmer insisted in an interview last week in Bay City, nestled in a windy, ***working-class*** county near Saginaw Bay that Mr. Trump won twice. Ms. Whitmer captured it too, [*prevailing there and across the state*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/11/09/us/politics/michigan-governor-whitmer.html) in [*Democrats’ November sweep*](https://www.mlive.com/politics/2022/11/michigan-sees-democratic-domination-after-party-sweeps-state-legislative-and-federal-contests.html).

“It would be a mistake for anyone to look at that and think Michigan is not still a tossup, very competitive, very diverse state that’s going to decide the outcome of the next national election again,” she said.

“Everybody thinks, Oh, Michigan’s done, it’s a blue state,” added Representative Debbie Dingell, a Michigan Democrat. “Tenuous is the operative word.”

Against that backdrop — significant victories last fall, in a state that is still closely divided — state Democrats are pursuing a flood of liberal legislation, while measuring the durability of an unwieldy coalition that defeated Republicans in the [*last*](https://www.detroitnews.com/story/news/politics/elections/2018/11/06/michigan-us-house-representatives-races-results/1814469002/) [*three*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/11/03/us/elections/results-michigan.html) elections.

Democratic triumphs were fueled by both moderate suburbanites and liberal city dwellers, left-wing college students and even some [*onetime Trump voters*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/07/05/us/politics/abortion-roe-midterm-elections-moderate-women.html) who thought their party had gone too far.

“The state Republican Party is not reflective of the average Republican in Michigan,” Ms. Whitmer said, nodding to [*the hard-right turn of the Michigan G.O.P.*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/02/18/us/politics/michigan-republicans-deperno-karamo.html) “I don’t think that everyone’s all of a sudden become Democrats.”

Ms. Whitmer has cautioned against claiming political “mandates.”

But Democrats have moved assertively to act on their power, which includes full control of the Legislature and governor’s mansion for the [*first time in 40 years*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/01/18/us/democrats-michigan-minnesota-maryland.html), focusing on both pocketbook priorities and cultural issues.

They have shepherded through a major [*tax package*](https://www.bridgemi.com/michigan-government/gov-gretchen-whitmer-signs-michigan-tax-relief-minus-180-checks), and, to the consternation of some in the business community, made Michigan [*the first state in nearly 60 years*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/22/us/politics/michigan-union-repeal.html) to repeal right-to-work rules, which had weakened organized labor. They have [*expanded L.G.B.T.Q. protections*](https://www.freep.com/story/news/politics/2023/03/16/michigan-lgbtq-protections-bill-civil-rights-law/69990432007/) and pursued [*anti-gun violence measures*](https://apnews.com/article/michigan-gun-laws-red-flag-democrats-b776dd9f64d2264a0f4c94a498b6035b), and have [*moved to repeal*](https://abcnews.go.com/US/michigan-house-senate-pass-bill-repealing-1931-abortion/story?id=97738249) a now-unenforceable abortion ban from 1931.

Ms. Whitmer has also signed a measure moving up Michigan’s presidential primary, a move [*blessed by national Democrats*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/02/04/us/politics/democrats-vote-primary-calendar.html), though it is unclear how Republicans will proceed.

If that calendar change takes hold, voters around the country who were once made intimately familiar with the Iowa State Fair may soon become acquainted with the [*Posen Potato Festival*](https://www.michiganfun.com/event/posen-potato-festival/) and a [*Michigan cheeseburger festival*](https://mymichiganbeach.com/cheeseburger-in-caseville/), as the state moves into a position of greater prominence in the Democratic nominating process.

Ms. Whitmer’s victory margin of nearly [*11 percentage points*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2022/11/08/us/elections/results-michigan-governor.html) — on par or ahead of governors in several more liberal states — has only encouraged a perception among many Democrats that she is possible presidential material.

But she insisted she [*would not run*](https://www.fox2detroit.com/news/michigan-gov-gretchen-whitmer-im-not-going-to-run-for-president-in-2024) for president in 2024, regardless of President Biden’s re-election plans. He is expected to run and [*would have strong support*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/11/28/us/politics/biden-2024.html) from party leaders including Ms. Whitmer, but has not yet announced a bid.

“I have made a commitment to the people of Michigan, I’m going to do this job till the end of this term,” Ms. Whitmer said. Pressed on whether there was anything about the presidency that appealed down the road, she first demurred — “no, not at the moment” — before allowing, “I think that this country is long overdue for a strong female chief executive.”

Republicans, for their part, who as recently as 2018 controlled the state levers of power, are now adrift and divided. Ahead of what should be a marquee Senate race to succeed [*Senator Debbie Stabenow*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/01/05/us/politics/stabenow-michigan-2024.html), a Democrat who is retiring, the challenge of nominating someone who would both survive a primary contest and thrive in a general election is growing more apparent by the week.

The state Republican Party is now helmed by an [*election denier, Kristina Karamo*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/02/18/us/politics/michigan-republicans-deperno-karamo.html), who lost her November race for secretary of state by [*14 points*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2022/11/08/us/elections/results-michigan-secretary-of-state.html) and has stoked doubts about her ability to run a serious operation.

“People have concerns that the incumbent will have trouble raising money when she [*openly maligns*](https://www.wlns.com/news/local-news/migops-karamo-will-ignore-big-players-possibly-forming-shadow-party/?utm_campaign=socialflow&amp;utm_source=t.co&amp;utm_medium=referral) the same donors she needs to bring in to help win the Senate race,” said Gustavo Portela, a former spokesman for the Michigan Republican Party. “She’ll have a challenge being able to balance the grass roots and donors.”

Ms. Karamo did not respond to requests for comment.

Just last week, the Michigan G.O.P. [*promoted an image*](https://www.cnn.com/2023/03/22/politics/michigan-gop-backlash-holocaust-tweet/index.html) on social media that compared efforts to curb gun violence with the Nazis’ theft of wedding rings from Holocaust victims, then [*defended the posts*](https://twitter.com/KristinaKaramo/status/1638565679547678720?s=20) amid a backlash.

“The Republican Party in Michigan is dead for the foreseeable future,” said former Representative Dave Trott, who represented a suburban Detroit district as a Republican but now considers himself an independent, [*supporting Mr. Biden*](https://www.detroitnews.com/story/news/politics/2020/09/03/snyder-endorses-biden-calls-trump-bully/5700833002/) in 2020. “Even if the right people were in charge, the MAGA movement is such that any candidate that would be more acceptable to a general electorate can’t win the primary.”

“If I’m Elissa Slotkin,” he added, “I’m already trying to figure out which Senate building I want my office in.”

The primary and the general elections for Senate are political lifetimes away, but Ms. Slotkin, a Democratic congresswoman from a competitive district, is currently in a [*commanding position*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/02/27/us/politics/elissa-slotkin-senate-michigan.html) in the race.

Several of the state’s highest-profile Democrats [*have*](https://twitter.com/garlin/status/1629935262326222851?s=20) [*passed*](https://twitter.com/JocelynBenson/status/1639308085687730181?s=20) on a Senate run, giving her running room in the primary, though a number of other Democrats — hoping to see more representation of Black voters, Detroit voters, or both in the race — [*could still*](https://www.politico.com/minutes/congress/03-20-2023/new-michigan-senate-candidate/) [*get in*](https://puck.news/hill-harper-against-the-machine/).

Among Republicans, former Representative Peter Meijer, who [*voted to impeach Mr. Trump*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/03/us/politics/peter-meijer-michigan.html), is perhaps the best-known potential candidate. Kevin Rinke, who ran a largely self-funded [*Republican primary campaign*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/07/30/us/politics/michigan-primary-governor-trump.html) for governor, has also been seen as a possible contender, among others. Both men lost primaries last year to far-right candidates who were [*then*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2022/11/08/us/elections/results-michigan-us-house-district-3.html) [*defeated*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2022/11/08/us/elections/results-michigan-governor.html) in general elections.

Maggie Abboud, a spokeswoman for the National Republican Senatorial Committee, said the committee had seen “a number of strong potential candidates reach out.”

Certainly, it is difficult to predict how the Democratic strength on display last fall will translate in 2024. The contests were defined in part by an [*extraordinary backlash*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/07/05/us/politics/abortion-roe-midterm-elections-moderate-women.html) to the overturning of Roe v. Wade and a major, successful initiative to [*enshrine abortion protections*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/11/09/us/abortion-rights-ballot-proposals.html) in the State Constitution — and it is far too early to say what issues will be galvanizing next year.

Democrats [*benefited*](https://www.freep.com/story/news/politics/2022/01/11/michigan-redistricting-democrats-republicans-legislature-election/9117423002/) from a redistricting process. And party leaders freely acknowledge how quickly the political environment in the state can shift.

“We were looking into the brink and decided to work our backsides off,” Ms. Slotkin said. “The minute you sleep on Michigan, it can go the other direction.”

There were also [*warning signs in Wayne County*](https://www.mlive.com/politics/2022/11/the-10-michigan-counties-with-biggest-hike-in-voter-turnout-5-red-and-5-blue.html), which is home to Detroit and the state’s [*largest population*](https://www.mlive.com/public-interest/2020/06/see-list-of-michigan-cities-with-most-african-american-residents-and-geographic-shifts-since-1970.html) of Black Americans. Turnout was lower in 2022 than it was in the 2018 midterms.

“We have an opportunity to do more,” said Lt. Gov. Garlin Gilchrist II, himself a Detroiter. “I certainly spent a lot of time with Black voters and particularly our younger voters and our Black male voters who we’ve got to make sure are deeply engaged, and that we invest in that engagement.”

Still, the party’s gains were significant, [*including signs of new inroads in*](https://www.bridgemi.com/michigan-government/gretchen-whitmers-path-victory-expanding-support-michigan-suburbs) white ***working-class*** territory that has become exceedingly difficult for Democrats around the country.

“In my district, folks were outraged by Jan. 6, but if that’s all you talk to them about, you’re not going to win their vote,” said State Senator Kristen McDonald Rivet, a Democrat whose seat includes parts of Bay County, and who emphasized both kitchen-table economic issues and abortion rights in her race.

“By demonstrating that we are moving on real issues that people care about and doing it very aggressively with Democratic power,” she said, she hoped Michiganders would believe that “voting for a Democrat means things are going to get better.”

Democrats “were really demoralized after the Trump victory, and suddenly we are seeing people coming to party meetings again,” she added. “The Democratic trifecta in Michigan has mobilized Democrats in a way that I haven’t seen in a really long time.”

But Ms. Dingell, the Democratic congresswoman, remains keenly focused on pro-Trump sentiment in the state, and she is already warning of another challenging election cycle, arguing that races up and down the ballot will be highly competitive.

“We will be ground zero for every race,” she said.

PHOTOS: Clockwise from above: Gov. Gretchen Whitmer of Michigan, a Democrat, comfortably won re-election; Representative Elissa Slotkin, is running for Senate; Kristen McDonald Rivet, a state senator. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY EMILY ELCONIN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES); Kristina Karamo getting the endorsement of former President Donald J. Trump last April. She now leads the state G.O.P. (PHOTOGRAPH BY BRITTANY GREESON FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A18.

**Load-Date:** March 30, 2023

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[***In Ohio Senate Race, Democrats Pin Their Hopes on the Suburbs***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65CN-FMK1-JBG3-63SR-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** Jazmine Ulloa and Jonathan Weisman

**Highlight:** J.D. Vance, the Republican nominee, enters the general election as the favorite. For Representative Tim Ryan, the Democrat, Ohio’s sprawling metro areas offer a possible path to victory.

**Body**

J.D. Vance, the Republican nominee, enters the general election as the favorite. For Representative Tim Ryan, the Democrat, Ohio’s sprawling metro areas offer a possible path to victory.

LORAIN, Ohio — J.D. Vance’s convincing victory Tuesday in the Republican Senate primary in this red-tinged state may have put an exclamation point on the power of former President Donald J. Trump’s imprimatur among conservative activist voters.

But Mr. Vance, the shape-shifting author and venture capitalist — once a Never-Trump antagonist, then an acolyte of the former president — has one possible battlefield left for the general election: the suburbs.

That is where Representative Tim Ryan, a Democrat hoping to appeal to establishment Republicans and ***working-class*** voters, will have to drive up the vote to overcome conservative shifts in more rural parts of the state. The suburbs are also the places here and across the country where demographics are the most racially and ethnically diverse — and where Republicans are slightly more split, centrists often feel without a party, and many voters are only now awakening to the 2022 midterm cycle.

In Lorain, a ***working-class***, industrial city west of Cleveland, some of that budding interest was elicited by Mr. Trump’s sway in this week’s primary elections, and by news of a draft Supreme Court opinion that would overturn a woman’s right to abortion. At her desk at Dye’s Appliances, Tara Ortiz, 43, a co-owner and manager, shuddered over the thought that her daughters were on the verge of losing control over their bodies that she had long taken for granted.

The abortion news made the November election more intriguing, said Ms. Ortiz, who added that she was planning to vote when the time comes but had not yet chosen a Senate candidate. Her husband is a major Trump supporter, she added, but she leans Democrat.

“I’m for whatever is going to make a better life for my children, and my Tom,” she said, referring to her husband.

A 20-minute drive east toward Cleveland, where wood-paneled homes give way to mansions alongside Lake Erie, Bay Village is among the suburbs and historically Republican communities across Ohio that have seen something of a liberal shift. Heading into a pharmacy with his 9-year-old son, Michael Edelman, 43, said Mr. Vance’s groundswell of support across the state was “a little terrifying.” But he said he believed Mr. Ryan could still have a path to victory if enough people show up at the ballot box in Ohio’s eight large urban centers.

“If rural counties carry the state, he doesn’t stand a chance,” said Mr. Edelman, the director of education at Ideastream Public Media, which runs several local public television and radio stations.

To be sure, Mr. Vance enters the general election season heavily favored against Mr. Ryan. Mr. Trump carried Ohio twice in far less favorable political climates, and with inflation surging and gas prices over $4 a gallon, the Buckeye State is not sheltered from the political winds.

In Ohio’s old battlegrounds, where union families voted Democratic for generations, and Appalachian voters tended to shift their allegiances and parties, the Trump era appears to have locked down Republican support. Blue-collar counties that hug the Pennsylvania border to the east and Appalachian regions along the West Virginia and Kentucky state lines — which starred in Mr. Vance’s best-selling memoir, “Hillbilly Elegy” — were walls of support for him.

“Trump changed the game here,” said Tom McCabe, chairman of the Republican Party in Mahoning County, where a decade ago Republicans were scarce and now they dominate.

Four years ago, Mr. Vance, working as a venture capitalist, was all smiles as he hitched a ride on a three-day bus trip, scouting investment opportunities in Youngstown and Akron, Ohio; Detroit and Flint, Mich.; and South Bend, Ind. — a [*tour that was organized by none other than Mr. Ryan*](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/03/04/technology/silicon-valley-midwest.html). Mr. Ryan, at the time, was the popular congressman from Mahoning and Trumbull Counties, eager to show off progress, like the electric vehicle batteries being built in what he called Voltage Valley.

That same year, 2018, Senator Sherrod Brown, a Democrat running for re-election, beat his Republican challenger, Jim Renacci, by 21 percentage points in Mahoning County.

But in a very short span, the tables have turned. As president, Mr. Trump effectively stole what differentiated Ohio Democrats like Mr. Ryan from their national party — protectionism and heated anti-China rhetoric — while winning over social conservatives, especially conservative Catholics, with his opposition to abortion rights and attacks on immigrants and transgender people.

Mr. Trump slipped by Joseph R. Biden Jr. in Mahoning County 50 percent to 48 percent in 2020, and Mr. Vance slid into Mr. Trump’s wake with scalding attacks on the free-trade policies of both parties as well as with anti-China rhetoric every bit as heated as Mr. Ryan’s. Mr. Vance’s biography — the son of a drug-addicted mother, he was raised by his grandmother in hardscrabble Ohio, joined the military and went on to college and Yale Law School — is every bit as compelling as Mr. Ryan’s tales of high school football stardom and a union mother who raised him on her own.

“J.D. Vance is the worst possible candidate for the Democrats to go up against,” said Paul Sracic, a political scientist at Youngstown State University who specializes in the voting patterns of blue-collar Ohioans. “Democrats like Ryan because they think he can talk to these ***working-class*** voters and get them back. They’re not coming back.”

Not everyone likes Mr. Vance in the Mahoning Valley.

“He says whatever he has to say to get done whatever he wants to do,” said Hank Zimmerman, 73, a retired union carpenter sipping a $1.25 glass of Genesee beer at the bar of the 90-year-old Golden Dawn on the weathered outskirts of Youngstown. “That’s J.D. Vance.”

Tex Fischer, the youthful communications director of the Mahoning County G.O.P., who said he voted on Tuesday for Josh Mandel, freely admitted a strong distaste for Mr. Vance. “Personally, I hated his guts,” he said. “I didn’t see him as authentic.”

But Mr. Fischer said he was now all in for Mr. Vance.

If Mr. Ryan’s [*own backyard is lost*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/04/06/us/politics/tim-ryan-ohio-voters.html), that leaves Democrats battling for Ohio’s fast-growing suburbs, especially around Cincinnati and Columbus, said Justin Barasky, a Democratic consultant from Cleveland. The hope for Democrats is that Mr. Vance’s hard-right pivot in the primary, his embrace of Mr. Trump and his Trump-style use of vulgarisms like “scumbag” will turn off the suburban voters who once were the core supporters of lower-key conservatives, like Gov. Mike DeWine and Senator Rob Portman, who is retiring from the seat that Mr. Vance and Mr. Ryan both want.

In Lorain County, which Mr. Brown carried for the Democrats in 2018 but which voted for Mr. Trump in 2020, Jeffrey Yates, 44, a janitor at a Ford plant and a onetime Republican who said he voted twice for Barack Obama, said he had grown skeptical of a newer wave of Democrats who, he argued, seemed hellbent on taking away people’s guns and shaming those who offended them. He said those Democrats did not seem to be thinking through the costs of sweeping progressive policies for people in lower-income tiers like himself.

Yet, Mr. Yates said that Mr. Trump’s rise had halted his drift back to the Republican Party. Republicans seem “almost like fundamentalists, almost like cultish” about the former president, he said. That scared him, he said, and he was weighing whether to vote for Mr. Ryan or to not vote at all.

But Republicans, even those who remain leery of Mr. Trump’s influence, say the state has simply been trending more conservative. Even Mr. DeWine has been pushed to the right, signing legislation to permit people to carry concealed weapons without licenses, and asking [*two Ohio State Board of Education members*](https://www.cleveland.com/news/2022/05/three-reasons-why-gov-mike-dewine-did-so-well-in-ohios-2022-republican-gubernatorial-primary.html) to resign after they declined to vote against an antiracism resolution criticized by conservatives.

There is also the matter of electability.

Chris Gagin, the former G.O.P. chairman of Belmont County, along the West Virginia border, said he was not fond of Mr. Vance personally but admired his political skills.

“He’s already outflanked Ryan with Trump’s blue-collar base,” Mr. Gagin said. “But in the suburbs, he’ll be the Yale-educated lawyer, author and venture capitalist. He can pull it off.”

Indeed, Kristi Woolard, 56, brought her copy of “Hillbilly Elegy” to a recent meet-and-greet for Mr. Vance in an exurb of Columbus — the kind of affluent area that is supposed to be trending away from Republicans.

“I loved this book,” she said. “He had so many things going against him, and he made it. He gives people confidence to know, if you press forward, if you just keep going, life can be good.”

PHOTOS: Tim Ryan and J.D. Vance will fight for votes in places like Lorain, Ohio, a ***working-class*** city.; Tara Ortiz, a co-owner of Dye’s Appliances, said she had not yet chosen a Senate candidate.; Jeffrey Yates, a janitor at Ford, was weighing whether to vote for Mr. Ryan or to not vote. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY BRIAN KAISER FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** May 6, 2022

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[***Jamaica Beyond the All-Inclusive Resorts***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67VN-V951-DXY4-X41H-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** By Charlie Brinkhurst-Cuff

**Body**

A writer explores the island beyond its popular all-inclusive resorts, seeking out guesthouses owned by locals, and experiences beyond the beaches. She finds mountain views, cascading waterfalls and a sense of place.

''So,'' said the tour guide, midway through our trip to Jamaica. ''What are you really looking for?''

It was a good question. In most of the places we went, our group of four women had been welcomed, warned and flirted with. But, we were rarely asked many questions about the nature of our trip. We'd flown in from England and the United States in mid-November, just before high season, intending to see the country over the course of a month, while staying in and visiting as many locally owned businesses and guesthouses as we could.

Traveling from the east of the lush island to the west, and mostly avoiding the tourist hot spots of Ocho Rios, Montego Bay and Negril, we sought out places that were the opposite of what Jamaica, and many Caribbean islands, have become known for: resort-style luxury that doesn't always offer locals a significant slice of the tourism pie. As a granddaughter of Jamaican immigrants, the search had special resonance for me.

''When people come to the Caribbean, they're being funneled into this journey of the airport to the resort, and that's all they see of the country,'' said Riaz Philips, the author of the award-winning cookbook ''West Winds: Recipes, History and Tales from Jamaica.'' ''Usually, if you follow the money trail of that passage, it doesn't lead to any tangible benefits for the people who live and work in those countries.''

Nicole Dennis-Benn, who wrote about the dark side of Jamaican tourism in her debut novel, ''Here Comes the Sun,'' explained that it can be hard for Jamaicans to start successful businesses. ''It's really impossible if you don't come from wealth already. You're not going to find much ownership among the Jamaican ***working class***,'' she said.

Even many of the white-sand beaches that foreign visitors enjoy are off-limits to residents, and are instead controlled by hotels and resorts, which limit access to their guests. Of the island's approximately 493 miles of coastline, less than three miles are designated as public beaches, and about half of those are used in association with hotels, according to a recent government policy paper. The public beaches that do exist are often run-down and not fit for use. That exclusion is emblematic of what some locals feel is the continuing legacy of colonialism and the history of slavery on the island.

Committed to discovering the country that few visitors see, we set out to discover if it was possible to be good tourists and travel to Jamaica beyond the resorts.

To the Blue Mountains

Our trip began with a long journey from Montego Bay's Sangster International Airport to Kingston on the Knutsford Express (a Greyhound-equivalent bus) and then a taxi up and across the Blue Mountains, high above the capital, to stay at the BlueMountView guesthouse.

We arrived at night after a treacherous drive. But we woke the next morning to the chirping of insects and a stunning sight: The guest rooms, made with an abundance of polished natural wood, are surrounded by trees, and built into the edge of a great crevasse, looking out over a plunging swathe of greenery.

It was at BlueMountView that we met Noel Lindo and his wife, Michelle. The self-described ''King of the Mountain,'' Mr. Lindo was born in the area. After living in London for most of his adult life, he and Michelle decided to return to Jamaica to live in 2011 -- building their own house, and then the guesthouses. They are explicitly L.G.B.T.Q.-friendly in a country that is not always hospitable to gay visitors, treat guests like family -- and hand-roast their own coffee on-site.

Mr. Lindo is fatherly, frank and incredibly chatty. He likes to layer stories upon stories, taking us from the streets of 1970s London to colonial Jamaica and back again.

''There's so much to do in this mountain. It's unbelievable,'' he said enthusiastically, pointing out hiking trails in the Blue and John Crow Mountains National Park, hidden waterfalls and coffee plantations, many of them owned by locals. Although it's isolated, we discovered that BlueMountView is within hiking distance of Strawberry Hill, the famous hotel started by the Island Records founder, Chris Blackwell. We stopped at Eits Cafe, where we gorged on tender saltfish fritters, warming pumpkin ginger soup and sticky, delicious, caramelized-plantain crepes while looking out across the misty mountains, surrounded by the buzz of swallowtail hummingbirds.

It was through Mr. Lindo that we wound up taking a day trip to visit the parish of Portland, on the island's northeast coast. Although perhaps predominantly known for its beaches and as the location of the Blue Lagoon, made famous in the 1980 movie, we had a more rural experience. Our first stop was the Living Daylights, an eco-farm, restaurant and bar in the jungle of Bonnie View Hill, Port Antonio, that has been open since 2018, aiming to offer guests ''a piece of paradise,'' with a focus on sustainability.

Jesse Crosby's family has farmed the land for more than 50 years, but he always had ambitions to do something more with it, and when he met Brandon Powell (who has both Jamaican and U.S. citizenship), they were able to make that a reality.

Arriving at midday, we were treated to a sweaty, fun farm hike led by Mr. Crosby. He picked cinnamon leaves from the trees for us to sniff, jostled down coconuts for us to drink from and showed us hidden plantain trees. This was followed by a delicious farm-to-table meal cooked by Simi Brenner, the owner of the Moussa Pot, a vegan restaurant, that included a chickpea curry with moringa leaf, ripe plantain and coco yam leafâ€Œ and a salad made from June plum, cucumber and sorrel leaf. The Moussa Pot has since moved to a new location in Portland, but the Living Daylights will continue to offer farm-to-table meals in future.

Our second stop in Portland was the self-governing Maroon community of Charles Town in Buff Bay Valley, whose residents are descendants of proud Africans who escaped enslavement by fleeing to mountainous regions. It was one of the few times in Jamaica where we were viscerally reminded of the island's dark history and its continuing legacy.

A tour of the small museum charted the history of the Maroons and how they have protected their freedom and culture over centuries, creating their own communities and belief systems while fighting against British slave owners and colonialists in a series of wars. Marcia Douglas, the current leader of the community (and the first woman to hold the position), held up a heavy shackle that would have once been clasped around an enslaved person's neck. Later, other members of the community brought out drums and sang. We were taught dances that bind the present and the past.

''What we're offering in the tourism sector is our heritage, our ancestral inheritance,'' Ms. Douglas told me after the tour.

Treasure Beach and community tourism

Another long, bumpy drive took us from the Blue Mountains down to Treasure Beach, a village in the southwest parish of St. Elizabeth. It's probably the area in Jamaica best known for community tourism -- low-impact travel that works in relative sync with the locals. Once a fishing village, over the past 30 years, Treasure Beach has become a beacon for tourists looking to travel off the beaten track.

The town is small, hot and with dusty roads lined by cactuses and flowers. Its treasures were somewhat hidden; shacks that looked inconsequential at first glance came alive at different times of the day. The stunning beaches were a more obvious draw, along with a variety of well-priced, locally owned guest rooms and villas on Airbnb, such as the Azteca Villas: a collection of newly built guesthouses, with a small shared pool, only a few minutes away from the beach and the main, albeit tiny, strip of shops and places to eat.

We spent the bulk of our time in Treasure Beach, sampling locally owned highlights like Smurfs CafÃ© for the best Jamaican breakfast in town; Eggy's Beach Bar for the coldest Red Stripes right on the sand; and Gee Wiz for tasty, reasonably priced vegan food in an eclectic setting -- the restaurant is painted in fading, cotton candy colors and flanked with statues of long-beaked fish, while the huge, pillared dining room boasts colorful murals.

Floyd's Pelican Bar, built from driftwood and palm fronds on a sandbank in the middle of the ocean, has to be the area's best-known spot. Constructed in 2001 by Floyde Forbes, it's a slick operation these days, requiring a boat journey that costs $40 per person at a minimum from Treasure Beach. But the vibes, a mile away from shore, are sun-drenched and otherworldly. The freshly caught fried escovitch fish and bammy (a type of cassava flatbread) were the best I had on the island.

Treasure Beach is still an anomaly in Jamaica's tourism sector.

''There's no question that over 90 percent of Jamaica's traditional room stock is all-inclusive,'' said Jason Henzell, the chairman and co-owner of Jakes Hotel, the largest business in the area, who also runs a nonprofit to support locals. ''I sat on the board of the Jamaican Ministry of Tourism for eight years, and I know they had been quite hesitant about community tourism. Not necessarily in Treasure Beach, but overall, because they were worried about crime. That's the cold, hard truth.''

The Ministry of Tourism did not respond to requests for comment.

But then, he said, Airbnb changed everything. ''It happened in spite of the ministry not wanting it. It's almost as though Airbnb was made for Jamaica, right? Because, you know, every Jamaican is a character.''

The other reality of Treasure Beach, though, is that much of the beachfront land has been bought up by non-Jamaicans. Mr. Henzell, who has helped landowners sell property in the area, tells me that land these days goes for over $1 million an acre, putting it out of reach of most locals.

''We know that tourism is our number one revenue. And a lot of the time when people are living in a prime area, especially ***working class*** Jamaicans, they tend to displace them,'' said Ms. Dennis-Benn, whose upcoming novel will explore land ownership.

But, Mr. Henzell pointed out, the majority of large guesthouses in Treasure Beach, four out of five, are owned by locals. And, he added, ''you have some foreigners who are extremely respectful of our community, respectful of our traditions, respectful of our heritage and culture.''

Last stop, Mel's

Our last stop, two hours from Treasure Beach, was Mel's Botanical Retreat, situated on Cave Mountain, in Westmoreland, the westernmost parish of Jamaica. The retreat, featuring three handbuilt wooden cabins and a communal kitchen, is high above the shimmering Caribbean Sea and nestled in the lush jungle. At present, it's being run by a teenage girl named Kiara Clayton. She is motherless and grieving, but trying to do something very special: keeping a dream of Black-woman-owned community tourism alive.

Kiara's mother, Melessia Rodney, founded the retreat, built on the site of her family's longtime goat pasture. In the summer of 2021, she was pregnant with her second child and had recently married the love of her life. But then, in August, she died: At age 36, Covid took her and her unborn baby.

Five months later, 15-year-old Kiara decided to take over the business; balancing it alongside schoolwork and her ambitions to study to become a lawyer or an entrepreneur in America. Despite her age, she understands the power of legacy. With the help of her family and her mother's many friends from all over the world, she is continuing to host guests at the retreat.

One night, Kiara joined me in the communal kitchen to talk about the business and why she decided to carry it on. ''She wanted it to be this Black Jamaican woman-owned business. She just loved being strong and independent,'' she said.

What makes the property special among the thousands of Airbnbs across Jamaica is its commitment to these ideals. ''It's really rare, in Jamaica, to have a woman born in poverty, and become as successful as Mel became with her goat pasture,'' said Stacey Davis, a family friend who helped Mel in the early days of the retreat. ''Every flower in that retreat, everything you see, she did by hand.''

Although Kiara has faced some financial struggles with maintaining the property since her mother died, it remains a haven for guests seeking that ephemeral and elusive trait: authenticity. Mel, and now Kiara, encourage guests to engage with the local community on the south side of the island.

At Benta River Falls, an hour or so's drive away from Mel's, we were treated to a joyous day at a series of cascading waterfalls and deep pools, led by two energetic guides. The property's owner, Stacy Wilson, played dominoes with a bunch of men in the small bar next to the falls, while we ate a delicious plate of crispy fries, and giggled with the pink-haired bartender. Mr. Wilson's American cousin, Jahcobee Faith, explained that the family has owned the area since the 1970s, but only set up business in 2017, charging, at the time we visited, $20 for tourists and a nominal 500 Jamaican dollars, or about $3.25, for locals.

Closer to Mel's, Bluefields beach provided all the white sand and azure, temperate water you could wish for, along with the knowledge that it is one of the few beaches on the island that explicitly remains open for locals. It's looked after by the Bluefields People's Community Association, which promotes sustainable social and economic development. With towels spread out under a tree, we sipped strong rum cocktails and played with local children in the water. We were guests, but we were accepted.

The reality is that Jamaica beyond the resorts is beautiful but impoverished, and still visibly recovering from the pandemic. It can get expensive if you don't drive and need to rely on taxis to get around, though route taxis, as used by locals, can offset some costs. The country has a Level 3 warning from the State Department, with some regions listed as Level 4, Do Not Travel, but these were not on our itinerary. Traveling around the country felt completely safe in a group; just keep your wits about you, and remain polite.

Stepping out of your comfort zone is a must: Taking the easy options will not lead you to the communities that will really benefit from the money that tourism can bring. It's on us, as tourists, to seek them out, move within them with an awareness of our relative privileges, and remember the human stories behind their businesses. There are deep sacrifices that some ***working-class*** Jamaicans have made to try and bring a new type of tourism to the surface.

As Kiara said to me, measuring her words, at the end of our conversation: ''It was Mel's dream and now it's my dream, but it probably doesn't have to work out the way it was going to work for her, for me. Maybe something else is destined for me.''

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[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/09/travel/encountering-another-jamaica.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/09/travel/encountering-another-jamaica.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Top, fishermen on Treasure Beach. Center left, the Azteca Villas guesthouses at Treasure Beach. Center right, Delroy Brown at his restaurant, Gee Wiz. Above, Eggy's Beach Bar at Treasure Beach. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY TONY CENICOLA/THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page C7.

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[***Greece, Battered a Decade Ago, Is Booming***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:697X-1GF1-JBG3-6439-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Highlight:** It is one of Europe’s fastest-growing economies, and while investors and tourists are flocking to the country, memories of austerity measures are still fresh for Greeks.

**Body**

It is one of Europe’s fastest-growing economies, and while investors and tourists are flocking to the country, memories of austerity measures are still fresh for Greeks.

Paris Skouros pointed toward the sky outside his office in Athens on a recent weekday. In the past six months, four high-rises had sprung up, built by Greek and international builders to be sold for use as tourist rentals, foreign real estate investments and company offices. Farther afield, a fresh crop of new buildings dotted the horizon.

Greece’s financial crisis almost ruined his firm, [*Skouros &amp; Sons*](https://skouroselevator.gr/), an elevator company. Years of harsh austerity measures imposed by international bailouts had been wrenching, Mr. Skouros said, as new construction ground to a standstill. But now an economic recovery has barreled in.

“During the crisis, we just wanted to survive,” Mr. Skouros said, as the sound of hammers hitting sheet metal rang out in his workshop. “Now we’re profitable, and business is so strong that we can’t find enough workers to keep up with demand.”

Laden with debt it couldn’t pay back, Greece nearly broke the eurozone a decade ago. Today, it is one of Europe’s fastest-growing economies. In a significant acknowledgment of the country’s turnaround, credit ratings agencies have been upgrading their appraisal of Greece’s debt, and opening the door for large foreign investors.

The economy is [*growing at twice the eurozone average*](https://www.imf.org/external/datamapper/profile/GRC), and unemployment, while still high at 11 percent, is the lowest in over a decade. Tourists have returned in droves, fueling a construction frenzy and new jobs. Multinational companies, like Microsoft and Pfizer, are investing. And banks that almost collapsed have [*cleaned up*](https://www.spglobal.com/marketintelligence/en/news-insights/latest-news-headlines/herculean-effort-to-clean-up-bad-loans-bodes-well-for-greece-s-banks-71562359) and are lending again, benefiting the broader economy.

Greece still faces risks. Its mountain of debt has shrunk, but at 166 percent of the economy, it’s among the world’s highest. The country’s banks still hold a pile of nonperforming loans that is bigger than the European average. And the misery of austerity is still fresh for some people, made worse by stubbornly high inflation stoked by Russia’s war in Ukraine.

The country’s prime minister, Kyriakos Mitsotakis, a business-friendly conservative politician, was [*re-elected by a landslide*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/25/world/europe/greece-election-kyriakos-mitsotakis.html) in June after being credited with spurring a recovery by reducing taxes and debt. The government cut red tape for businesses and raised the minimum wage. The country is even paying back international bailout money ahead of schedule.

Mr. Mitsotakis hailed Greece’s return to investors’ graces. “I will never allow us to relive the trauma of a national bankruptcy,” he said a day after the latest upgrade.

Greece became the center of Europe’s debt crisis after Wall Street imploded in 2008. [*Ireland*](https://www.nytimes.com/2010/11/29/business/global/29euro.html?searchResultPosition=4), [*Portugal*](https://www.nytimes.com/2011/05/04/business/global/04portugal.html?searchResultPosition=2) and [*Cyprus*](https://www.nytimes.com/2013/03/18/business/global/facing-bailout-tax-cypriots-rush-to-get-their-money-out-of-banks.html?searchResultPosition=10) were also forced to take international bailouts. But [*Greece*](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/06/19/business/economy/greece-europe-bailout.html?searchResultPosition=2) had it the worst, requiring three rescue packages from 2010 to 2015, totaling 320 billion euros, or $343 billion, with bitter austerity terms. Household incomes and pensions were slashed. The economy shrank by a quarter, and hundreds of thousands of businesses collapsed as banks shuttered. By 2013, nearly a third of Greeks were unemployed.

“We would have liked the austerity to be milder, but the measures were the Greek contribution to saving itself,” said Yannis Stournaras, a former finance minister who is the governor of Greece’s central bank and a member of the European Central Bank board. “Greece had to take these tough steps to survive.”

Greece exited the bailout programs’ strict fiscal controls [*in 2018*](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/08/19/business/greece-bailout-financial-crisis.html?searchResultPosition=12), and the government’s actions since then have earned confidence from the European Union. In 2021, Brussels policymakers approved another €30 billion for [*climate investments*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2021/11/02/world/cop26-glasgow-climate-summit/how-greek-islands-are-serving-as-labs-for-clean-energy?smid=url-share) in Greece, part of a broader effort to bolster E.U. economies after Covid-19 lockdowns.

This month, [*DBRS Morningstar,*](https://www.dbrsmorningstar.com/issuers/17484/hellenic-republic) a global credit rating agency recognized by the European Central Bank, raised Greece’s debt rating to investment grade, a move that opens the door for pensions and other big investors to buy bonds issued by the government. And that will lower borrowing costs for households, businesses and the government after the E.C.B. has been raising interest rates to fight inflation.

Moody’s, one of the largest credit ratings agencies, raised Greece’s debt rating on Sept. 15 by two notches, just short of investment grade, citing [*“profound structural change”*](https://www.moodys.com/research/Moodys-upgrades-Greeces-ratings-to-Ba1-outlook-stable-Rating-Action--PR_480117) in the country’s economy, finances and banking system.

Investors are jumping in. Microsoft is building a €1 billion data center east of Athens. Farther north, Pfizer is anchoring a €650 million research hub. American, Chinese and European companies are pitching renewable-energy deals. And investments by Cisco, JPMorgan, Meta and other multinationals are projected to have an economic impact worth billions of euros over the next few years.

Well over 10 million tourists swarmed into Greece this summer [*despite a spate of wildfires*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/23/world/europe/greece-wildfires-athens.html?smid=nytcore-ios-share&amp;referringSource=articleShare), bringing estimated revenues of over €21 billion. Construction has climbed on the mainland and on popular [*Greek islands*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/20/business/mykonos-greece-construction-tourism.html?searchResultPosition=1), driven by a surging demand for hotels, Airbnb rentals and a [*program*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/03/20/business/greece-economy-golden-visas-tourism.html?searchResultPosition=9) that lets foreigners get a [*visa*](https://www.schengenvisainfo.com/eu-golden-visas/greece-golden-visa/) to live in E.U. states if they buy at least €500,000 in real estate in Greece.

The activity has buoyed businesses like the one run by Mr. Skouros. The company, which he manages with his brother, John, was founded by their father in 1965. When orders dried up during the economic crisis, they pulled through by servicing elevators they had already installed around Athens.

Today, it has orders for elevators in 10 buildings, up from none during the crisis and Covid lockdowns. At around €20,000 per elevator, the firm is profitable again. Mr. Skouros raised salaries 10 percent and hired five more employees. He needs more technicians, but in a hot economy, he is no longer finding takers.

The comeback is moving so quickly that Mr. Skouros is worried about a real estate bubble forming. So he is steering clear of new high-rise construction that he fears could go bust, and targeting smaller residential buildings with sound finances.

For others, the economic upturn has yet to heal the scars from austerity.

Dmitris Mitrofinakis, 67, has struggled to bounce back from shuttering the home décor store that he ran for over 40 years, after draining his personal savings during the crisis to try to salvage it. When he retired in 2015, the pension that he had long paid into was slashed to €1,300 a month from the €2,400 he was supposed to get.

“The austerity imposed on Greece was too strict,” said Mr. Mitrofinakis, who lives in a modest apartment with his wife in a ***working-class*** neighborhood, adding that he has little money left at the end of the month.

He sees signs that the economy is improving. “When you look around, people have more work and higher salaries,” Mr. Mitrofinakis said. “But a lot of other people haven’t recovered,” he said, adding that many of his retired neighbors are struggling to make ends meet.

Roula Skouros, a hotel manager in the city of Tripoli, doesn’t expect Greece’s investment grade rating to improve her life. “Someone who maybe works at the bank or at the stock market probably is affected, but I’m not,” said Ms. Skouros, who is not related to Paris Skouros.

Her paycheck has always hovered around the minimum wage, she said. But with inflation running rampant at the gas pump and grocery store, an improved economy “doesn’t mean anything if you can’t afford gas and food,” Ms. Skouros said.

In a recent speech, Mr. Mitsotakis acknowledged the challenges and vowed to spread the recovery’s benefits more widely. “We’re not hiding behind investment grade, saying, ‘We achieved an important goal — let’s turn to autopilot,’” he said.

His government announced that it aimed to raise the monthly minimum wage to €950 by the end of its four-year term after lifting it to €780 in April. Public-sector salaries will also increase for the first time since a 20 percent cut during the crisis to pay Greece’s debts.

For Konstantinos Kanderakis, 62, a supervisor at Greece’s digital services agency, the gains are meaningful. He earns €1,300 a month after a 35-year career in government, and he will get a €100 monthly increase after a decade in which his income had fallen.

“It’s a big psychological boost,” he said. “Greece is stable again, and what I am happy about is that things will be better for my children.”

Niki Kitsantonis contributed reporting from Athens.

Niki Kitsantonis contributed reporting from Athens.

PHOTOS: Saddled with debt, Greece nearly broke the eurozone a decade ago. Today, it is one of Europe’s fastest-growing economies. But it still faces risks like nonperforming loans, inflation and Russia’s war in Ukraine. (B1); A restaurant in Plaka, a tourist area of Athens. Over 10 million tourists visited Greece this summer despite a spate of wildfires, bringing in estimated revenues of over 21 billion euros. Hotels and Airbnb rentals are in high demand.; Yannis Stournaras, governor of Greece’s central bank, said that after surviving the crisis, Greece was now growing faster than the rest of the eurozone. Unemployment, while still high at 11 percent, is the lowest in over a decade. (B6); Greece, which became the center of Europe’s debt crisis after Wall Street imploded in 2008, is now experiencing a boom. Construction is resuming in Athens, left, and the Greek tourism sector has been revived, as seen at the port of Piraeus and an Athenian fish market, below. But some people, such as retirees, are still struggling from the effects of past austerity measures. (B6-B7); John and Paris Skouros, brothers who manage Skouros &amp; Sons, at their offices in Athens. Greece’s economic upswing has revived once-stricken companies like theirs. “Now we’re profitable,” Paris Skouros said.; Tourism is skyrocketing, stoking a construction frenzy for hotels, Airbnbs and other lodging on the mainland and Greek islands like Mykonos. Multinational companies, like Microsoft and Pfizer, have been investing as well. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY MARCO ARGUELLO FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page B1, B6, B7.

**Load-Date:** September 30, 2023

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[***I Know What Savage Fear Really Lies at the Heart of the American Dream; Guest Essay***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6776-R1S1-DXY4-X1W7-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** Costica Bradatan

**Highlight:** It’s the fear of failure.

**Body**

I wrote a book [*in praise of failure*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/12/28/books/review/in-praise-of-failure-costica-bradatan.html), which is like a fish praising water. I’ve been swimming in failure for as long as I can remember — even before that. Quite a lot of who we are, what we do and especially what we cannot do is determined well before we are born, by history, geography, the rise and fall of empires, that farcical god we call luck. I came into this world with failure in my blood and bones. Sometimes I wonder if there is anything else there.

I come from Romania, a country as insignificant as it seems cursed, a place that has been submerged in failure for [*as long as it has been in existence*](https://civic-nation.org/?country=580). Failure seems to be everywhere: in the air people breathe, in the water they drink, even in the language they speak. Especially in the language. Romanian is any linguist’s dream: Layer piles upon linguistic layer like geological strata, indicating the foreign armies and empires that have at one time or another colonized the place, exploited it at length or merely marched through it — raping it in haste: Greek, Roman, Byzantine, Ottoman, Hungarian, Russian, Austro-Hungarian, then Soviet.

As with the local cuisine, which is so rich because it combines all the neighboring culinary traditions but has no clear identity of its own, the Romanian language is a purely Babelian affair: a dozen tongues in one. There are countless words for “failure” in Romanian, of different origins and verbal constructions so exquisite that you want to fail only for the pleasure of putting your experience into words. Coming from such a place, how could I not write in praise of failure?

At the time I was born, in the 1970s, the country was in the middle of an intense affair with utopia. Nothing breeds more failure than an obsessive quest for purity. The closer you get to perfection, the more abject the failure. We were supposed to reach the communist paradise any day, even as people’s lives were becoming progressively more hellish. The state was supposed to wither away, per Friedrich Engels’s prophecy, yet it was becoming more and more oppressive. Everything was owned in common, even though there was nothing much to be owned. For good measure, the utopian experiment was run largely by a gang of thugs. That strikes me now as a logical arrangement. You had to be either incurably idealistic or rotten to the core to believe in utopia, and idealism was never a plant to grow roots in that part of the world.

The Romanian state did everything — from the repression and surveillance to the police beatings and windows broken in the middle of the night — in the name of the ***working class***. The regime was called “the dictatorship of the proletariat,” but that must have been a grammatical error: It was most obviously a dictatorship over the proletariat. The workers were kept deep in misery, ignorance and poverty. They were treated like beasts of burden and told that they were lucky, that under capitalism, their lives would be so much worse. In school, many subjects were covered, but the discipline most widely taught was the art of cognitive dissonance: how to look at all of this and pretend to see none of it. If you mastered the craft, you could survive, even though you were left seriously broken inside. I lived in “1984,” knew it like the back of my hand, long before I discovered the book.

Books. It took me a while to discover them. For if there was one social class even worse off than the ***working class*** in the communist utopia, it was the peasant class.

I came into the world in a family of barely literate peasants, and there was not one book in the home where I grew up. Later in life, I would collect books compulsively, thousands of them, in an impossible effort to fill up the haunting emptiness of my bookless childhood and adolescence. You could, in principle, borrow books from the village’s library, but it was risky. You could get punished if you were caught reading. That was precious time stolen from productive work; child labor was routine in that quasi-paradise.

In the home in which I grew up, few words were spoken. The use of words was a too-demanding affair for people whose main job was sheer biological survival. An angry look, a jolt or the occasional beating were much more effective means of communication. Intellectual atrophy in that environment was a social epidemic. My early socialization was largely with the cows I attended. Later in life, I embraced the craft of words in a desperate effort to fix, retroactively, all that was wrong with my wordless childhood.

By the late 1980s, some of the thugs got bored with the communist experiment and realized that it would be more fun if they turned capitalist. That’s how the regime collapsed, under the weight of its own absurdity, catching us, the children of utopia, amid its ruins. Not that this hurt us (by that point, we were too damaged to be hurt by anything), but it left us with a privileged relationship with failure, an affinity for it, even a special flair for it. Once in utopia, you are doomed; you carry its nothingness in your bones wherever you go.

In Romania, with its masochistic history, a venerable tradition has taken root: You do everything you can to distance yourself from the country, to shed it as a serpent sheds its skin and adopt a new identity, any identity. The philosopher E.M. Cioran, a brilliant exemplar of Romanianness, in his book “The Trouble With Being Born,” wrote: “I have spent my whole life wanting to be something else: Spanish, Russian, cannibal — anything, except what I was.” In other writings, he admitted that he loved Romania “with a heavy hatred” and that leaving it for France in his late 20s was “by far the most intelligent thing” he had ever done.

Apart from a remarkable gift for failing, Romanians have a knack for living in a state of painful separation, leaving a place and missing it unbearably. “Dor” (from the Latin “dolor,” or “pain”), the word used to express that state, is one of the most defining in the Romanian vocabulary. Many a folk song, countless poems and even works of philosophy have been built around this one word.

When my turn came to follow this tradition, it was a relatively simple decision. I would emigrate to the United States. For I knew right away that America’s noisy worshiping of success, its mania for ratings and rankings, the compulsive celebration of perfection in everything served only as a facade. Behind the optimistic veneer there lies an extraordinary fear of failure: the horror of going down and going under, of losing face and respectability, of exclusion and marginalization. It’s not success but failure — the savage fear of it — that lies at the heart of the American dream. The country is custom made for an aficionado of failure like me.

Costica Bradatan is a professor of humanities in the Honors College at Texas Tech University and the author of “[*In Praise of Failure: Four Lessons in Humility*](https://www.hup.harvard.edu/catalog.php?isbn=9780674970472).” His essay “Democracy Is for the Gods” appears in the new anthology “[*Question Everything: A Stone Reader.*](https://wwnorton.com/books/9781324091837)”

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This article appeared in print on page SR10.

**Load-Date:** January 7, 2023

**End of Document**



[***There’s a Step Biden Can Take to Help Workers, and He Hasn’t Done It; Guest Essay***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:62HN-HP41-DXY4-X52J-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

April 25, 2021 Sunday 13:37 EST

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 995 words

**Byline:** Eyal Press

**Highlight:** The Labor Department still (still!) needs to do more to protect employees from getting Covid on the job.

**Body**

Since foiling Donald Trump’s bid for a second term, Joe Biden has gone out of his way to send ***working-class*** voters the message that he, and not his predecessor, is the true champion of their interests. Shortly after he was inaugurated, Mr. Biden [*signed*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/22/business/biden-food-stamps-stimulus-checks.html) an executive order to encourage the federal government and federal contractors to pay their workers a $15 minimum hourly wage. He fired the general counsel of the National Labor Relations Board, an anti-union lawyer and a Trump appointee. In a [*video*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/22/business/biden-food-stamps-stimulus-checks.html) tweeted in late February, Mr. Biden paid homage to unions and warned employers that there should be “no intimidation, no coercion, no threats” when workers exercise their collective bargaining rights.

Mr. Biden’s video did not explicitly refer to a valiant but [*ultimately unsuccessful*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/22/business/biden-food-stamps-stimulus-checks.html) organizing effort at an Amazon warehouse in Bessemer, Ala. But along with his other statements and actions, it marked a notable shift from the more tepid relationship with organized labor that has prevailed under some recent Democratic presidents, including Barack Obama. It also signaled a decisive break with the priorities of Mr. Trump, who rewarded his ***working-class*** supporters by cutting taxes for the rich and gutting worker protections.

But there is one notable change that the Biden administration has not yet made: issuing an emergency temporary standard that would require employers to protect workers from exposure to the coronavirus by taking actions such as instituting mask-wearing requirements and social-distancing rules.

A year ago, union leaders and workers’ rights advocates pressed the Occupational Safety and Health Administration to address the worst occupational health crisis since the agency’s founding in 1971. Their appeals fell on deaf ears. Instead, OSHA issued toothless guidelines that employers were explicitly told were voluntary and created no legal obligations.

As a candidate, Mr. Biden criticized this approach, assailing what he called Mr. Trump’s “foot-dragging.” The day after Mr. Biden was sworn into office, he signed an executive order directing OSHA to review the matter and, if warranted, to issue an emergency temporary standard by March 15. Yet more than a month later, no standard has appeared, leading some to fear that the idea has been shelved. Marty Walsh, Mr. Biden’s secretary of labor, said on MSNBC this month that the administration [*was looking*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/22/business/biden-food-stamps-stimulus-checks.html) into the standard.

One potential explanation for Mr. Biden’s own foot-dragging is that, with vaccination rates rising, the administration no longer believes action is necessary. But the threat to workers has hardly disappeared, particularly as new coronavirus variants continue to spread.

In Michigan, which has experienced a surge in Covid infections, more than half of new reported Covid [*outbreaks*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/22/business/biden-food-stamps-stimulus-checks.html) have occurred in workplaces. “Vaccinations are helping, but we are nowhere near a situation where dangerous exposures are under control,” said David Michaels, an epidemiologist at the George Washington University Milken Institute School of Public Health, who was the director of OSHA under Mr. Obama. A union representing workers at a pork slaughterhouse in Oklahoma, which has had one of the largest outbreaks in the meatpacking industry, [*recently filed a complaint*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/22/business/biden-food-stamps-stimulus-checks.html) accusing the plant of not taking enough measures to protect employees. (The company has denied this.)

Another reason the Biden administration may be hedging? Politics — in particular, the desire to avoid antagonizing governors as well as business groups like the National Retail Federation, which [*has urged*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/22/business/biden-food-stamps-stimulus-checks.html) the agency to refrain from imposing “inflexible and costly burdens on employers.” This opposition is unsurprising: For decades, trade associations [*have opposed*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/22/business/biden-food-stamps-stimulus-checks.html) many new OSHA regulations, often warning that the rules will wipe out jobs and [*constrain business*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/22/business/biden-food-stamps-stimulus-checks.html). According to Dr. Michaels, such fears have generally proved unfounded.

Although some states, including California and Virginia, have issued their own standards, employees in most places are still unprotected — a matter that ought to concern supporters of racial justice no less than advocates for workers’ rights. “The essential workers getting sick are in occupations that are disproportionately made up of Black and brown workers,” said Deborah Berkowitz of the National Employment Law Project. A case in point is the meatpacking industry, where line workers are overwhelmingly immigrants and people of color and where, as Ms. Berkowitz recently told Congress, more workers have died of Covid in the past 12 months than from all other work-related hazards in the past 15 years.

By issuing an emergency temporary standard that includes some basic requirements for Covid safety measures, the Biden administration would affirm that the health and safety of all ***working-class*** people matter.

During Mr. Trump’s presidency, the term “***working class***” came to be associated with people who flocked to his rallies — that is, with white men in MAGA hats. But the Black and Latino essential workers who risked their lives during the pandemic — and some of the voters of all races who catapulted Mr. Biden to victory last November — are no less a part of the ***working class***. The Trump administration treated the lives of these workers as expendable. For moral reasons as well as practical ones, Joe Biden should make it clear that they are not.

Eyal Press ([*@eyalpress*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/22/business/biden-food-stamps-stimulus-checks.html)) is a journalist who has reported on labor issues for The Times Magazine and The New Yorker. He is the author of the forthcoming book “Dirty Work: Essential Jobs and the Hidden Toll of Inequality in America.”

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PHOTO: (PHOTOGRAPH BY Patrick T. Fallon/Agence France-Presse — Getty Images FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** April 26, 2021

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[***Deep Into the Internet's Darkest Corners***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:687T-RCX1-JBG3-60RK-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

May 16, 2023 Tuesday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section C; Column 0; The Arts/Cultural Desk; Pg. 6; CRITIC'S PICK

**Length:** 836 words

**Byline:** By Laura Cappelle

**Body**

In Marion Siéfert's much-anticipated new show, the French director explores the dynamics of online grooming.

The French stage director Marion Siéfert has her finger on the pulse of our digital lives. In ''2 or 3 Things I Know About You,'' she playfully tackled oversharing on Facebook, before turning to the perils of online streaming in ''\_jeanne\_dark\_'' -- a show that fell foul of Instagram's moderation policies when it was relayed live on the platform.

With ''Daddy,'' a sharp, no-holds-barred new production at the Odéon-Théâtre de l'Europe, in Paris, Siéfert has ventured even further into the internet's dark corners. In it, a 13-year-old is groomed online by an older man and gets lost in a virtual reality game that exploits teenage girls for profit.

It also marks a new stage in Siéfert's career. ''Daddy'' is her first big-budget production for a major playhouse, and one of the Paris season's most anticipated premieres. So Siéfert is swinging much bigger, on every level: larger cast, more atmospheric sets and a somewhat indulgent running time of three and a half hours. Yet her biting originality remains intact.

Reality is no match for screen entertainment in ''Daddy.'' The central character, Mara, is a quiet teenager from southern France. A subtly written scene, early on, introduces her family: Her parents, a nurse and a security guard, are too exhausted by their poorly paid jobs to devote much attention to their daughters. It's no surprise that whenever she can, Mara escapes to the brighter landscape of online gaming.

In an unnamed video game, she joins Julien, a smooth-talking 27-year-old who is her frequent online partner in crime. The easy intimacy they have built is showcased through a spectacular video sequence: On a screen the size of the Odéon's stage, we see a 3-D game designed by the video artist Antoine Briot in which Mara and Julien's avatars who shoot at enemies with assault rifles before hopping on fluorescent skateboards.

Throughout, we hear Mara and Julien banter over their headsets. ''You're the most badass girl in this game,'' Julien says.

The groundwork is laid for the abusive dynamic that ensues. When they first meet outside the game, on a video call, Mara confides in Julien that she dreams of being an actress. He compliments her, and tells her about ''Daddy'' -- a new game that allows players, Julien says, to become avatars sponsored by sugar daddies, and showcase their talents to a ''fan base.''

Siéfert has a knack for assembling captivatingly unconventional actors, and just as ''\_jeanne\_dark\_'' was tailor-made for Helena de Laurens, a shape-shifter unafraid to lean into grotesque physicality, ''Daddy'' owes much to its two central performers. As Mara, the 15-year-old Lila Houel, who came to the production with limited stage experience, is coarsely candid in these early scenes, with turns of phrase that emphasize the character's ***working-class*** background. Opposite her, Louis Peres, best known as a screen actor, is a startling tech-generation descendant of Christian Bale in ''American Psycho'': clean-cut, in control, smoothly scary.

Siéfert's smartest move is to leave video and special effects behind once the two enter the game world of ''Daddy.'' The virtual space becomes a sinister, near-empty stage dotted with what look like snow mounds, where Mara encounters other preyed-upon young women.

The rules of ''Daddy'' aren't wholly clear. Men invest so teenage girls can perform routines that earn them points with fans. Houel, for instance, interprets a scene from the movie ''Interview with the Vampire''; the sparkling Jennifer Gold, who plays the game's reigning star Jessica, delivers cabaret-style numbers, including Marilyn Monroe's ''My Heart Belongs to Daddy'' from the 1960 film ''Let's Make Love.''

The points and the fans are never shown -- Siéfert keeps things deliberately vague. The focus is on the dynamics of child abuse, and the erosion of Mara's individuality and willpower by Julien. While some scenes of verbal and physical violence are troubling enough to make you fear for Houel's mental health, she rises to the occasion with astonishing sang-froid, quietly haunted then seething in the second act.

Siéfert co-wrote ''Daddy'' with Matthieu Bareyre, and some of the points they make don't need so much time to come across: Cuts would be welcome. Yet ''Daddy'' speaks to the zeitgeist and the lives of teenagers today with a mix of ease and critical distance that few stage directors can match.

And even at 11:30 p.m., one final scene had the audience sitting up and leaning forward. After a bloody narrative twist, the back wall of the stage slid away to reveal the street outside, and a performer staggered out of the game into the Odéon's leafy neighborhood -- while a few passers-by stopped, puzzled, to peek at the action onstage. In Siéfert's theater, the real and the virtual keep colliding in invigorating ways.

Daddy

Through May 26 at the Odéon -- Théâtre de l'Europe in Paris; theatre-odeon.eu.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/11/theater/daddy-marion-siefert-review-odeon-paris.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/11/theater/daddy-marion-siefert-review-odeon-paris.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Top, Jennifer Gold delivers cabaret-style numbers in ''Daddy.'' Right, Louis Peres and Lila Houel are the central performers in the play, written by Marion Siéfert and Matthieu Bareyre. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY MATTHIEU BAREYRE) This article appeared in print on page C6.

**Load-Date:** May 16, 2023

**End of Document**



[***What Biden Owes Essential Workers***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:62HV-R331-DXY4-X06P-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

April 26, 2021 Monday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; Editorial Desk; Pg. 21

**Length:** 1003 words

**Byline:** By Eyal Press

**Body**

The Labor Department still (still!) needs to do more to protect employees from getting Covid on the job.

Since foiling Donald Trump's bid for a second term, Joe Biden has gone out of his way to send ***working-class*** voters the message that he, and not his predecessor, is the true champion of their interests. Shortly after he was inaugurated, Mr. Biden signed an executive order to encourage the federal government and federal contractors to pay their workers a $15 minimum hourly wage. He fired the general counsel of the National Labor Relations Board, an anti-union lawyer and a Trump appointee. In a video tweeted in late February, Mr. Biden paid homage to unions and warned employers that there should be ''no intimidation, no coercion, no threats'' when workers exercise their collective bargaining rights.

Mr. Biden's video did not explicitly refer to a valiant but ultimately unsuccessful organizing effort at an Amazon warehouse in Bessemer, Ala. But along with his other statements and actions, it marked a notable shift from the more tepid relationship with organized labor that has prevailed under some recent Democratic presidents, including Barack Obama. It also signaled a decisive break with the priorities of Mr. Trump, who rewarded his ***working-class*** supporters by cutting taxes for the rich and gutting worker protections.

But there is one notable change that the Biden administration has not yet made: issuing an emergency temporary standard that would require employers to protect workers from exposure to the coronavirus by taking actions such as instituting mask-wearing requirements and social-distancing rules.

A year ago, union leaders and workers' rights advocates pressed the Occupational Safety and Health Administration to address the worst occupational health crisis since the agency's founding in 1971. Their appeals fell on deaf ears. Instead, OSHA issued toothless guidelines that employers were explicitly told were voluntary and created no legal obligations.

As a candidate, Mr. Biden criticized this approach, assailing what he called Mr. Trump's ''foot-dragging.'' The day after Mr. Biden was sworn into office, he signed an executive order directing OSHA to review the matter and, if warranted, to issue an emergency temporary standard by March 15. Yet more than a month later, no standard has appeared, leading some to fear that the idea has been shelved. Marty Walsh, Mr. Biden's secretary of labor, said on MSNBC this month that the administration was looking into the standard.

One potential explanation for Mr. Biden's own foot-dragging is that, with vaccination rates rising, the administration no longer believes action is necessary. But the threat to workers has hardly disappeared, particularly as new coronavirus variants continue to spread.

In Michigan, which has experienced a surge in Covid infections, more than half of new reported Covid outbreaks have occurred in workplaces. ''Vaccinations are helping, but we are nowhere near a situation where dangerous exposures are under control,'' said David Michaels, an epidemiologist at the George Washington University Milken Institute School of Public Health, who was the director of OSHA under Mr. Obama. A union representing workers at a pork slaughterhouse in Oklahoma, which has had one of the largest outbreaks in the meatpacking industry, recently filed a complaint accusing the plant of not taking enough measures to protect employees. (The company has denied this.)

Another reason the Biden administration may be hedging? Politics -- in particular, the desire to avoid antagonizing governors as well as business groups like the National Retail Federation, which has urged the agency to refrain from imposing ''inflexible and costly burdens on employers.'' This opposition is unsurprising: For decades, trade associations have opposed many new OSHA regulations, often warning that the rules will wipe out jobs and constrain business. According to Dr. Michaels, such fears have generally proved unfounded.

Although some states, including California and Virginia, have issued their own standards, employees in most places are still unprotected -- a matter that ought to concern supporters of racial justice no less than advocates for workers' rights. ''The essential workers getting sick are in occupations that are disproportionately made up of Black and brown workers,'' said Deborah Berkowitz of the National Employment Law Project. A case in point is the meatpacking industry, where line workers are overwhelmingly immigrants and people of color and where, as Ms. Berkowitz recently told Congress, more workers have died of Covid in the past 12 months than from all other work-related hazards in the past 15 years.

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During Mr. Trump's presidency, the term ''***working class***'' came to be associated with people who flocked to his rallies -- that is, with white men in MAGA hats. But the Black and Latino essential workers who risked their lives during the pandemic -- and some of the voters of all races who catapulted Mr. Biden to victory last November -- are no less a part of the ***working class***. The Trump administration treated the lives of these workers as expendable. For moral reasons as well as practical ones, Joe Biden should make it clear that they are not.

Eyal Press (@eyalpress) is a journalist who has reported on labor issues for The Times Magazine and The New Yorker. He is the author of the forthcoming book ''Dirty Work: Essential Jobs and the Hidden Toll of Inequality in America.''

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**Graphic**

PHOTO: (PHOTOGRAPH BY Patrick T. Fallon/Agence France-Presse -- Getty Images FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** April 26, 2021

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[***Why Joni Ernst Talked About Her Tough Upbringing; State of the Union***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:605S-6R41-JBG3-6462-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

June 20, 2020 Saturday 08:50 EST

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**Section:** UPSHOT

**Length:** 358 words

**Byline:** Lynn Vavreck

**Highlight:** Politicians can win hearts on the left with stories about overcoming adversity in childhood, but there’s no evidence it affects their policy positions.

**Body**

As she did in her stump speeches for Senate last fall, [*Joni Ernst*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/20/us/politics/iowa-polls-trump-biden-ernst-greenfield.html) of Iowa mentioned her upbringing in her response to the [*State of the Union speech*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/20/us/politics/iowa-polls-trump-biden-ernst-greenfield.html) Tuesday night. She talked about tough times walking to the school bus and her feelings about being different from the other families in her town. Politicians do this because they think it makes them relatable — it’s a shortcut to many people that says, “I understand you.”

And they’re right: The signals work, and people believe them.

But research published last year in [*The Journal of Politics*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/20/us/politics/iowa-polls-trump-biden-ernst-greenfield.html) by the political scientists [*Nick Carnes*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/20/us/politics/iowa-polls-trump-biden-ernst-greenfield.html) and [*Meredith Sadin*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/20/us/politics/iowa-polls-trump-biden-ernst-greenfield.html) suggests that there’s [*nothing behind these signals*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/20/us/politics/iowa-polls-trump-biden-ernst-greenfield.html) when it comes to policy. Mr. Carnes and Ms. Sadin gathered biographical information on every legislator in the 106th through 110th Congresses, including their parents’ professions.

They then examined two things: the kinds of people who voted for the candidates (***working class*** or not, for example) and the legislator’s support for bills related to ***working-class*** issues once in Congress. They found that candidates who talked about tough upbringings got more votes from the left. The shortcuts work.

But they also discovered that legislators from ***working-class*** backgrounds voted no more liberally than legislators who were the children of lawyers of doctors. Upbringing seemed to have nothing to do with how legislators voted once in Congress.

What was the most important thing that determined whether a legislator would win the support of the ***working class*** once elected?

Party identification.

We may not be living in a red America or a blue America, but party identification is still the single best predictor of vote choice — whether you’re a voter or a member of Congress.

Lynn Vavreck, a professor of political science at U.C.L.A., is a co-author of “The Gamble,” about the 2012 presidential campaign. Follow her on Twitter at @vavreck.

PHOTO: Senator Joni Ernst of Iowa rehearsed her response to the State of the Union on Tuesday. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Jabin Botsford/The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Related Articles**

* [*Was Joni Ernst’s State of the Union Rebuttal Conciliatory, or Just More of the Same?*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/20/us/politics/iowa-polls-trump-biden-ernst-greenfield.html)

**Load-Date:** July 14, 2020

**End of Document**



[***House Race in New York Swing District Could Test the Influence of Abortion Rights***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6655-7FD1-DXY4-X54H-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

August 14, 2022 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; National Desk; Pg. 21

**Length:** 1477 words

**Byline:** By Grace Ashford

**Body**

An Aug. 23 special election to replace a Democrat, Antonio Delgado, could help answer one of the biggest questions of the midterms.

CHATHAM, N.Y. -- In New York's Hudson Valley, ubiquitous lawn signs underscore how an upcoming special election for an open House seat has taken on outsize implications.

''Choice Is on the Ballot,'' one sign says, the white lettering cast over a background of pink and blue, and a smaller line beneath it for the Democratic candidate, Pat Ryan.

The Aug. 23 contest for the seesaw district, which routinely wavers between Democratic and Republican control, had initially been cast as a potential bellwether of President Biden's stature among swing voters.

But the race -- among the first House special elections in a swing district since the Supreme Court overturned Roe v. Wade -- has quickly morphed into a closely watched test case of how important abortion rights may be in a tossup general election.

Mr. Ryan, a combat veteran who serves as executive of Ulster County, is in favor of protecting abortion access nationwide. Marc Molinaro, the Republican executive of Dutchess County, is not.

Like many other Democratic congressional candidates around the country, Mr. Ryan is trying to make the threat to abortion rights a central issue in the campaign. He cites the rollbacks of reproductive rights, voting rights and access to health care as urgent indicators.

''It is an existential moment for our democracy,'' he said.

Mr. Molinaro has similarly adopted a Republican Party strategy -- avoid talking about abortion whenever possible -- that is beginning to take hold, especially after voters in Kansas, a Republican state, overwhelmingly rejected a referendum that would have removed abortion rights from the state's constitution.

Polling shows that 65 percent of Americans believe that abortion should be legal in most or all cases -- a number that has grown in the past decade. But whether that belief is enough to persuade voters to stick with Democrats despite high gas prices and inflation remains to be seen -- and is a question that reflects the party's larger struggle to energize a socially and economically diverse base in the upcoming midterms.

The 19th Congressional District in New York -- last represented by Antonio Delgado, a Democrat who gave up his seat this spring to serve as lieutenant governor -- is among the nation's dwindling number of true swing districts. Combining both the liberal cities of Kingston and Hudson with more conservative rural areas of Greene and Delaware Counties, the district went for President Barack Obama in 2012 and Donald J. Trump in 2016 before returning narrowly to the Democrats in 2020.

When Mr. Delgado won in 2018 and again in 2020, some saw the impact of well-heeled city-dwellers, many of whom vote Democrat, who had begun to migrate into the Hudson Valley. That trend has only increased during the pandemic, revitalizing small towns but also exacerbating the area's housing crisis and contributing to local tensions.

Mr. Molinaro has tried to tailor his campaign to middle- and ***working-class*** concerns, speaking often about crime and economic woes, a struggle he says he knows first hand as a child growing up on food stamps. He blames Democratic policies in Albany and Washington for the inflation and high consumer prices that he says are hurting upstate New Yorkers, urging voters to send a message to ''limousine liberals.''

On social issues, Mr. Molinaro mostly toes the party line, saying he opposes bans on assault rifles and is personally opposed to abortion. But where he once said that he considered the constitutional right to abortion to be settled law, he now says that he believes the decision belongs with states and he would vote against a federal law ensuring abortion access nationwide. Similarly, he says that he would oppose a nationwide ban.

The position has put him on the defensive, particularly given the weight that Mr. Ryan has given the issue in campaign literature and advertising. Indeed, Mr. Molinaro rarely speaks about it except when pressed, as in a recent debate, when he invoked rare late-term abortions as a reason to restrict abortion rights.

''Like most people of this district, I just think there ought to be some thoughtful limitations,'' he said. Later, he prodded Mr. Ryan: ''Are you OK, Pat, with no limitations? None? You think that even to the second before delivery, you are OK with abortion?''

Mr. Ryan frames his campaign as an outgrowth of the call to service that led him to the military, speaking often about responsibility to community and the promise that government should be a force for good.

Like Mr. Molinaro, he agrees that the economy is not working for many in the ***working class***, but blames large corporations for taking more than their share. Calling out entrenched politicians on both sides of the aisle, he envisions a ''people-centered'' economy bolstered by investments in child care, housing and infrastructure.

The contest has drawn notice from partisan backers. In the most recent three-month reporting period, Mr. Ryan raised over a million dollars. Mr. Molinaro has received an assist from the National Republican Congressional Committee, which plans to spend more than $700,000 on TV ads in this race, according to the media tracking firm AdImpact.

Mr. Molinaro also boasts $1 million cash on hand and high name recognition locally, first as a teenage mayor of the village of Tivoli and later as a 2018 candidate for governor.

At the Greene County Youth Fair in late July, would-be voters differed about the extent to which the Supreme Court's abortion ruling would influence their ballot choices.

Alea Fanelli, a registered Republican, said she viewed herself as an independent. And while she disapproves of Democratic prison reforms that she says have made her husband's job as a corrections officer more dangerous, she said she is still likely to vote for Mr. Ryan, because of his support for abortion rights.

The mother of a daughter, she said her views were shaped by the need to ''think about our kids, for the future.'' If abortion is outlawed, she said, ''then what, we're back to back rooms, alleys, men kicking us in the stomach?''

Other attendees at the youth fair, who spoke over the bleating of prize goats, suggested that the abortion rights issue was overblown. Many Republican-leaning voters said that though they believed abortion ought to be available in certain instances, it was not a motivating issue for them.

Some disagreed with the premise that the procedure was under threat, noting that it would remain available in New York State. Others said that Republicans had no intention of banning the procedure outright -- despite efforts to impose bans in nearly a dozen states.

Roger Maben, a member of the Greene County Republican Committee, has ''mixed feelings'' about abortion, but says that's beside the point. ''There's an old saying in elections: It's the economy stupid!'' he said, adding: ''Abortion doesn't matter.''

Adding to the intrigue is the chaos of redistricting, which has muddled timelines and scrambled political races across the state, perhaps none more so than here.

The winner of the race will serve out the four-month remainder of Mr. Delgado's term. There will be a separate election in November for the newly redrawn 19th District -- whose geographic contours stretch west to take in Tompkins and Tioga Counties but lose much of the Hudson Valley.

Regardless of whether Mr. Molinaro wins the special election in August, he has committed to running for the new 19th District seat in November. Mr. Ryan, however, has entered a three-way Democratic primary for a newly redrawn 18th District, which comprises Dutchess and Orange counties as well as Ulster County, where he lives.

So by January, if Mr. Molinaro wins in the new 19th and Mr. Ryan wins in the new 18th, each could hold seats in Congress -- though it is also possible that both will find themselves out of a job. For now though, the two rivals are focusing on the special election in a moment both say is critical.

Given all of the upheaval the district has seen in recent years, local issues could also play a role in the race.

Abi Mesick, a Democratic town board member from Chatham, is supporting Mr. Ryan. But she said she feared that her party has not done enough to reach out to ***working-class*** Hudson Valley residents whose communities have been changed by an influx of second homeowners and city dwellers.

She worried that they would be drawn to Mr. Molinaro's charisma. ''I bet you three-quarters of them are going to vote for him, even if there's a couple of things they don't like,'' she said.

''Because they don't like these guys,'' she added, casting a glance at a group of older women dressed in head-to-toe linen. ''These guys don't represent them.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/13/nyregion/abortion-congress-ryan-molinaro.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/13/nyregion/abortion-congress-ryan-molinaro.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Marc Molinaro, a Republican, personally opposes abortion. (PHOTOGRAPH BY LIBBY MARCH FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

Pat Ryan, a Democrat, favors protecting access to abortion. (PHOTOGRAPH BY RICHARD BEAVEN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** August 14, 2022

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[***Record Rent Burdens Batter Low-Income Life***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69VB-S6D1-JBG3-61FY-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

December 11, 2023 Monday 08:29 EST

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**Section:** US; politics

**Length:** 2696 words

**Highlight:** More tenants than ever spend half or more of their income for shelter, leaving less for everything else, taking an emotional toll and leaving some without a place to call their own.

**Body**

To understand how rising rents punish families of modest means, look no further than the queen-size bed that Jessica Jones and her three children share in her mother’s living room, where each night brings a squirming, turning tussle for space in a house with no privacy.

Ms. Jones and her daughter Katelen, 14, anchor the sides like human bed rails, with two younger girls tucked in between. Joy is a 4-year-old featherweight, but Destaney, at 6, kicks so much that Ms. Jones binds her in a mermaid blanket. The day’s tensions lie beside them, and midnight sneezes are shared events.

After two years of doubling up, Ms. Jones longs for a place of her own. But even though she works full time for the state government, a modest apartment would consume more than half of her income, a burden most landlords find disqualifying and one she could not sustain.

With $41,000 a year in earnings and child support, she is, by government definition, not poor — just homeless.

“My anxiety is through the roof,” she said. “I feel almost hopeless.”

Unaffordable rents are changing low-income life, blighting the prospects of not only the poor but also growing shares of the lower middle class after decades in which rent increases have outpaced income growth.

Nearly two-thirds of households in the bottom 20 percent of incomes face “severe cost burdens,” meaning they pay more than half of their income for rent and utilities, according to the Harvard Joint Center for Housing Studies.

Among ***working-class*** renters — the 20 percent of people in the next level up the income scale — the share with severe burdens has nearly tripled in two decades to 17 percent.

For both groups, the proportion with severe cost burdens has reached record highs.

“More people, higher up the ladder, are facing impossible trade-offs,” said Whitney Airgood-Obrycki, a researcher at the Harvard Center.

The federal government deems shelter affordable if it takes 30 percent or less of household income, a goal that only about half of the nation’s 44 million renter households meet.

In consuming half or more of a family’s income, severe rent burdens steal from essential needs like food and medicine. They destroy the ability to save. They force frequent, destabilizing moves, unsettling parents at work and children in school. They flood fragile households with stress.

“Housing insecurity ripples through [*every domain of family life*](https://www.annualreviews.org/doi/pdf/10.1146/annurev-soc-090921-040646),” said Stefanie DeLuca, a sociologist at Johns Hopkins University. “It’s this constant mental and emotional tax.”

The growing burdens coincide with the declining reach of federal housing aid. Since 2004, the number of households served by the main programs for the poorest renters — public housing, Section 8 and Housing Choice Vouchers — has fallen by 6 percent, the Harvard analysis found, while the number eligible has soared.

Ms. Jones, who moved in with her mother after her landlord did not renew the lease on a subsidized apartment, said the displacement had wreaked family havoc. Her mother complains that rambunctious children fill the house with noise. Katelen’s moods darkened and her grades dived. Sleepless and anxious, Ms. Jones took a medical leave, then passed out and suffered a concussion.

“I felt like I was going to die, I was so stressed out,” she said.

Similar stories abound in Charleston, which illustrates the forces that have raised housing costs nationwide. The problem is not that poverty has grown but that prosperity has spread in unequal fashion, bidding up rents and leaving behind families of modest means as federal aid declined. Jacqueline Drayton, a longtime Verizon worker, skipped meals to rent a suburban house that exhausted more than 60 percent of her income, then got laid off. Latoyia Cruz-Rivas thought she could handle an apartment that consumed more than half her income as a school bus driver. After an eviction proved her wrong, she lived in her car with her son and their dog.

As the Joneses’ crisis stretches into its third year, Katelen’s singing has become a source of daily conflict. As a performer at church and an arts charter school, she considers singing her greatest joy, but her grandmother calls it noise. As doors slam and tempers flare, the housing crisis spills into the driveway, where her big voice fills a parked car and she forgets how long her family has waited for shelter it can afford.

“I feel so stuck,” she said. “But singing helps me feel free.”

No Buffer

People who spend half their income for shelter have no room for error. A few canceled work shifts or an unexpected car repair can leave them short. That poses special peril in South Carolina, where landlords can evict any tenant who pays even a single month’s rent more than five days late.

Ms. Cruz-Rivas discovered the risk.

A school bus driver from Greensboro, N.C., Ms. Cruz-Rivas, 42, moved to Charleston during the coronavirus pandemic, drawn by significantly higher wages and a desire to distance her teenage sons, Jevon and Amon, from troublemaking friends. She did not realize that rents were higher, too. With utilities, her apartment took more than half of her income, but, she said, “I figured, ‘I’ll make it work.’”

For a while she did, if barely. But her hours shrank as more drivers returned to work after the pandemic, and Jevon’s job at Pizza Hut did not fill the gap. Federal pandemic aid staved off one eviction threat. Then came the kind of cascading misfortune that can put tenants on the street.

Her sons totaled her car. The state suspended her commercial driver’s license. In the weeks it took to reinstate it, she lacked an income, and her landlord moved to evict her.

Amon moved in with his girlfriend. A school social worker who serves homeless families, Sonya Jones, arranged motel stays and a donated car. When the motel money ran out, Ms. Cruz-Rivas and Jevon began living in the car with their dog, Koffi.

Ms. Cruz-Rivas, who takes pride in her lack of self-pity, faced the ordeal with odd cheerfulness. “There’s people in worse situations than us,” she said. They slept in a parking lot and used the restroom at the all-night convenience store where Jevon found a job.

Having survived childhood sexual abuse, she added, “I can train my mind to accept anything.”

Reclining in the car one night this fall, Ms. Cruz-Rivas scrolled through social media while Jevon watched football on his phone with Koffi at his feet.

“We just lay back and chill,” Ms. Cruz-Rivas said.

“We talk, laugh, joke,” Jevon said.

Their matching tattoos read “family first.” It would have made a homey scene if home wasn’t an old Toyota.

Ms. Cruz-Rivas switched jobs to a limousine service, where her clientele of businesswomen and bachelorettes had no idea their upbeat driver slept in her car.

An eviction record makes Ms. Cruz-Rivas a pariah in the rental market, but Jevon, now 20, joined a waiting list for subsidized housing. After months of homelessness, he landed an apartment where they can sleep without hitting the steering wheel.

‘Rent Has an Effect on Your Mental Health’

Thirty miles from the parking lot where Ms. Cruz-Rivas slept, Jacqueline Drayton has a four-bedroom house in suburban Summerville, where traffic stops for geese crossings and residents car-pool in golf carts.

But she grapples with the same affordability crisis. With shelter costs consuming most of her income, Ms. Drayton, the former Verizon worker, said the burden depresses everything from her food budget to her psychological health.

“It’s nerve-racking,” she said. “Sometimes I don’t know if I’m going to make it.”

The shortage of affordable housing may seem perennial, but the problem has changed. In 1960, shelter took 28 percent of the average renter’s income (though some was so bad it lacked indoor plumbing). Now it takes 41 percent of income — and for poor renters, 75 percent.

Ms. Drayton’s father, James Earl Drayton, was one of nine firefighters honored as heroes after their deaths in a 2007 fire. But she notes that he gave his life for a city with little housing she can afford.

Concerned about violence, Ms. Drayton left the city eight years ago when she was married and two incomes covered suburban rent. Divorce changed the math. With earnings of about $42,000 and little child support, she moved with four children to a house that consumed roughly two-thirds of her income.

Suddenly everything revolved around rent. She skipped meals to pay it. She used tax refunds to pay it in advance. She felt anxious before she paid the rent and depleted afterward. Her post-divorce depression deepened.

“Rent definitely took over everything,” she said. “Rent has an effect on your mental health.”

Needing back surgery this year, Ms. Drayton scheduled an unpaid leave around her tax refund, but recovery took longer than planned. She deferred other bills, borrowed from her sister and tapped retirement funds, but still fell behind.

Among the forces that may be raising rents nationwide is the emergence of large corporate landlords. Ms. Drayton rented from AMH, a public company with 60,000 homes that asked a court to put her out. Most tenants in housing court lack attorneys, but a pro bono lawyer negotiated a deal to let her move without an eviction on her record. Yet her next rental was even more expensive and owned by Cerberus Capital Management, a private equity giant, through its property company, FirstKey Homes.

After 18 years at Verizon, she was laid off amid the move, with seven months of severance pay.

Ms. Drayton’s daughter, a high school freshman, wanted to join cheerleading this fall, but the $650 fee ended the conversation. It was not a close call.

“To be honest, I go without food sometimes — just having milk and cereal,” Ms. Drayton said. “Sometimes I couldn’t even get that.”

A Consequence of Poverty, and a Cause

As a midsize city in a low-cost state, Charleston may not seem like a place with impossible housing math. But it has long drawn new residents with big housing budgets attracted to its beaches, history and food, and a surge of manufacturing jobs has swelled their ranks.

Higher housing prices at the top mean higher prices below as land values rise and gentrification quickens. Mount Pleasant, an affluent suburb, compounded the shortage of affordable shelter by banning new apartments.

“Charleston County has become a victim of its own success,” the [*county’s housing plan*](https://charlestoncounty.org/hof/) warns.

Even after adjusting for inflation, the cost of a basic two-bedroom apartment rose by a third over the past decade, according to federal estimates called fair-market rents, taking $4,600 a year from tenants of modest means.

Civic pride suffered a blow in 2018 when Princeton researchers found the city of North Charleston had the country’s highest eviction rate, a product of high rents and weak tenant-protection laws.

“Most of them are working, but it just takes one unfortunate event — ‘I was sick’ or ‘my car broke down,’” said Taylor Rumble, a lawyer with Charleston Legal Access, a nonprofit law firm that expanded its tenant work. “It’s heartbreaking, but ‘heartbreaking’ isn’t a legal defense.”

The county set aside $20 million in federal stimulus funds for affordable housing. But that is only 4 percent of the investment the plan said is needed.

Budget-busting rents are not just an urban problem. Three-quarters of Charleston’s low-income households (those in the bottom fifth) pay more than half their income for shelter. But the same holds true in tiny Bladen County, N.C. (population 29,000), where low rent is offset by low pay. The share of low-income households with severe rent burdens ranges from 73 percent in big cities to 50 percent in rural areas.

Standard measures, used by the government and scholars, modestly overstate the problem because the Census Bureau’s definition of income omits some forms of aid, including food stamps and tax credits. At the request of The New York Times, Danielle Wilson and Christopher Wimer of Columbia University and Ms. Airgood-Obrycki of Harvard re-estimated rent burdens counting that aid.

For 2019, that lowered the share of households in the bottom quintile who are paying half or more of their income for shelter to 52 percent, from 60 percent. “You still have more than half the low-income population with severe burdens,” Ms. Wilson said.

Housing burdens are a consequence of poverty but also a cause. Research has shown that high rent burdens can harm cognitive development, increase delinquent behavior and reduce spending on health care and food, while evictions worsen mental and physical health and force families into worse neighborhoods.

Hope Harvey, a University of Kentucky sociologist, emphasized how much “cognitive bandwidth” housing instability consumes. “It permeates every aspect of family life,” she said. “There’s little left for anything else.”

‘A House for the Family’

It certainly permeates the life of Ms. Jones, the state worker who shares a bed with three children in her mother’s packed home. She finds it impossible to honor her mother’s demands for quiet without leaving her children feeling caged.

“It’s like walking on eggshells,” she said. “I feel like I’ve failed my kids.”

A former beautician, Ms. Jones has spent four years doing community outreach for the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children, or WIC. “I love, love, love my job,” she said.

But even with child support and occasional hairdressing jobs, her $41,000 income offers few options to house a family of four in Charleston.

A four-bedroom home, at fair-market rents, would deplete 70 percent of her income. Three bedrooms would take 56 percent and two bedrooms 45 percent. She does not think she can pay even the least of those sums, and her low credit score decreases the odds a landlord would take the chance.

Ms. Jones reached an emotional breaking point last year after she and the children caught Covid and Destaney was hospitalized. Ms. Jones took a medical leave, developed migraines and got a concussion from passing out. She is taking medication for anxiety, which she blames on the overcrowding.

“I’ve not been able to sleep — at all,” she said.

Mature beyond her 14 years, Katelen, the singer, is a co-parent of sorts, a patient caretaker of her younger siblings. But she is also an adolescent who lost her privacy at an age when it is especially prized. And the fights with her grandmother over her singing leave her both furious and tinged with self-reproach.

“I’m trying not to lash out at her because I know it’s disrespectful,” she said.

On a recent evening she escaped to the car and conjured a song of longing from “The Little Mermaid,” then switched to a gospel romp about the transformative power of the Holy Spirit.

I feel your Spirit

All over me

It’s in my hands, in my soul, down in my feet

From the back seat, Destaney supplied hand claps, backup vocals and nodding affirmation that she felt the Spirit, too. Then she fished a drawing from her first-grade backpack. It captured on paper what had eluded her in life: a house with four people and four beds.

“A house for the family,” she said.

Kitty Bennett contributed research.

Audio Produced by Adrienne Hurst.

Kitty Bennett contributed research. Audio Produced by Adrienne Hurst.

PHOTOS: FOUR TO A BED: Jessica Jones, below right with her daughters, all of whom share a queen-size bed in the living room of Ms. Jones’s mother. Ms. Jones in her office at a state agency, left; a modest apartment would consume more than half of her income. Her daughter Katelen, below, singing at church; around the crowded home, her singing is a source of conflict. (A18); FAMILY FIRST: Latoyia Cruz-Rivas, left, lost an apartment that took more than half of her income and lived in her car with her son Jevon and their dog. She and her children have tattoos that read “Family first.” Ms. Cruz-Rivas and Jevon washing clothes at a laundry, above right. (A18-A19); STRUGGLING TO KEEP UP: Jacqueline Drayton, above left, skipped meals to pay rent on a suburban home that took more than 60 percent of her income, before being laid off. She said her father had died fighting a fire, giving his life for a city with little housing she could afford. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY ELIZABETH BICK FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A19) This article appeared in print on page A1, A18, A19.

**Load-Date:** December 18, 2023

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[***The Rise and Fall of the World’s Most Successful Joint Venture***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69MJ-R9D1-DXY4-X2BP-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Section:** BUSINESS

**Length:** 2381 words

**Byline:** Peter S. Goodman

**Highlight:** China and the U.S. both gained from their economic integration. As they pull apart, each is finding it will be hard to fully replace the other.

**Body**

For more than a quarter century, the fortunes of the United States and China were fused in a uniquely monumental joint venture.

Americans treated China like the mother of all outlet stores, purchasing staggering quantities of low-priced factory goods. Major brands exploited China as the ultimate means of cutting costs, manufacturing their products in a land where wages are low and unions are banned.

As Chinese industry filled American homes with electronics and furniture, factory jobs lifted hundreds of millions of Chinese from poverty. China’s leaders used the proceeds of the export juggernaut to buy trillions of dollars of U.S. government bonds, keeping America’s borrowing costs low and allowing its spending bonanza to continue.

Here were two countries separated by the Pacific Ocean, one shaped by freewheeling capitalism, the other ruled by an authoritarian Communist Party, yet conjoined in an enterprise so consequential that the economic historian Niall Ferguson coined a term: [*Chimerica*](https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1468-2362.2007.00210.x), shorthand for their “symbiotic economic relationship.”

No one uses words like symbiotic today. In Washington, two political parties that agree on almost nothing are united in their depictions of China as a geopolitical rival and a mortal threat to middle-class security. In Beijing, leaders accuse the United States of plotting to deny China’s rightful place as a superpower. As each country seeks to diminish its dependence on the other, businesses worldwide are adapting their supply chains.

Chimerica has yielded to a trade war, with both sides extending [*steep tariffs*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/23/business/economy/china-trade-tariffs-biden.html) and curbs on critical exports — from [*advanced technology*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/28/business/economy/biden-administration-ai-chips-china.html) to [*minerals used to make electric vehicles*](https://www.reuters.com/markets/commodities/china-ups-critical-minerals-heat-with-graphite-controls-2023-10-24/#:~:text=The%20new%20measures%2C%20which%20prohibit,lubricants%20sectors%20have%20been%20rescinded.).

American companies are [*shifting factory production away from China*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/01/business/tech-companies-china.html) to less politically risky venues. Chinese businesses are focused on trade with allies and neighbors, while [*seeking domestic suppliers*](https://www.reuters.com/technology/china-rushes-swap-western-tech-with-domestic-options-us-cracks-down-2023-10-26/) for technology they are barred from buying from American companies.

Decades of American rhetoric that celebrated commerce as a wellspring of democratization in China have given way to resignation that the country’s current leadership — under President Xi Jinping — is intent on crushing dissent at home and projecting military might abroad.

For Chinese leaders, the once-prevailing faith that economic integration would undergird peaceful relations has been relinquished to a muscular form of nationalism that is challenging a global order still dominated by the United States.

“In a perfect political world, these are two countries that are made in heaven, exactly because they are complementary,” said Yasheng Huang, an economist at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology Sloan School of Management. “Essentially, these two countries kind of got married without knowing one another’s religions.”

But divorce is not a practical option. The United States and China — the world’s two largest economies — are intertwined. Chinese manufacturing has evolved from basic areas like footwear and apparel into advanced industries, including those central to efforts to limit the [*ravages of climate change*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/02/business/china-solar-energy-cop-28.html). The United States remains the paramount consumer marketplace. Even as geopolitical tensions fray their ties, these two countries still depend on each other, their respective roles not easily replaced.

Apple makes most of its iPhones in China, even as it has been [*shifting some production to India*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/11/07/business/apple-china-ymtc.html). A Chinese brand, [*CATL*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/12/22/business/china-catl-electric-car-batteries.html), is the world’s largest maker of electric car batteries, and Chinese companies dominate the [*refining of critical minerals like nickel*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/18/business/indonesia-nickel-sulawesi-china.html) used in such products. Chinese businesses make up more than three-fourths of the global supply chain for [*solar energy panels*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/01/business/economy/solar-xinjiang-china-report.html#:~:text=China's%20dominance%20over%20the%20solar,stage%20of%20the%20supply%20chain.).

China is a leading source of sales for major global brands, from [*Hollywood studios*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/11/18/world/asia/china-movies.html) and multinational automakers to manufacturers of construction equipment like Caterpillar and John Deere. [*Computer chip-makers*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/07/08/business/economy/us-china-chips-janet-yellen.html) like Intel, Micron and Qualcomm derive roughly two-thirds of their revenues from sales and licensing deals in China.

The powerful tug of those commercial entanglements will be in the background of planned discussions on Wednesday between [*Mr. Xi and President Biden*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/10/us/politics/biden-xi-meeting.html). The meeting, at a global conference in San Francisco, would be their first in a year.

It was never going to last.

Still, the prospect that their political schism will endure is altering global supply chains. In place of relying on China as the factory floor to the world, businesses are increasingly exploring ways to diversify. [*Mexico*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/01/01/business/mexico-china-us-trade.html) and [*Central America*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/24/business/columbia-sportswear-nearshoring-central-america.html) are gaining investment as companies that sell to North America set up factories there.

Some trade and national security experts celebrate these shifts as an overdue adjustment to decades of growth propelled by a perilous codependency between the United States and China.

Beijing’s purchases of American debt — though steadily declining since 2012 — kept borrowing costs low, but also encouraged investors to seek out greater returns. That led financial speculators to gorge on low-grade mortgages, delivering the global financial crisis of 2008, said Brad Setser, a former U.S. Treasury Department official and now an economist at the Council on Foreign Relations.

“It was certainly a form of interdependence,” Mr. Setser said. “But the notion that China saves and the U.S. spends, China lends and the U.S. borrows, and all is good because we are two sides of the same coin, we’re complementary, that was never sustainable.”

The pandemic brought home the risks of American reliance on Chinese factories to produce vital goods like masks and medical gowns, to say nothing of exercise bikes and smartphones, all of which became [*scarce*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/08/30/business/supply-chain-shortages.html). [*Chaos at ports*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/10/11/business/supply-chain-crisis-savannah-port.html) and increases in [*shipping prices*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/03/31/business/supply-chain-small-business.html) exposed the pitfalls of leaning on a single country on the other side of an ocean.

The Biden administration took the disruption and growing rivalry with China as impetus for an industrial policy aimed at encouraging American manufacturing and greater trade with allies — especially in strategically vital industries like computer chips.

Yet economists caution that even a marginal shifting of factory production from China will entail higher costs for consumers while [*slowing global economic growth*](https://www.imf.org/en/Blogs/Articles/2023/10/17/harm-from-de-risking-strategies-would-reverberate-beyond-china).

The share of American imports from China has dropped 5 percent since 2017. The goods imported from other countries are more expensive — 10 percent more in the case of Vietnam, and 3 percent higher from Mexico, according to [*research*](https://www.kansascityfed.org/documents/9747/JH_Paper_Alfaro.pdf) by Laura Alfaro at Harvard Business School and Davin Chor at Dartmouth’s Tuck School of Business.

Though wages have risen in China, no other country possesses the depth and breadth of manufacturing capacity.

That did not happen by accident.

How China came to bet on trade.

Beginning in the late 1970s under the leadership of Deng Xiaoping, the Chinese government sought to rescue the country from its state of poverty and isolation by unleashing a series of market reforms. National wealth would be amassed by making products and selling them to the world. Officials courted foreign investment while building out infrastructure — highways, ports, power plants.

The culmination came in 2001 when China joined the [*World Trade Organization*](https://www.nytimes.com/2001/11/11/world/world-trade-organization-admits-china-amid-doubts.html), winning global access for its exports in exchange for promising to open its own markets to foreign competitors.

American leaders championed China’s inclusion in the global trading system as far more than an effort to sell Big Macs and bulldozers to the world’s most populous nation.

“By joining the W.T.O., China is not simply agreeing to import more of our products,” [*President Bill Clinton declared*](https://archive.nytimes.com/www.nytimes.com/library/world/asia/030900clinton-china-text.html) on the eve of a key congressional vote in 2000. “It is agreeing to import one of democracy’s most cherished values: economic freedom.”

Yet beneath such high-minded rhetoric, American brands pushed for greater access to China for the simple reason that its factories could turn out goods more cheaply than anywhere else.

“China makes products that working families can afford,” said Clark A. Johnson, chief executive of the then-prominent chain Pier 1 Imports, as he represented the National Retail Federation during congressional testimony in 1998.

That formulation carried the day.

In the two decades after China became part of the W.T.O., American imports from China multiplied fivefold to $504 billion a year, according to census data.

Walmart, a company ruled by a zeal for low prices, opened a procurement center in the boomtown of Shenzhen. The company would gather hundreds of representatives from surrounding factories. They would sit in wooden chairs, sipping tea out of flimsy plastic cups, as they waited for hours to meet Walmart’s buyers. The company could demand rock-bottom prices, aided by the implicit threat that if one factory balked, another could be summoned from inside the same waiting room.

Two years after China entered the W.T.O., Walmart was spending $15 billion on Chinese-made products, a sum that encompassed almost one-eighth of all of China’s exports to the United States. A decade later, Walmart was importing $49 billion of Chinese goods into the United States, according to one [*analysis*](https://www.epi.org/publication/the-wal-mart-effect/).

Gaining from this trade was virtually anyone walking into a store. Chinese imports effectively boosted the spending power of the average American household about 2 percent, or $1,500, a year from 2000 and 2007, according to [*one study*](https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/usappblog/2019/08/14/despite-job-losses-lower-prices-from-trade-with-china-have-left-us-households-massively-better-off/). Chinese goods pressed down American prices 0.19 percent a year from 2004 to 2015, [*another study*](https://www.aeaweb.org/articles?id=10.1257/aeri.20180358) found.

The people left behind.

Those hurt by Chinese imports were concentrated and conspicuous. [*Once-thriving American factory towns*](https://www.nytimes.com/2016/09/29/business/economy/more-wealth-more-jobs-but-not-for-everyone-what-fuels-the-backlash-on-trade.html) sank into joblessness and despair, swapping restaurants and hardware stores for food banks and pawnshops.

From 1999 to 2011, a surge of low-priced Chinese imports eliminated nearly one million American manufacturing jobs and two million positions throughout the broader economy, according to a [*paper*](https://www.nber.org/papers/w21906) by the economists David H. Autor, David Dorn and Gordon H. Hanson.

The resulting anger helped deliver Donald J. Trump to the White House. During his 2016 campaign, he vowed to unleash a trade war.

“We can’t continue to allow China to rape our country,” Mr. Trump said at a rally. “It’s the greatest theft in the history of the world.”

Such inflammatory characterizations collided with the reality that low-priced goods from China were an antidote to the rising cost of living. Still, Mr. Trump’s accusations resonated in many ***working-class*** communities.

There was truth to the notion that Chinese industry was breaching the rules of international trade. The government lavished credit on the largest companies via loans from state-owned banks. Chinese industrial ventures could evade environmental and labor laws by sharing a cut of the profits with local officials. The Chinese market remained full of barriers to competition from foreign companies. Those that invested in China suffered brazen theft of intellectual property and rampant counterfeiting of their products.

Yet in many ways, the United States benefited from trade with China. Cheaper goods helped households cope with stagnating incomes while padding corporate coffers. The trouble was that most of the gains flowed to the shareholders of companies making products in China, while Washington failed to cushion those left behind.

A federal program called Trade Adjustment Assistance was supposed to compensate those rendered jobless by cheap imports, offering cash and training for other work. But Congress vastly underfunded the program. Fewer than one-third of those eligible for benefits in 2019 received help, according to an [*analysis of Department of Labor data*](https://www.iisd.org/articles/policy-analysis/trade-adjustment-assistance-help-workers).

In a triumph of simple political messaging over the complex accounting of trade, the public increasingly came to believe that Chinese industry was solely a predatory force — that Americans “were just taken advantage of,” said Jessica Chen Weiss, a China expert at Cornell University and a former State Department official in the Biden administration. “We didn’t do a good job of distributing the benefits, but they were nonetheless real.”

Part of the change in American sentiment appeared to reflect bitterness over how engagement with China failed to deliver the promised political transformation.

The Chinese government used its trade winnings to [*expand its military capabilities*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/19/world/asia/china-military-nuclear-weapons.html), while [*menacing neighbors*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/23/world/asia/china-sea-philippines-us.html) like the Philippines. It constructed an [*Orwellian surveillance apparatus*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/05/22/world/asia/china-surveillance-xinjiang.html), wielding it against the [*Uyghurs*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2019/04/04/world/asia/xinjiang-china-surveillance-prison.html), an ethnic minority in the western region of Xinjiang.

American trade with China also failed to promote Beijing’s promised market reforms. Instead, Mr. Xi’s government has amplified the power of state-owned companies, while cracking down on the private sector.

For decades, foreign automakers were forced to team up with state-owned car companies as a way to get a crack at the Chinese market. Now, a fresh crop of Chinese companies is harnessing the know-how gleaned from those ventures to take markets from [*foreign automakers*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/04/14/business/china-shanghai-auto-show.html).

In the end, the engagement policy led to the moment at hand: a messy and bewildering process of disengagement.

The Biden administration argues that, by reducing dependence on Chinese industry, the American economy will become more resilient and less vulnerable to disruption in the face of shocks and conflict.

But many factory goods made in countries like Vietnam contain large volumes of parts and materials produced in China, according to research by Caroline Freund, an international trade expert at the University of California, San Diego.

As Chimerica dissolves, the world could end up with greater complexity in its supply chains — more factories in more countries — yet still reliant on critical components made largely in just one.

“You still depend on China, it’s just that it takes more steps along the way,” said Mr. Setser of the Council on Foreign Relations. “There’s more places where things could go wrong.”

PHOTO: Shipping containers at P-President Biden with President Xi Jinping of China last year. The two leaders are scheduled to meet this week. (PHOTOGRAPH BY DOUG MILLS/THE NEW YORK TIMES); Shipping containers at Port of Los Angeles. The share of U.S. imports from China has dropped 5 percent since 2017. (PHOTOGRAPH (Y ADAM AMENGUAL FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES); A Walmart store in Zhuhai, China. At one point, almost one-eighth of all China exports to the U.S. were Walmart’s. (PHOTOGRAPH BY QILAI SHEN/BLOOMBERG) (B4)

**Load-Date:** November 14, 2023

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[***'A Dark Day for Maine': 18 Dead, Cities on Edge And New Scars to Heal***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69GR-J9D1-JBG3-6306-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Length:** 1781 words

**Byline:** By Jenna Russell, Amelia Nierenberg, Nicholas Bogel-Burroughs and Michael Levenson

**Body**

Businesses, schools and offices in the southern part of the state were closed on Thursday as the authorities sought a 40-year-old suspect.

The familiar rituals of a Wednesday night were playing out at Just-In-Time Recreation, a bowling alley in Lewiston, Maine, with 22 lanes of tenpin and a restaurant serving nachos and wings.

Parents and children were there for a children's bowling league. Regulars were midway through their weekly games, unwinding after work.

Then a man wearing a brown hooded sweatshirt and carrying a military-style semiautomatic rifle walked in.

Tricia Asselin, 53, was there with her sister, Bobbi Nichols, when they heard a bang -- and then another from the lanes reserved for children's night. As they sprinted for the exit, with Ms. Nichols in the lead, Ms. Asselin -- who worked at the alley and was there on a night off -- peeled off into the kitchen to grab her cellphone so she could call 911.

Ms. Nichols bolted through the door, thinking her sister was behind her. When she realized she wasn't, it was too late.

''Bobbi tried to get back. She said, 'my sister's in there, my sister's in there,''' their mother, Alicia LaChance, said by phone from her home in Okeechobee, Fla. Ms. Asselin had not been officially identified as among the victims on Thursday, but the family was expecting the worst. ''They told her nobody in there is alive anymore,'' her mother said.

Minutes after attacking the alley, the armed man showed up at Schemengees Bar & Grille, a few miles away, where people were playing cornhole and billiards, and opened fire again.

By the time he finished shooting, at the bar and the bowling alley, 18 people had been killed and 13 others had been injured, Gov. Janet Mills of Maine said.

Afterward, the gunman fled, forcing a major lockdown across the region as hundreds of law enforcement officials searched on Thursday for a suspect they identified as Robert R. Card, 40, of Bowdoin, Maine. The authorities warned that he should be considered armed and dangerous.

Around 7:30 p.m., officers were outside a home in Bowdoin owned by Mr. Card's family, as a helicopter circled overheard. ''We are not going away,'' one officer said over a loudspeaker. ''You need to come outside now.''

Hours later, law enforcement vehicles were seen leaving the property, and a spokeswoman for the State Police said officers had been serving search warrants and they did not find the suspect there. ''They will be back at it tomorrow,'' Shannon Moss, the spokeswoman, wrote in a text.

The rampage made Lewiston, a scrappy ***working-class*** city of nearly 40,000, the latest scene of America's mass shooting crisis. It also put the region on edge, as the police warned residents of Lewiston and several other nearby towns to stay home as they searched for Mr. Card.

''We believe this is someone that should not be approached,'' Col. William G. Ross of the Maine State Police said.

It was the deadliest mass shooting in the United States since May 2022, when a gunman killed 19 children and two teachers at an elementary school in Uvalde, Texas.

Although the details provided by the authorities were sparse, including whether any children were killed, the familiar outlines of the massacre -- a lone gunman snuffing out innocent lives with a powerful weapon -- pushed Americans and their leaders into familiar corners.

President Biden, who ordered flags at federal buildings to be flown at half-staff to honor the victims, urged Congress to ban assault weapons and high-capacity magazines and to enact universal background checks, among other steps.

''This is the very least we owe every American who will now bear the scars -- physical and mental -- of this latest attack,'' Mr. Biden said in a statement.

Representative Jared Golden, whose district includes Lewiston, had been one of the few House Democrats who opposed an assault-weapons ban, citing the strong tradition of gun ownership in the area. But at a news conference Thursday evening, he said he would now support a ban.

''The time has now come for me to take responsibility for this failure,'' he said, adding: ''I ask for forgiveness and support.''

When asked if she, too, would support a ban, Senator Susan Collins, Republican of Maine, said it was more important to ban ''very-high-capacity magazines,'' which let shooters fire more rounds without stopping to reload. She added: ''Certainly there's always more that can be done.''

But Republicans who adamantly defend the right to bear arms were not expected to back such measures. Representative Mike Johnson of Louisiana, the newly elected House speaker, did not mention any legislative response as he answered questions about the shooting.

''This is a dark time in America,'' Mr. Johnson, a Republican, told reporters in Washington. ''We have a lot of problems and we're really, really hopeful and prayerful. Prayer is appropriate at a time like this -- that the evil can end, and this senseless violence can stop.''

Ms. Mills called it ''a dark day for Maine.'' With 18 dead, the largely rural state recorded as many homicides in a few minutes on Wednesday night as it had in some recent years. The state had 29 homicides last year, 20 in 2021 and 18 in each of the previous two years.

''Our small state of just 1.3 million people has long been known as one of the safest states in the nation,'' Ms. Mills, a Democrat, said. ''This attack strikes at the very heart of who we are and the values we hold dear for this precious place we call home.''

As the police sought the suspect, government buildings, local school districts and universities in the southern part of the state were closed. Businesses across a vast swath of Maine, from beach towns close to the New Hampshire border to towns in the woods nearly 200 miles north, also shut down.

The streets of Lewiston were nearly deserted on Thursday morning. Nearby, at a middle school where families waited on Wednesday night for news of loved ones, only one car was parked in the lot. Bates College, in Lewiston, locked down its campus and postponed the inauguration of its new president, Garry Jenkins.

Residents said they were on guard as a growing contingent of local, state and federal officers swarmed the region.

After spending the night indoors, afraid to even open the curtains, Traelynn Smith, 19, and Serenity Moczara, 18, ventured out around lunchtime Thursday to get something to eat. Ms. Smith was carrying a knife in her pocket.

''Even talking about it gives me goose bumps,'' she said. ''I've never seen my state like this.''

Colonel Ross said on Thursday that a vehicle found at a boat landing in Lisbon, Maine, about eight miles from Lewiston, had been connected to Mr. Card. He gave no other details about possible developments in the manhunt.

Details of Mr. Card's life were scarce on Thursday. Military officials said that he was a sergeant first class in the Army Reserve, assigned to the 3rd Battalion, 304th Infantry Regiment in Saco, Maine, and had enlisted in 2002. He had no combat deployments and served as a petroleum supply specialist, shipping and storing vehicle and aircraft fuel.

Investigators were looking into a run-in Mr. Card had with officials during a recent visit to Camp Smith, a National Guard training facility not far from West Point in New York, a senior law enforcement official said on condition on anonymity because the official was not authorized to discuss the incident. The official said that Mr. Card was later evaluated at a mental health facility.

The first 911 call reporting gunfire at the bowling alley on Wednesday came in at 6:56 p.m., Colonel Ross said.

Chad Vincent was in the fifth frame of his weekly game when he heard what sounded ''like a table crashing on the floor or something.'' There were 30 to 50 bowlers in the alley, he said, in addition to about 26 people from his league.

''Nobody really screamed,'' Mr. Vincent said. ''Nobody knew what it was.''

But about five seconds later, he heard another bang and one of his bowling partners shouted, '''Hey, that's a gun! That's gunshots!'''

Mr. Vincent, 45, ran toward a back exit and dialed 911.

He and other bowlers from his league ran through the woods to an Italian restaurant and locked themselves inside until loved ones came to pick them up.

Mr. Vincent said they were in disbelief.

''We're going: This is Maine,'' he said. ''This is not happening. This stuff doesn't happen in Maine. Everybody's nice. We usually don't have problems.''

About 12 minutes after the 911 calls reporting gunfire at the bowling alley, the police received calls that a gunman was inside Schemengees Bar & Grille.

Bryan MacFarlane, 41, was part of a gathering of deaf people there when the shooting started, his mother, Janette Randazzo, said. On Thursday, two police officers came to her home to confirm her worst fears: that her son was dead.

''I have a picture in my head of my kid lying there with gunshot wounds somewhere on the body,'' she said. ''It's traumatic to me just imagining it.''

Joseph Walker, 57, a manager at the bar, was also fatally shot, according to his father, Leroy Walker Sr., 74, a city councilor in Auburn, Maine.

Mr. Walker said the police had told his son's wife that the younger Mr. Walker ''died a hero'' because he picked up a nearby butcher's knife ''and tried to go at the gunman.''

''My Joey will be missed by thousands,'' Mr. Walker said on Thursday, as he sat outside his apartment, crying. Mr. Walker said he did not feel angry toward the man who killed his son.

''There's so much hate in this world, and people who have a sickness or a mind that's a little off tilt, they go to hate,'' he said. ''If he's sick in the head, I can't hold anything against him.''

Kristy Strout said Thursday afternoon that she had not heard from her husband, Arthur, since about a half-hour before the shooting at the bar. He had been playing pool with friends in preparation for a game he had on Thursday, Ms. Strout said.

She thinks one of his teammates was shot, but she had not received any news or information from the authorities. She said she was waiting for the medical examiner to tell her more.

''I have three kids. I want closure,'' she said. ''We don't want to sit here and wonder.''

Colbi Edmonds, Billy Witz, Patricia Mazzei, Gaya Gupta, Adeel Hassan, Katie Benner, Glenn Thrush, Eduardo Medina and Erica L. Green contributed reporting. Susan C. Beachy and Kirsten Noyes contributed research.Colbi Edmonds, Billy Witz, Patricia Mazzei, Gaya Gupta, Adeel Hassan, Katie Benner, Glenn Thrush, Eduardo Medina and Erica L. Green contributed reporting. Susan C. Beachy and Kirsten Noyes contributed research.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/26/us/maine-lewiston-mass-shooting.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/26/us/maine-lewiston-mass-shooting.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Outside a reunification center set up in Auburn, Maine, after Wednesday night's shooting in the nearby city of Lewiston. (PHOTOGRAPH BY DEREK DAVIS/PORTLAND PRESS HERALD, VIA ASSOCIATED PRESS) (A1)

Law enforcement officers outside Schemengees Bar & Grille the morning after a gunman opened fire on people there and at a bowling alley in Lewiston, Maine. (PHOTOGRAPH BY SOPHIE PARK FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

A police roadblock in Lisbon, Maine. Schools and businesses were shut down as officers across the region searched for the suspect. (PHOTOGRAPH BY ROBERT F. BUKATY/ASSOCIATED PRESS)

The police identified Robert R. Card, 40, of Bowdoin, Maine, as a person of interest. (PHOTOGRAPH BY LEWISTON MAINE POLICE DEPARTMENT, VIA ASSOCIATED PRESS)

Miia Zellner, an elementary school art teacher, posting hearts around Lewiston on Thursday.

Maine officials, including Gov. Janet Mills, addressing the news media at City Hall in Lewiston. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY JOHN TULLY FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A22)

Gov. Greg Abbott, center, at a news conference this year, has said he would support a Texas bill to strengthen border security. (PHOTOGRAPH BY ERIC GAY/ASSOCIATED PRESS)

A Texas officer patrolled the banks of the Rio Grande in May. A proposal would allow local police agencies to arrest and jail migrants. (PHOTOGRAPH BY ALFREDO ESTRELLA/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE -- GETTY IMAGES) (A23) This article appeared in print on page A1, A22, A23.

**Load-Date:** October 27, 2023

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[***America’s Political Turmoil***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69B2-V9X1-JBG3-6242-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** BRIEFING

**Length:** 1813 words

**Byline:** David Leonhardt

**Highlight:** A survey of the chaos across the U.S. political system.

**Body**

A survey of the chaos across the U.S. political system.

Imagine if you were a foreign leader surveying the political chaos in the United States:

* For the first time in history, a party has just fired its own speaker of the House in the middle of a term.
* In the Senate, one of the two party leaders, who’s 81 years old, has twice recently frozen in public, unable to speak.
* A Supreme Court justice has allowed wealthy political donors to finance a lavish lifestyle for him and his wife (and that same justice’s wife urged officials to overturn the 2020 presidential election result based on lies).
* A likely nominee in the upcoming presidential election is facing four criminal trials and regularly speaks in apocalyptic terms about the country’s future.
* That nominee is essentially tied in the polls with an 80-year-old president who many voters worry is too old to serve a second term.

If you were an ally of the U.S., you’d have to be worried. If you were an enemy, you’d have to be pleased.

“To many watching at home and abroad, the American way no longer seems to offer a case study in effective representative democracy,” [*Peter Baker of The Times writes*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/05/us/politics/speaker-mccarthy-biden-democracy.html). “Instead, it has become an example of disarray and discord, one that rewards extremism, challenges norms and threatens to divide a polarized country even further.”

Fractured and extreme

Many factors have contributed to this turmoil. Decades of stagnant living standards have caused voter frustration. Social media, along with the rise of a cable television network [*willing to promote falsehoods*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/04/06/magazine/fox-dominion-jan-6.html), has inflamed discourse. The decline of institutions — churches, labor unions, once-dominant local employers — has left Americans feeling unmoored. And aging political leaders have failed to groom strong successors.

But the single largest source of the chaos is the Republican Party.

I don’t say that lightly. Readers of this newsletter know that I think there is plenty of evidence that the Democratic Party also has problems. It has struggled in recent years to come up with effective policies on [*Covid school closures*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/05/briefing/covid-school-absence.html), [*illegal immigration*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/07/11/briefing/global-migration.html) and several other issues. Many ***working-class*** voters consider the party to be disdainful of them, which helps explain why its longtime troubles with white voters have recently spread [*to voters of color*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/15/upshot/democrats-biden-hispanic-black-voters.html).

Still, every major political party has weaknesses. Despite theirs, the Democrats remain a functional party by almost any standard. Their moderate and progressive factions frequently work together. President Biden, like Barack Obama before him, has passed a long list of substantive legislation. Congressional Democrats have remained impressively united for two decades.

The Republican Party, by contrast, is both fractured and increasingly extreme. Tens of millions of Republican voters have embraced beliefs that are simply wrong: that Obama was born in Kenya, that Donald Trump was cheated out of re-election, that Covid vaccines don’t work, that human beings aren’t causing climate change. A crowd of Republican-aligned protesters violently attacked the Capitol in 2021, assaulting police officers and causing several deaths. Prominent Republican politicians, including Trump, have spoken positively about that attack and more generally about political violence.

Kevin McCarthy’s downfall as speaker is the latest sign of the party’s drift toward radicalism. He lost his job because a group of hard-right House members was furious with him for conducting policy negotiations that are inherent to democratic governance. “The ouster captures the degraded state of the Republican Party in this era of rage,” wrote The Wall Street Journal editorial board, a reliable voice of conservatism.

‘The greatest challenge’

When my colleagues and I asked democracy experts this week how to make sense of the country’s political turmoil, they emphasized that the central explanation was the Republican Party:

* “The democratic system needs two viable parties,” Sarah Binder, a political scientist at George Washington University, said. “You need a set of leaders on both sides that have the confidence of their followers and have some understanding of the rules of the road.”

1. “In my lifetime, this is the greatest challenge that I’ve seen coming at us,” said Joseph Ellis, a Pulitzer Prize-winning historian.
2. Daniel Ziblatt, a co-author of the recent book “Tyranny of the Minority,” told me that the structure of the American political system was partly to blame: The Electoral College, the Senate and gerrymandering have allowed Republicans to wield power without appealing to most Americans. “Our constitution in this way is one of several factors radicalizing the Republican Party, leading it to turn away from democracy itself,” Ziblatt said.
3. “I think the country’s political class is aging and underperforming in many ways — I’m a longtime critic of gerontocracy. But that’s a second-order problem,” Brendan Nyhan of Dartmouth College said. “The first-order problems by far are the state of the G.O.P. and the electoral rules and institutions that make the threat it poses so significant.”

Even with all these problems, there are reasons for optimism. The Republican caucus in the Senate is more functional than in the House. Federal judges and election officials, from both parties, blocked Trump’s efforts to overturn the 2020 election. Candidates who endorsed his lies fared poorly in the 2022 midterms. It’s possible that a more functional Republican Party, committed to both conservatism and American democracy, will emerge in coming years.

But it is not assured. “Events of recent weeks have reminded us that the authoritarian threat isn’t going away,” Nyhan said.

THE LATEST NEWS

Congress

* Representatives Jim Jordan and Steve Scalise [*are running against each other*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/04/us/politics/house-speaker-mccarthy.html) for House speaker.

1. Nancy Pelosi was [*kicked out of her bonus office*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/04/us/politics/pelosi-hideaway-office-capitol.html) in the Capitol. The decision was supposedly made by McCarthy, who is expected to move into the office next week.
2. Biden [*expressed concern*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2023/10/05/world/russia-ukraine-news/the-president-says-aid-could-be-funded-by-another-means-if-the-houses-tumult-endures?smid=url-share) that aid to Ukraine could be disrupted by the chaos over the House speakership.
3. Steve Bannon’s podcast has [*stoked the right-wing anger*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/04/us/politics/bannon-republicans-gaetz-mace.html) that unseated McCarthy.

More on Politics

* The Biden administration will [*forgive additional student debt*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/04/us/politics/biden-student-loans.html), this time for teachers, firefighters and people with disabilities.

1. Federal prosecutors are looking at [*Rudy Giuliani’s drinking habits*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/04/us/politics/rudy-giuliani-drinking.html) as part of Trump’s 2020 election interference case.
2. Ron DeSantis’s campaign announced that it had raised $15 million in the past three months. Hours later, the Trump campaign said it [*raised $46 million*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/04/us/politics/trump-campaign-fund-raising-desantis.html).
3. Senator Robert Menendez was accused of [*receiving a $60,000 Mercedes convertible*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/04/nyregion/nadine-menendez-mercedes-death.html) for his partner as a bribe. She damaged her previous car in a crash that killed a man.
4. Commander, Biden’s [*2-year-old German shepherd*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/04/us/politics/bidens-commander-dog-biting.html), is no longer living at the White House after a series of biting incidents involving staff.

International

* Meet the 8-year-old boy in Mongolia who was identified as the [*latest incarnation of a spiritual leader*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/04/world/asia/mongolia-tibetan-buddhism-bogd.html) in Tibetan Buddhism.

1. A teenage girl in Iran is [*in a coma*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/05/world/middleeast/iran-armita-geravand.html) after she boarded a train with her hair uncovered. The government hasn’t released video, but some accuse the country’s morality police of hurting her.
2. Kenya is sending police officers to deal with gang violence in Haiti. At home, people [*accuse the officers of brutality*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/04/world/africa/kenya-police-haiti.html).
3. Volodymyr Zelensky hasn’t ruled out the possibility of [*a presidential election in Ukraine*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/05/world/europe/ukraine-zelensky-elections-war.html) next year.

Climate

* June, July, August and September [*broke heat records*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/05/us/summer-climate-change.html). The soaring temperatures are changing Americans’ relationship to summer.

1. People who work outside have few legal protections [*against the heat*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/05/health/heat-exposure-workers-osha.html).
2. While fall is off to a late start, [*chillier air is expected to arrive*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/04/us/weather-heat-cold-temperatures.html) in much of the U.S. this weekend.

Labor

* Workers at the health care provider Kaiser Permanente [*began a three-day strike*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/04/health/kaiser-permanente-strike-health-care.html), hoping to call attention to staffing shortages.

1. “There’s a billionaire class, and there’s the rest of us”: [*Read a profile of Shawn Fain*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/05/business/economy/shawn-fain-uaw-profile.html), the leader of the striking autoworkers.

Other Big Stories

* Mayor Eric Adams asked a judge to suspend New York City’s obligation to [*provide housing for thousands of migrants*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/04/nyregion/eric-adams-right-to-shelter-migrant-crisis.html).

1. A shooting outside a Massachusetts market critically [*injured a pregnant woman*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/04/us/holyoke-massachusetts-shooting-pregnant-woman.html) on a passing bus. Her baby died.
2. The Maryland Supreme Court is set to hear arguments today in [*the case of Adnan Syed*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/04/us/adnan-syed-serial-supreme-court-maryland.html), the subject of the podcast “Serial.”

Opinions

Americans can be forgiven for tuning out Trump, but we should [*pay attention to his escalating calls for violence*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/05/opinion/trump-violent-language.html), Alex Kingsbury says.

Here are columns by Charles Blow on [*Trump and McCarthy*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/04/opinion/trump-kevin-mccarthy.html) and Pamela Paul on [*the concept of antiracism*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/05/opinion/ibram-x-kendi-racism.html).

MORNING READS

Dogs have their day: A [*beloved New York Halloween dog parade*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/04/nyregion/tompkins-square-halloween-dog-parade-saved.html) was almost canceled. Then the mayor’s office stepped in.

Detective work: A lucky break and [*old-fashioned police work*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/04/nyregion/charlotte-sena-missing-ny.html) led to the rescue of a missing 9-year-old in New York.

Travel 101: Make sure you [*don’t bring bedbugs home from vacation*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/04/travel/bedbugs-paris-vacation.html) (especially if you go to Paris).

Kenergy sanctions: Warner Bros. no longer releases films in Russia. But theaters have found a way to [*screen “Barbie.”*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/04/world/europe/barbie-russia-hollywood-ukraine-war.html)

Lives Lived: James Jorden was an influential writer and editor who fused high culture and punk aesthetics in his opera zine-turned-website Parterre Box. [*He died at 69*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/04/arts/music/james-jorden-dead.html).

SPORTS

M.L.B.: In a surprise result, the Texas Rangers swept the Tampa Bay Rays in the Wild Card Series, [*winning 7-1*](https://theathletic.com/4930945/2023/10/04/rangers-rays-al-wild-card-sweep/).

Bowling and batting: The [*Cricket World Cup starts today*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/03/sports/cricket/cricket-world-cup-explained.html) and will be played in 10 locations across India.

Soccer: The 2030 World Cup will take place across [*three continents*](https://theathletic.com/4929110/2023/10/04/world-cup-2030-hosts-morocco-spain-portugal/), as part of the celebration of the tournament’s 100th anniversary.

ARTS AND IDEAS

Geniuses: Patrick Makuakane, a hula choreographer in San Francisco. María Magdalena Campos-Pons, a multimedia artist in Nashville. Courtney Bryan, a composer in New Orleans. They are among this year’s class of MacArthur Fellows — commonly known as the “genius” awards — which reward innovators in arts, science and more with an $800,000 grant.

[*See the full list of winners*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/04/arts/macarthur-award-genius-grants.html), which also includes a U.S. poet laureate, a hydroclimatologist and a democracy advocate.

More on culture

* Prosecutors are mapping out [*a detailed narrative*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/05/arts/tupac-murder-testimony-keefe-d.html) of the events that led to Tupac Shakur’s death.

1. Saturday Night Live announced [*it will return*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/04/arts/television/snl-return-pete-davidson.html) for the first time since the writers’ strike on Oct. 14, with Pete Davidson as host.

THE MORNING RECOMMENDS …

Make a Hiroshima-style Japanese [*cabbage pancake*](https://cooking.nytimes.com/recipes/1024688-hiroshima-style-okonomiyaki).

Elevate your morning coffee with [*these mugs*](https://www.nytimes.com/wirecutter/reviews/our-staffs-favorite-mugs/).

Go for a hike in [*comfortable boots*](https://www.nytimes.com/wirecutter/reviews/best-hiking-boots/).

GAMES

Here is [*today’s Spelling Bee*](https://www.nytimes.com/puzzles/spelling-bee). Yesterday’s pangrams were arthropod and hardtop.

And here are [*today’s Mini Crossword*](https://www.nytimes.com/crosswords/game/mini), [*Wordle*](https://www.nytimes.com/games/wordle/index.html), [*Sudoku*](https://www.nytimes.com/puzzles/sudoku) and [*Connections*](https://www.nytimes.com/games/connections).

Thanks for spending part of your morning with The Times. See you tomorrow. — David

[*Sign up here to get this newsletter in your inbox*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing). Reach our team at [*themorning@nytimes.com*](mailto:themorning@nytimes.com).

PHOTO: Matt Gaetz at the Capitol after McCarthy was removed as Speaker of the House. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Kent Nishimura for The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** October 5, 2023

**End of Document**



[***Let's Revisit the Social Media Moments Of 2023 You Were Hoping to Forget***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69YY-WX21-JBG3-653Y-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** Section D; Column 0; Style Desk; Pg. 4

**Length:** 3271 words

**Byline:** By Madison Malone Kircher

**Body**

You may have forgotten -- or wanted to forget -- what happened on the internet in 2023. We're here to refresh your memory.

Algorithms are getting good, alarmingly so, at feeding you content targeted to your weird and wonderful and even secret interests. Still, a lot of interesting stories end up falling outside our digital castle walls. This list is an attempt to rectify that, revisiting the people, trends, feuds and frenzies that took off on social media platforms in 2023 but might not have broken into your personal World Wide Web.

Did you see the olive oil executive trying to start beef with another olive oil executive on LinkedIn? How about the woman who gets paid thousands of dollars by pretending to be a video game character? Or the young Texan who is facing prison time after his lavish wedding blew up on TikTok? We've got you covered.

The Inexplicable

Hail, Caesar?

Find a man, any man, and ask him how often he thinks about the Roman Empire. According to TikTok, the answer is at least once a day. Viral videos on the platform inspired a ''Saturday Night Live'' sketch in November. ''The Roman Empire, Ancient Rome,'' rapped the episode's guest host, Jason Momoa. ''Five times a day, it pops into my dome.''

Don't Call It a Snack

Girl Dinner was a big summertime TikTok trend. A number of people -- mostly young women, as the name implies -- showed off nicely arranged plates comprising a bit of this (cheese), a bit of that (bread, maybe) and a few other things (pickle spear, nuts, salami slice). Proponents said the trend freed them from the tyranny of traditional dinner. Detractors claimed it glorified eating disorders.

A Yassified Barney

After Barney the purple dinosaur got a makeover in February, baffled fans filled the internet with talk of the character's new teeth, brighter purple skin, larger eyes and perhaps even a bit of rhinoplasty. (Make that dinoplasty. I'll be here all article.)

The Return of Joe Cool

The ''Peanuts'' dog created by Charles M. Schulz found a new generation of fans this year. In April, the American Red Cross was inundated with young people looking to donate blood in exchange for a limited-edition Snoopy T-shirt. In October, The Atlantic labeled the cartoon beagle ''The Hero Gen Z Needs.''

A Broadway-Style Rap. What Could Go Wrong?

Ariana DeBose's opening number at the British Academy Film Awards in February quickly became a meme. Was it bizarre? Yes. Could you look away? Absolutely not. Ms. DeBose, a member of the original ''Hamilton'' cast, brought the earnest enthusiasm of a Broadway star to a rap that included the lines ''Angela Bassett did the thing / Viola Davis, my Woman King.'' Social media loved it. And hated it.

An Underground Star

Sabrina Bahsoon, a law school graduate in her early twenties, racked up millions of online views this year by filming herself lip-syncing in the London Underground amid unsuspecting commuters. Tube Girl, as she was known, inspired numerous copycats.

The Edible

Gimme Five Margaritas!

On the campus of Louisiana State University in May, Cindy Smock, a 65-year-old evangelical preacher, tried to sell students on the benefits of abstinence by listing the sexual acts that women will supposedly perform after drinking certain numbers of margaritas. Shortly after a video of Sister Cindy's sermon hit social media, her words inspired a banger of a tune (known as ''Gimme One Margarita'') that became TikTok's song of the summer.

Mm, Mm, Good?

The writer and comedian Annie Rauwerda stirred up a big reaction on the internet -- and in her Brooklyn neighborhood -- when she cooked a pot of vegan stew for over a month this summer. Her concoction was based on the ''perpetual stews'' of culinary lore, and Ms. Rauwerda brought it to a playground each week for anyone who wanted a taste. As it bubbled and steamed in the pot, she encouraged people to toss in their own ingredients, so that it never tasted the same way twice.

The Milkshake of Death

In June, McDonald's added something to its menu: the Grimace Shake, named in honor of the purple bloblike creature who has long been a foil to the chain's signature clown. The beverage soon gave rise to a TikTok trend: In video after video, creators started out by pretending to give a positive review of the shake -- only to end up dead in a pool of purple goo. Did McDonald's mind? Nope. ''This is free advertising,'' said Jonah Berger, a marketing professor at the University of Pennsylvania.

Atlanta Gets Keith Lee'd

Keith Lee, a food obsessive with more than 15 million TikTok followers, has posted influential reviews of restaurants in Chicago, Detroit and Los Angeles. But he might have had his biggest effect during a visit to Atlanta in the fall, when he gave voice to the gripes of local restaurant-goers by dragging establishments that charged extra for butter, syrup and hot sauce. The Atlanta Journal-Constitution noted Mr. Lee's power over the city's dining scene in a story headlined ''Move over, Michelin, Atlanta just got Keith Lee'd.''

The Technically Edible

A Viral Campus Concoction

Social media helped spread the popularity of a campus drink, BORG, an acronym for ''blackout rage gallon.'' In viral TikTok videos, student mixologists filled plastic gallon jugs with water, alcohol, sweet flavorings and a hangover remedy, like Pedialyte. ''You don't taste any of the liquor, which is the great part,'' one college student said. Officials were less pleased by the trend. In March, the Amherst Fire Department in Amherst, Mass., reported 28 requests for ambulance transports during a BORG-fueled party at the University of Massachusetts Amherst.

The Pesto Prompt

Susi Vidal, a TikTok creator in Arizona, posted a video in September about how to make homemade pesto. ''Call me crazy if you want,'' she says at the start, ''but I've never liked store-bought pesto.'' With that, Ms. Vidal inspired a wave of TikTok users to repost the opening of her video as the intro to much crazier confessional stories of their own about ghosts, bad dates and stalkers.

Krispy Meme

It was an image that launched a thousand Halloween costumes: Justin Bieber and his wife, Hailey, at a Krispy Kreme counter. In the photo, the celebrity couple appears to be dressed for wildly different functions, with perhaps neither appropriately attired for ordering and eating fresh doughnuts. Ms. Bieber is wearing a strapless red minidress and red heels; Mr. Bieber is outfitted in gray shorts, yellow Crocs and a pink baseball cap perched atop a gray hood. The picture was meant to promote Ms. Bieber's cosmetics line -- and it had the desired effect on the social media hive mind.

Ice Cream So Good

The TikTok creator PinkyDoll became a social media celebrity in July because of the livestreams and videos in which she played blank-eyed video game characters, the kind who says inane things like ''Mmm, ice cream so good,'' which became a catchphrase. Though she was the subject of some online mockery, PinkyDoll made thousands of dollars from her online work.

The Audible

Big on Social

''Hello, Christ? I'm 'bout to sin again.'' That's a line from ''You Wish,'' a song by the Los Angeles rap duo Flyana Boss that was huge on social media this summer. In the fall, a snippet of the song ''Water,'' by the South African singer Tyla, swept the internet, thanks, in part, to the TikTok dance challenge that went with it. (In case you had finally gotten that one out of your head, its refrain goes: ''Make me sweat/ Make me hotter/ Make me lose my breath / Make me water.'') ''Water'' was followed by another TikTok earworm, ''It Girl,'' by Aliyah Bah, whose multilayered fashion sense, known as Aliyahcore, trended online earlier in the year.

Cute and Cuter

Social media also fueled the rise of a number of novelty songs. A ditty created by pet owners to soothe anxious dog in elevators became an anthem for anxious humans everywhere. Sing it with me: ''She's so brave / She's well behaved / She is not afraid!'' A fiendishly catchy song from the children's puppet show ''Nanalan''' introduced millions of people to Mona and the program's other super-cute characters. ''Who's that wonderful girl?'' the ''Nanalan''' song goes. ''Could she be any cuter?''

Spoofs Become Hits

''Planet of the Bass,'' a parody of a '90s Eurodance track, had a moment in August. Some internet users were amused, and others were horrified, by its kooky music video and baffling lyrics (''Women are my favorite guy''). Shout out DJ Crazy Times, also known as Kyle Gordon, a comedian in Brooklyn. In a similar vein, DJ Mandy, a 19-year-old student in California, made ripples this year as the Internet's most inept disc jockey. Social media users couldn't resist sharing videos that showed her making awkward mash-ups and beat drops, complete with a nonsensical transition from Flo Rida to Taylor Swift.

The Quiet Game

''Look around, everybody on mute,'' Beyoncé sang each night of her ''Renaissance'' tour. That line, from the song ''Energy,'' gave rise to a social media challenge wherein audiences competed to see which crowd could be the most hushed. If you couldn't get tickets, the best seat in the house was a TikTok livestream.

The Nuptial

Emily Getting Married

Emily Mariko burst onto the viral scene in 2021 thanks to her simple recipe for salmon leftovers. In June, her California wedding became the talk of TikTok. People couldn't get enough of the details, from the brown bridesmaids dresses to Ms. Mariko's many outfit changes. It is unclear if salmon was served.

Sofia, Also Getting Married

This ''quiet luxury'' ceremony was anything but quiet. Social media users could not stop talking about the wedding of Sofia Richie Grainge, the daughter of Lionel Richie, to Elliot Grainge, a music executive. The soft, subtle makeup! The looks! The slicked-back bun! The South of France backdrop! Months after the April event, TikTok creators were still borrowing from Ms. Richie Grainge's wedding-day style.

TikTok's Wedding Fail

Lunden Stallings and Olivia Bennett built a huge following on TikTok, partly because of their country-club fashion sense. And so their October ceremony was highly anticipated by fans, who dubbed it TikTok's royal wedding. The excitement, however, was short-lived. Days after the event, old tweets resurfaced in which one of the brides had repeatedly used a racial slur. The couple issued an apology and added an ''anti-racist resources'' page to their website, but the damage was done.

There Goes the Groom

Jacob LaGrone and Madelaine Brockway, a wealthy young couple from Texas, caused an online stir thanks to their lavish wedding, a five-day affair that included stops at the Versailles, the Paris Opera house and a reception headlined by Adam Levine of Maroon 5. Ms. Brockway posted several wedding videos on TikTok, all of which went viral and caused commenters to ask, Who are these people? The videos were deleted a few days after the ceremony, when surprising facts emerged about the groom. Namely, that he had fired a gun at police officers from Westworth Village and Westover Hills, Texas, who were trying to serve him with an indictment in March. Mr. LaGrone is now facing a potential life sentence.

The Theatrical

An Oily Fight

A niche drama in the world of olive oil startups went online in April. The chief executive and co-founder of Graza logged on to LinkedIn -- a site not known as a forum for beefs -- to accuse another olive oil company of stealing his idea. The idea being a squeeze bottle.

Mascara Fraud?

Mikayla Nogueira, a beauty influencer known for her Boston accent, caused a bit of an online ruckus in January after posting an ad for L'Oreal Telescopic Life mascara. In the video, Ms. Nogueira appears to be wearing false eyelashes, rather than the product she was promoting. (Someone fibbed on the internet? For money? Say it ain't so!)

To Catch a Tabi Thief

Alex Dougé, a social media coordinator in New York, met a man named Josh on Tinder and brought him back to her apartment. The next morning she discovered that her Tabi Mary-Janes, a pricey shoe from the brand Margiela, were missing. After Ms. Dougé recapped the saga on TikTok, internet sleuths quickly located the man. It turned out that he had indeed stolen the prize shoes -- and given them to his girlfriend! Oh, the drama! Ms. Dougé eventually got her Tabis back, and social media welcomed a new addition to the roster of awful internet men.

Riverboat Brawl

A brawl on the Alabama riverfront made national news after a video of the incident went viral in August. The fight came about after five white boaters attacked a Black riverboat captain, who had instructed them to dock their pontoon elsewhere. A Black bystander joined the melee on the captain's behalf, wielding a folding chair as a weapon. In the brawl's aftermath, the humble folding chair became a symbol of resistance.

Viral Trial

Gwyneth Paltrow on trial for an accident on the slopes of the Deer Valley Resort in Utah was the internet gift that kept on giving. Social media platforms were blanketed with memes about the proceedings in March as jurors heard testimony on who was to blame for the collision -- the Oscar-winning actress or the retired optometrist who had sued her for more than $300,000. Online highlights included Ms. Paltrow's answer to the question of the ''losses'' she had suffered because of the incident. ''Well,'' she said, ''we lost half a day of skiing.'' The jury found her Gwynocent.

Apartment Madness

Emma Ganzarain, a resource management employee in Oslo, just wanted to share photos of her redecorated apartment with her TikTok followers. Before she moved in, she explained, her boyfriend had lived there by himself, and she believed that she had brought some order to the place. Outraged commenters did not agree, accusing Ms. Ganzarain of turning a homey apartment into a sad beige nightmare.

The Sartorial

These Boots Were Not Made For Walking

Fashion or marketing ploy? Cartoonish red boots were the talk of TikTok for a moment in February. The bloated footwear was designed by MSCHF, a New York collective with a knack for designing clothes and household goods that send the internet into a frenzy.

Law Roach (Kinda) Retires

Law Roach, an award-winning stylist for celebrities including Anne Hathaway and Celine Dion, created some confusion among the more fashion-conscious quarters of social media in March, when he abruptly announced that he was retiring, only to walk days later alongside Naomi Campbell in a runway show. He later clarified that he was retiring only from styling.

The Bed Bugs of Paris

What's French for schadenfreude? Amid the glam of Paris fashion week, a story crawled into the headlines. Bedbugs! Everywhere! Videos on social media raised the alarm by showing the little creatures scampering through the Paris Métro.

Platform as Runway

Kristina Avakyan, a New York resident, gained popularity on TikTok for videos in which she modeled eccentric outfits on subway platforms. She faced criticism after an interview with The Cut, in which she said that people in Harlem and Queens don't understand her fashion sense.

Endless A.I. Portraits

Throughout the year, A.I. generators spat out an images of people looking like modified, slightly shinier versions of themselves (with, occasionally, an extra finger or two). The A.I. yearbook photo generator was particularly popular on Instagram. But viewers beware! Pope Francis was not papped walking around in a puffy white Balenciaga coat. That was just some fairly convincing A.I. art.

The Mostly Delightful

A Hairbrush Microphone Masterpiece

The Mattison twins, a pair of TikTok creators, performed a funny lip-sync cover of Lady A's ''Need You Now,'' singing into a hair brush suspended from the ceiling. (This hairbrush mic is one of the comedy duo's go-to props.) The low-quality video, posted in February, recalled the simpler comedy of the Vine era (2013-2017, R.I.P.).

Dances With Knives

An Instagram video of Britney Spears dancing in her home wielding two large knives grabbed the attention of viewers in September. Some concerned fans reported the video to the police, to Ms. Spears's chagrin. ''So unacceptable for cops to listen to random fans and come in to my home unwarranted,'' she wrote on Instagram. ''I've been bullied in my home for so long now ... ITS ENOUGH!'' She later added that the knives were props.

So Unfair

In perhaps the most perfect nepo baby behavior of all time, Romy Mars, the teenage daughter of the director Sofia Coppola and the singer Thomas Mars, was grounded for (wait for it) trying to charter a helicopter from New York to Maryland using her father's credit card. ''I wanted to have dinner with my camp friend.'' Ms. Mars said in a TikTok. She added that her parents had rules against her using social media.

The Streamable

A Woman of the People

In a scene from ''Beckham,'' the Netflix documentary series about David Beckham, his wife, Victoria Beckham, is seen telling the camera that she grew up ''very ***working class***.'' At that moment, her husband pokes his head into the room to ask what kind of car her father drove her to school in. The former Spice Girl tries to duck the question before finally answering, ''In the '80s, my dad had a Rolls-Royce.'' After the clip went viral, Ms. Beckham embraced it, posting it on her own TikTok account.

Feud? What Feud?

The ''Sex and the City'' cast member Kim Cattrall made a brief cameo in season two of the show's reboot, ''And Just Like That ...'' She was not in the same frame as any of the other members of the famous foursome, and if you blinked you'd have missed her. But, still, there she was. Our Samantha. Her minutes-long appearance inspired so many memes, tweets and TikToks you might have thought she was there all along.

The Debatable

Ozempic Mania

Weight loss drugs made their way to the online set this year, with some influencers casting stigma aside and unabashedly proclaiming their Ozempic use.

Djerf Dupe Drama

Matilda Djerf, a popular Swedish influencer and a founder of the fashion brand Djerf Avenue, irked fans when her team started reporting TikTok videos that mentioned places to purchase dupes -- inexpensive copies -- of her pricey designs.

Rocky Hockey Romance

Drama rippled through a niche literary community -- fans of hockey romance novels -- when Felicia Wennberg, the wife of the N.H.L. player Alex Wennberg, said that certain book lovers had become ''predatory and exploiting'' in their comments about her husband.

Bud Light Backlash

In April, the transgender influencer Dylan Mulvaney partnered with Bud Light for a video promoting the brand. The online ad featuring Ms. Mulvaney angered many conservatives, who called for a boycott. As sales of the beer plunged, the musician Kid Rock posted a video that showed him shooting a stack of Bud Light cases. Months later, TMZ posted a video of him drinking the very same beer at a concert.

Taylor Made Travis Famous. Right?

The football star Travis Kelce was already a household name before he was romantically linked to one of the most famous women on the planet. This fall, as a prank, many women filmed themselves telling men -- usually husbands or boyfriends -- that Ms. Swift was going to put Mr. Kelce on the map. Based on the videos, it seems like every guy took the bait.

Arielle Chapin, Nancy Coleman, Anna Foley, Jessica Grose, Becky Hughes, Natasha Janardan, Joumana Khatib, Ran Lee, Phoebe Lett, Lauren McCarthy, Jordyn Holman, Callie Holtermann, Tanya Sichynsky, Dodai Stewart, Remy Tumin and Lindsey Wiebe contributed reporting.

**Graphic**

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MATTEL

CRISTINA PEREZ

SABRINA BAHSOON

STUART WILSON/BAFTA, VIA GETTY IMAGES

CHRISTOPHER TESTANI FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

AMIR HAMJA/ THE NEW YORK TIMES

MCDONALD'S

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SARAH STIER/GETTY IMAGE) (D5) This article appeared in print on page D4.

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[***Identity Crisis for an Automotive Heartland***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6978-JXG1-JBG3-61CY-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** By Mitch Smith

**Body**

Michigan's economy and identity have been intertwined with auto manufacturing since Henry Ford perfected the moving assembly line and made Detroit a magnet for blue-collar workers seeking a middle-class foothold.

But the symbiosis between the state and its signature industry has been repeatedly challenged in recent decades by competition from abroad, factory closures and balance sheets so bad they required federal bailouts.

In some ways, that makes the current uncertainty in the state feel familiar. Members of the United Automobile Workers are back on the picket lines. Upstart carmakers outside Michigan are growing in market share. And as electric vehicles gain popularity, urgent questions abound about the auto industry's future and Michigan's place in it.

''We cannot let other countries or other states beat us in this competition,'' said State Senator Darrin Camilleri, a Democrat whose district is home to several car manufacturing facilities, including a Ford plant where workers are striking. ''It's not only about ensuring that these jobs are well paid,'' he added, ''but making sure that more of those jobs are still right here.''

Three things are true about the auto industry in Michigan: It is far smaller than it once was. It remains vital to the local and national economies. And its ethos -- the idea that you can work hard, make something worthwhile and get a fair wage for doing it -- is ingrained deeply in the state's sense of itself.

''The Motor City, I think that says it all -- people just identify cars and Detroit, and being the leader in that,'' said John P. Rhaesa, the mayor of Wayne, Mich., a ***working-class*** Detroit suburb where striking Ford employees have lined the main drag this week, perking up each time a passing semi-truck blares a supportive honk.

The Big Three -- Ford, General Motors and Stellantis -- have an estimated 66,000 U.A.W. employees in Michigan, according to one recent study -- more than four times as many as any other state. The figure does not include thousands of workers who staff the automakers' corporate offices or the employees of auto parts suppliers whose factories dot Southeast Michigan's industrial corridors.

U.A.W. workers began a targeted strike last week against all three companies, beginning with single plants in Michigan, Missouri and Ohio. The union is seeking significant pay raises, shorter workweeks and job security as the industry moves toward electrification. If deals are not reached by Friday, union officials have warned, the strike could expand to more plants.

Officials in Michigan have tried in recent years to lock in their state's place in the shifting automotive economy, seeking facilities to build not only electric cars, but also parts that would go inside them. A General Motors factory on the edge of Detroit that was once slated to end production was instead retooled as that company's first plant entirely for electric vehicles. And as Big Three automakers expand their plug-in offerings and compete with electric-focused companies like Tesla, Michigan has aggressively courted new electric battery factories.

''We're still the cornerstone of the automotive industry,'' said Kenyetta Hairston-Bridges, the chief operating officer and an executive vice president at the Detroit Economic Growth Corporation. ''Just like that ingenuity and that innovation that happened decades and decades ago, that is still taking place right now.''

But the industry no longer plays an all-consuming role in the state, and its future is in flux. Adding to the uncertainty: Electric cars have fewer parts, and can be made with fewer workers than vehicles with internal combustion engines can.

In Detroit, G.M.'s headquarters still punctuates the skyline, but downtown has flourished in recent years largely because of investments by companies like Rocket Mortgage and Ally Financial. Other sectors, like health care and education, also power the state's economy, though they lack the cultural resonance of carmaking.

Though large numbers of Michigan residents continue to work in auto manufacturing and parts manufacturing, federal data shows that those numbers have declined sharply -- by some measures, around 50 percent -- since 2000.

''I still think of the auto industry as kind of the most important industry in Michigan,'' said Gabriel Ehrlich, an economic forecaster at the University of Michigan. ''But it just doesn't dominate the state economy the way it did 20 or 30 years ago.''

Before the strike started, Dr. Ehrlich co-wrote a paper outlining the potential fallout if workers left their posts. A protracted full strike at any of the three companies would lead to tens of thousands of lost jobs and tens of millions of dollars in economic impact, the study found. An eight-week full strike at all three companies could lead to 300,000 lost jobs in Michigan, the authors said, with the damage extending past the assembly plants and into parts suppliers and other industries.

Matt Wegener, a Ford employee for 28 years who was picketing outside the Wayne plant this week, said he was already paring back his spending because of the strike. Though his factory is so far the only one in Michigan where workers have struck, the effects of individual cutbacks would multiply if the union calls more workers to the picket lines.

''Before the strike even started, I told myself I'm going to start limiting my budget, because I had a feeling that was coming,'' Mr. Wegener, 48, said as he held up a red ''U.A.W. on strike'' sign in front of a gate leading to a deserted parking lot. ''Just little things that you don't necessarily need at the grocery store. You don't need to get ice cream.''

Union workers and their supporters said the short-term pain of a strike could lead to sustained economic benefits if employees receive big raises in a new contract and are able to spend more. But if auto companies agree to deals that they cannot afford, analysts said, that could ultimately hurt workers and the state.

''I do really worry about these new contract negotiations, if they are not sustainable for the many aspects of the economy that they affect,'' said Tyler Theile, chief operating officer of Anderson Economic Group, a Michigan-based research and consulting firm whose past clients have included the auto companies. ''We don't want to go back to the jobs banks and bankruptcy. Public opinion isn't going to digest another bailout.''

Over generations, the auto industry has become part of Michigan's culture, forging not only the stories of industrial cities like Detroit and Flint and Lansing, but also of families whose grandparents moved to the state to find steady union jobs that paid enough to raise children and buy a house.

Detroit's N.B.A. team, the Pistons, is named after an engine component. On the state's highways, Chryslers and Chevys and Fords are notably prevalent, with foreign brands more sparse. And young Michigan residents, though in smaller numbers than before, continue to follow relatives into jobs at the auto plants.

Heaven Brown, 22, said she joined family members at the Wayne factory about three years ago. Her overnight shift helping to build Ford Broncos is physically demanding, she said, and it pays just enough to cover her bills. From her place on the picket line this week, she said she hoped the work stoppage would lead to improvements.

''I think everything is going to work, we're going to get what we deserve,'' Ms. Brown said. Still, she said, ''I wonder how long this strike is going to be, how long they're going to wait.''

The auto industry and its labor movement are deeply fused into Michigan's politics. About 14 percent of Michigan workers were members of a union in 2022, down from 17 percent of workers in 2012 but still above the national average.

This year, Democrats took full control of state government for the first time since the 1980s. Gov. Gretchen Whitmer and legislative leaders swiftly announced that repealing a so-called right-to-work law and restoring the prevailing wage would be among their first priorities. Both steps reversed Republican policies from the prior decade that unions loathed.

Still, with the state closely divided on partisan lines, Republicans and Democrats have competed fiercely in recent elections for union voters, traditionally a left-leaning constituency.

Donald J. Trump, who made inroads with blue-collar workers during his presidential campaigns, and who has criticized the national move toward electric cars, plans to speak to union members in Detroit next week rather than take part in a Republican debate. Facing skepticism from some people in the union, President Biden has voiced support for the striking workers.

The potential stakes in the standoff -- the difference between a thriving auto industry and a struggling one -- can be seen across Michigan's industrial landscape.

For hope, look to the crumbling train station in Detroit that Ford brought back to life, or the Stellantis factory that reopened, or the electric vehicle supplier that is building on the site of an abandoned Cadillac plant.

But there are risks of being so tied to one industry. Detroit and Flint were 20th-century boom towns that grew alongside their car factories and became havens for the middle class. Both saw their fortunes reverse when factories closed: residents fled, property values collapsed, crime rates soared.

Brenda Carter, a Democratic state representative from Pontiac, another factory town that fell on hard times, said she had witnessed many of the same highs and lows in her city.

Ms. Carter spent more than 30 years in the U.A.W., working in machine repair for G.M.

It was a job she took pride in. It was also a job she walked away from before she planned to, accepting an early retirement package in the depths of the Great Recession.

Still, she said, the auto industry was one worth investing in, worth hitching Michigan's future to, worth doubling down on, even as it shifts from combustion to electric power.

''We are the manufacturing capital of the world,'' Ms. Carter said. ''That is who we are.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/20/us/michigan-uaw-strike-economy.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/20/us/michigan-uaw-strike-economy.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: From top: the Stellantis Mack Assembly Complex in Detroit. Members of the United Automobile Workers striking near a Ford plant in Wayne, a blue-collar Detroit suburb. Mayor John P. Rhaesa of Wayne said, ''People just identify cars and Detroit.''

A mural, including scenes from the auto industry, on the side of a movie theater in Wayne. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY NICK HAGEN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A12.

**Load-Date:** September 22, 2023

**End of Document**



[***‘Dark Day for Maine’ After Gunman Kills 18 at Bowling Alley and Bar***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69GP-NXT1-JBG3-626C-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

October 26, 2023 Thursday 10:56 EST

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**Section:** US

**Length:** 2000 words

**Byline:** Jenna Russell, Amelia Nierenberg, Nicholas Bogel-Burroughs and Michael Levenson

**Highlight:** Businesses, schools and offices in the southern part of the state were closed on Thursday as the authorities sought a 40-year-old suspect.

**Body**

Businesses, schools and offices in the southern part of the state were closed on Thursday as the authorities sought a 40-year-old suspect.

The familiar rituals of a Wednesday night were playing out at Just-In-Time Recreation, a bowling alley in Lewiston, Maine, with 22 lanes of tenpin and a restaurant serving nachos and wings.

Parents and children were there for a children’s bowling league. Regulars were midway through their weekly games, unwinding after work.

Then a man wearing a brown hooded sweatshirt and carrying a military-style semiautomatic rifle walked in.

Tricia Asselin, 53, was there with her sister, Bobbi Nichols, when they heard a bang — and then another from the lanes reserved for children’s night. As they sprinted for the exit, with Ms. Nichols in the lead, Ms. Asselin — who worked at the alley and was there on a night off — peeled off into the kitchen to grab her cellphone so she could call 911.

Ms. Nichols bolted through the door, thinking her sister was behind her. When she realized she wasn’t, it was too late.

“Bobbi tried to get back. She said, ‘my sister’s in there, my sister’s in there,’” their mother, Alicia LaChance, said by phone from her home in Okeechobee, Fla. Ms. Asselin had not been officially identified as among the victims on Thursday, but the family was expecting the worst. “They told her nobody in there is alive anymore,” her mother said.

Minutes after attacking the alley, the armed man showed up at [*Schemengees Bar &amp; Grille*](https://www.facebook.com/Schemengees), a few miles away, where people were playing cornhole and billiards, and opened fire again.

By the time he finished shooting, at the bar and the bowling alley, 18 people had been killed and 13 others had been injured, Gov. Janet Mills of Maine said.

Afterward, the gunman fled, forcing a major lockdown across the region as hundreds of law enforcement officials searched on Thursday for a suspect they identified as Robert R. Card, 40, of Bowdoin, Maine. The authorities warned that he should be considered armed and dangerous.

Around 7:30 p.m., officers were outside a home in Bowdoin owned by Mr. Card’s family, as a helicopter circled overheard. “We are not going away,” one officer said over a loudspeaker. “You need to come outside now.”

Hours later, law enforcement vehicles were seen leaving the property, and a spokeswoman for the State Police said officers had been serving search warrants and they did not find the suspect there. “They will be back at it tomorrow,” Shannon Moss, the spokeswoman, wrote in a text.

The rampage made Lewiston, a scrappy ***working-class*** city of nearly 40,000, the latest scene of America’s mass shooting crisis. It also put the region on edge, as the police warned residents of Lewiston and several other nearby towns to stay home as they searched for Mr. Card.

“We believe this is someone that should not be approached,” Col. William G. Ross of the Maine State Police said.

It was the deadliest mass shooting in the United States since May 2022, when a gunman killed 19 children and two teachers at an elementary school in Uvalde, Texas.

Although the details provided by the authorities were sparse, including whether any children were killed, the familiar outlines of the massacre — a lone gunman snuffing out innocent lives with a powerful weapon — pushed Americans and their leaders into familiar corners.

President Biden, who ordered flags at federal buildings to be flown at half-staff to honor the victims, urged Congress to ban assault weapons and high-capacity magazines and to enact universal background checks, among other steps.

“This is the very least we owe every American who will now bear the scars — physical and mental — of this latest attack,” Mr. Biden said in a statement.

Representative Jared Golden, whose district includes Lewiston, had been one of the few House Democrats who opposed an assault-weapons ban, citing the strong tradition of gun ownership in the area. But at a news conference Thursday evening, he said he would now support a ban.

“The time has now come for me to take responsibility for this failure,” he said, adding: “I ask for forgiveness and support.”

When asked if she, too, would support a ban, Senator Susan Collins, Republican of Maine, said it was more important to ban “very-high-capacity magazines,” which let shooters fire more rounds without stopping to reload. She added: “Certainly there’s always more that can be done.”

But Republicans who adamantly defend the right to bear arms were not expected to back such measures. Representative Mike Johnson of Louisiana, the newly elected House speaker, did not mention any legislative response as he answered questions about the shooting.

“This is a dark time in America,” Mr. Johnson, a Republican, told reporters in Washington. “We have a lot of problems and we’re really, really hopeful and prayerful. Prayer is appropriate at a time like this — that the evil can end, and this senseless violence can stop.”

Ms. Mills called it “a dark day for Maine.” With 18 dead, the largely rural state recorded as many homicides in a few minutes on Wednesday night as it had in some recent years. The state had 29 homicides last year, 20 in 2021 and 18 in each of the previous two years.

“Our small state of just 1.3 million people has long been known as one of the safest states in the nation,” Ms. Mills, a Democrat, said. “This attack strikes at the very heart of who we are and the values we hold dear for this precious place we call home.”

As the police sought the suspect, government buildings, local school districts and universities in the southern part of the state were closed. Businesses across a vast swath of Maine, from beach towns close to the New Hampshire border to towns in the woods nearly 200 miles north, also shut down.

The streets of Lewiston were nearly deserted on Thursday morning. Nearby, at a middle school where families waited on Wednesday night for news of loved ones, only one car was parked in the lot. Bates College, in Lewiston, locked down its campus and postponed the inauguration of its new president, Garry Jenkins.

Residents said they were on guard as a growing contingent of local, state and federal officers swarmed the region.

After spending the night indoors, afraid to even open the curtains, Traelynn Smith, 19, and Serenity Moczara, 18, ventured out around lunchtime Thursday to get something to eat. Ms. Smith was carrying a knife in her pocket.

“Even talking about it gives me goose bumps,” she said. “I’ve never seen my state like this.”

Colonel Ross said on Thursday that a vehicle found at a boat landing in Lisbon, Maine, about eight miles from Lewiston, had been connected to Mr. Card. He gave no other details about possible developments in the manhunt.

Details of Mr. Card’s life were scarce on Thursday. Military officials said that he was a sergeant first class in the Army Reserve, assigned to the 3rd Battalion, 304th Infantry Regiment in Saco, Maine, and had enlisted in 2002. He had no combat deployments and served as a petroleum supply specialist, shipping and storing vehicle and aircraft fuel.

Investigators were looking into a run-in Mr. Card had with officials during a recent visit to Camp Smith, a National Guard training facility not far from West Point in New York, a senior law enforcement official said on condition on anonymity because the official was not authorized to discuss the incident. The official said that Mr. Card was later evaluated at a mental health facility.

The first 911 call reporting gunfire at the bowling alley on Wednesday came in at 6:56 p.m., Colonel Ross said.

Chad Vincent was in the fifth frame of his weekly game when he heard what sounded “like a table crashing on the floor or something.” There were 30 to 50 bowlers in the alley, he said, in addition to about 26 people from his league.

“Nobody really screamed,” Mr. Vincent said. “Nobody knew what it was.”

But about five seconds later, he heard another bang and one of his bowling partners shouted, “‘Hey, that’s a gun! That’s gunshots!’”

Mr. Vincent, 45, ran toward a back exit and dialed 911.

He and other bowlers from his league ran through the woods to an Italian restaurant and locked themselves inside until loved ones came to pick them up.

Mr. Vincent said they were in disbelief.

“We’re going: This is Maine,” he said. “This is not happening. This stuff doesn’t happen in Maine. Everybody’s nice. We usually don’t have problems.”

About 12 minutes after the 911 calls reporting gunfire at the bowling alley, the police received calls that a gunman was inside Schemengees Bar &amp; Grille.

Bryan MacFarlane, 41, was part of a gathering of deaf people there when the shooting started, his mother, Janette Randazzo, said. On Thursday, two police officers came to her home to confirm her worst fears: that her son was dead.

“I have a picture in my head of my kid lying there with gunshot wounds somewhere on the body,” she said. “It’s traumatic to me just imagining it.”

Joseph Walker, 57, a manager at the bar, was also fatally shot, according to his father, Leroy Walker Sr., 74, a city councilor in Auburn, Maine.

Mr. Walker said the police had told his son’s wife that the younger Mr. Walker “died a hero” because he picked up a nearby butcher’s knife “and tried to go at the gunman.”

“My Joey will be missed by thousands,” Mr. Walker said on Thursday, as he sat outside his apartment, crying. Mr. Walker said he did not feel angry toward the man who killed his son.

“There’s so much hate in this world, and people who have a sickness or a mind that’s a little off tilt, they go to hate,” he said. “If he’s sick in the head, I can’t hold anything against him.”

Kristy Strout said Thursday afternoon that she had not heard from her husband, Arthur, since about a half-hour before the shooting at the bar. He had been playing pool with friends in preparation for a game he had on Thursday, Ms. Strout said.

She thinks one of his teammates was shot, but she had not received any news or information from the authorities. She said she was waiting for the medical examiner to tell her more.

“I have three kids. I want closure,” she said. “We don’t want to sit here and wonder.”

Colbi Edmonds, Billy Witz, Patricia Mazzei, Gaya Gupta, Adeel Hassan, Katie Benner, Sydney Cromwell, Glenn Thrush, Eduardo Medina and Erica L. Green contributed reporting. Susan C. Beachy and Kirsten Noyes contributed research.

Colbi Edmonds, Billy Witz, Patricia Mazzei, Gaya Gupta, Adeel Hassan, Katie Benner, Sydney Cromwell, Glenn Thrush, Eduardo Medina and Erica L. Green contributed reporting. Susan C. Beachy and Kirsten Noyes contributed research.

PHOTOS: Outside a reunification center set up in Auburn, Maine, after Wednesday night’s shooting in the nearby city of Lewiston. (PHOTOGRAPH BY DEREK DAVIS/PORTLAND PRESS HERALD, VIA ASSOCIATED PRESS) (A1); Law enforcement officers outside Schemengees Bar &amp; Grille the morning after a gunman opened fire on people there and at a bowling alley in Lewiston, Maine. (PHOTOGRAPH BY SOPHIE PARK FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES); A police roadblock in Lisbon, Maine. Schools and businesses were shut down as officers across the region searched for the suspect. (PHOTOGRAPH BY ROBERT F. BUKATY/ASSOCIATED PRESS); The police identified Robert R. Card, 40, of Bowdoin, Maine, as a person of interest. (PHOTOGRAPH BY LEWISTON MAINE POLICE DEPARTMENT, VIA ASSOCIATED PRESS); Miia Zellner, an elementary school art teacher, posting hearts around Lewiston on Thursday.; Maine officials, including Gov. Janet Mills, addressing the news media at City Hall in Lewiston. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY JOHN TULLY FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A22); Gov. Greg Abbott, center, at a news conference this year, has said he would support a Texas bill to strengthen border security. (PHOTOGRAPH BY ERIC GAY/ASSOCIATED PRESS); A Texas officer patrolled the banks of the Rio Grande in May. A proposal would allow local police agencies to arrest and jail migrants. (PHOTOGRAPH BY ALFREDO ESTRELLA/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE — GETTY IMAGES) (A23) This article appeared in print on page A1, A22, A23.

**Load-Date:** October 31, 2023

**End of Document**



[***Workers Continue to Be Priced Out of Housing***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68BB-W4B1-JBG3-6521-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

May 28, 2023 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section RE; Column 0; Real Estate Desk; Pg. 13

**Length:** 912 words

**Byline:** By Heather Senison

**Body**

Business owners and local leaders are scrambling to create housing for workers in low-wage jobs, but residents who are opposed to development say land must be preserved.

For decades, residents and seasonal visitors to the Hamptons and other towns on the East End of Long Island have braced for spending summer mornings and evenings in the ''trade parade,'' the congested procession of contractors, hospital staff and other workers who commute to the East End to work every day.

Priced out of the area, many workers have long lived up-island in less expensive locales like Manorville and Mastic-Shirley, forced to commute for hours each day.

But the parade is thinning, business owners warned. Fewer and fewer workers are willing to endure wall-to-wall traffic for low-wage jobs, punctuating the longtime dilemma that the workers who keep the North and South Forks running cannot afford to live there.

''I don't throw the word crisis around very easily, but it's at that point,'' said Fred Thiele Jr., a state assemblyman whose district includes Southampton. He said a staff member was forced to vacate the house she rented in Sag Harbor when the landlord sold it to capitalize on soaring home prices, part of a wave of sales that turned yearlong rentals into seasonal vacation homes. The staffer moved in with her boyfriend, he said, ''but for a lot of people in that situation, they didn't have options."

Complaints about the lack of affordability are not new, but the pandemic brought on a panic and changes in the rhythm of the summer season. Many restaurants now close one or two days a week, even in the summer, without enough staff to work in them, business owners say. ''Who's going to drive from Shirley and sit in that traffic to clean hotel rooms?'' said Jay Schneiderman, the town supervisor of Southampton and the owner of a hotel in Montauk.

Residents are once again debating proposed solutions, including where to build high-density housing developments and how to best use funds that are designated for affordable housing measures.

The Hamptons had pockets of affordability, such as the Springs, a densely wooded neighborhood along Three Mile Harbor Road in East Hampton, but the mad dash to the suburbs during the pandemic pushed prices out of reach for people with lower incomes.

Even real estate agents making an average $100,000 a year can't afford the market, said Ben Dixon, a salesperson with Douglas Elliman in both New York City and the Hamptons.

The average sales price on the South Fork, which includes the Towns of East Hampton and Southampton, was $3.222 million in the first quarter of 2023, a 73 percent increase from $1.86 million in 2019, according to Corcoran data.

On the North Fork, which includes the Towns of Southold and Shelter Island, the average price was $1.188 million in the first quarter of 2023, up 64 percent from $723,000 in 2019.

The towns offer some subsidized rental and sales units, including 344 in Southampton and 818 in East Hampton. The wait-lists of applicants far exceed the demand: 1,334 applicants in Southampton and 3,107 applicants in East Hampton, as of last month.

In November, the four Towns on the North and South Forks -- Southampton, East Hampton, Southold and Shelter Island -- passed a 0.5 percent real estate transfer tax to build up a Community Housing Fund. The tax applies to the sale of all properties, with the first $400,000 exempt for those sold for less than $2 million. Mr. Thiele's office expects the new tax to raise $25 million in 2024, its first full year of implementation, and $600 million by the time it's up for renewal in 2050.

Local governments can use the fund for initiatives, like down payment assistance for home buyers, public-private construction projects and the creation of accessory dwelling units on existing home properties. If the community housing fund raises $10 million annually, it would equate to 66 new units each year, Mr. Schneiderman said.

Residents are skeptical of affordable housing; they believe that the preservation of the Hamptons' lush environment is a priority, too, said Bob DeLuca, president of the land conservation organization Group for the East End.

''You should be concerned about what happens in your backyard. Why wouldn't you be?'' he said.

Land in the Hamptons is guarded by the Peconic Bay Tax, a real estate transfer tax enacted in 1998 that has generated more than $1 billion since 2000 for a Community Preservation Fund.

It has been so successful that there is little land left for development. About 68 percent of Montauk is preserved, said Scott Wilson, director of land acquisition and management for the Town of East Hampton.

While officials navigate policies and politics, local business owners are determining where their employees will live in the meantime.

Jesse Matsuoka, 37, who co-owns four restaurants, including Sen and K Pasa in Sag Harbor, now has six ''staff houses'': a single-family and a multifamily home in Sag Harbor, three apartments above Sen, his parents' guest bedrooms and a spare room in his own house.

His wife, Jessica Matsuoka, moonlights as their property manager.

Still, Mr. Matsuoka needs housing for more than 100 seasonal employees and isn't sure that his restaurants will operate at full capacity this summer.

''They're trying to sell this lifestyle to others to live here, but they've pushed out the ***working class***, so how are businesses supposed to operate?'' he asked.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/25/realestate/hamptons-affordable-housing.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/25/realestate/hamptons-affordable-housing.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: Business owners and local residents in the Hamptons are debating whether to prioritize land preservation or the creation of affordable housing, like this HUD development, the Sandy Hollow Cove apartments in Southampton. (PHOTOGRAPH BY ANDY RYAN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** May 28, 2023

**End of Document**



[***To Aid Shows, Networks Cut Pay for Actors***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68V6-3191-JBG3-63BS-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

August 1, 2023 Tuesday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section B; Column 0; Business/Financial Desk; Pg. 1

**Length:** 1311 words

**Byline:** By Nicole Sperling

**Body**

In a shrinking business, actors on some shows are being guaranteed less money, an issue that's helping to fuel the Hollywood strike.

Starring on the CBS sitcom ''Bob Hearts Abishola'' has been good for Bayo Akinfemi. Being a regular cast member for four years has given him financial security and made him a star in his native Nigeria, where the show is wildly popular. It even helped him branch out from acting, when producers gave him the opportunity to direct an episode.

But Mr. Akinfemi and 10 of his castmates were told this year that the only way the half-hour show was going to get a fifth season was if budgets were cut. How the actors were paid was going to change.

No longer would they be guaranteed pay for all 22 episodes of a season. Instead, Mr. Akinfemi and his castmates would be reclassified as recurring cast members. They would be paid the same amount per episode, but unlike regular cast members, they would be paid only for the episodes in which they appeared and would be guaranteed only five of those in a truncated 13-episode season, once the actors' strike was over and performers returned to work. (Only Billy Gardell, who plays the white middle-aged businessman Bob, and Folake Olowofoyeku, who plays Abishola, the Nigerian nurse he loves, will remain series regulars.)

''It was a bit surprising, for all of 10 seconds,'' Mr. Akinfemi said in an interview before SAG-AFTRA, the actors' union, went on strike. ''We are disappointed, but we also understand at the end of the day it's a business.''

For decades, actors playing supporting characters on successful network television shows have been able to renegotiate their contracts in later seasons and reap financial windfalls. But this is a new era for network TV.

It's a business that has been struggling with depressed ratings, decreased advertising revenue and fierce competition from streaming services, resulting in millions of viewers cutting their cable subscriptions. And one way networks and production companies are trying to deal with the changing economics is to ask the casts of some long-running shows to take pay cuts.

''The glory days of linear television are sadly behind us,'' said Channing Dungey, the chairwoman and chief executive of Warner Bros. Television Studios, the studio behind ''Bob Hearts Abishola.''

This new reality in network television is one of the reasons behind the Hollywood writers' and actors' strikes. Those on strike say the economics of the streaming era have effectively reduced their pay and cut into money they get from residuals, a type of royalty. The studios say they aren't making the kind of money they used to, meaning that they're having to shave costs wherever they can.

The sides are at a standstill. The writers haven't spoken to the studios since going out on strike on May 2, and the actors haven't since walking out on July 14. No negotiations are scheduled.

''Blue Bloods,'' a CBS drama starring Tom Selleck, is returning for its 14th season only because the entire cast agreed to a 25 percent pay cut when the strike is over. On the CW network, ''Superman & Lois,'' which is entering its fourth season, and ''All American: Homecoming,'' which is hanging on for a third season, saw their budgets cut and cast members reduced to day players or eliminated.

Not even the juggernaut represented by Dick Wolf's lineup of shows on NBC is immune. A number of the actors on shows like ''Chicago P.D.'' and ''Chicago Fire'' are being guaranteed appearances in fewer episodes for the coming season, according to two people familiar with the productions, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss personnel matters.

''This is something that's happening across the board,'' Ms. Dungey said, adding that CBS wanted to renew ''Bob Hearts Abishola'' only if Warner Bros. was able to produce it for the network at a reduced cost. ''There are a number of different shows, both on CBS and elsewhere, where the same kinds of considerations are coming into play.''

CBS and NBC declined to comment.

Word of the salary adjustments for ''Bob Hearts Abishola'' came out in late April, just days before SAG-AFTRA authorized its strike with a 97.9 percent vote in favor.

''This is the beginning of the end for ***working-class*** actors,'' the actress Ever Carradine, who has been in shows like ''Commander in Chief'' on ABC and Hulu's ''The Handmaid's Tale,'' wrote on Twitter at the time. ''I have never worked harder in my career to make less money, and I am not alone.''

Today, first-time series regulars often earn anywhere from $20,000 to $50,000 an episode, depending on the budget of the show, the size of the role, and the studio or network that's footing the bill. Commissions for agents and management are subtracted from those sums.

To some, the recent reductions are an inevitable correction from the era of peak television, when studios were eager to lure talent with lucrative contracts. Some executives argue that paring back salaries will ultimately allow more shows to be made, at a more reasonable price.

Network shows do not draw anywhere close to the viewer numbers they did when 20 million people were watching ''Seinfeld'' and ''Friends'' every week in the 1990s.

At the end of its fourth season, ''Bob Hearts Abishola'' was averaging 6.9 million viewers per episode, according to Nielsen's Live +35 metric, which measures the first 35 days of viewing on both linear and digital platforms. Hits had bigger audiences, like CBS's ''Ghosts,'' which averaged 11 million viewers over 35 days, and ABC's ''Abbott Elementary,'' which averaged 9.1 million.

But the rise of streaming has cannibalized network television on a scale the networks weren't prepared for, and not even scaling back on scripted offerings has been enough to stem the bleeding. ''Bob Hearts Abishola'' is one of four prime-time scripted comedies left on CBS.

''It is hard now to get shows to Seasons 5 and beyond, but it doesn't mean that it can't happen,'' Ms. Dungey said. ''It just is less likely to happen as often as it did in the past.''

Yet the new reality means actors must decide whether to remain on a show at a reduced rate but with some job security or leave to see if they can find other jobs.

The management team for Kelly Jenrette, an actress on the CW's ''All American: Homecoming,'' told the trade publication Deadline that she had chosen to become a recurring character rather than ''opt for a return as a series regular on reduced episodic guarantees.''

Ms. Jenrette declined to be interviewed because, she said, she was told that doing so would violate the actors' union's ban on promoting projects associated with struck companies. The CW declined to comment.

For some, the pride they take in their shows is also an enticement to stay. On ''Bob Hearts Abishola,'' Mr. Akinfemi plays Goodwin, an employee of Bob's compression sock company who was on his way to becoming an economics professor in Nigeria before he left the country.

Fans have stopped him in the Nigerian airport, in the streets of Toronto, even at the CVS near his home in Los Angeles to marvel that whole scenes of the show are spoken in Mr. Akinfemi's native Yoruba tongue. (He also serves as the language consultant for the sitcom.)

''The idea that there could be a show like this that really showcases Nigerian culture, it's just unfathomable,'' Mr. Akinfemi said. ''That we are really representing Nigerian culture as accurately as possible and in a positive light, on American television, is mind-blowing to a lot of Nigerians and Africans.''

He and the 10 other cast members affected by the pay changes on ''Bob Hearts Abishola'' all chose to stay.

''These actors are attached to good, important, groundbreaking work,'' said Tash Moseley, Mr. Akinfemi's manager. ''I think they knew that the actors would come back and do it no matter what.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/07/31/business/media/actors-strike-bob-hearts-abishola-pay.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/07/31/business/media/actors-strike-bob-hearts-abishola-pay.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Bayo Akinfemi in the CBS sitcom ''Bob Hearts Abishola,'' above. Channing Dungey, the C.E.O. of Warner Bros. Television Studios, the studio behind the show, right. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY SONJA FLEMMING/CBS

DAVID LIVINGSTON/GETTY IMAGES) (B4) This article appeared in print on page B1, B4.

**Load-Date:** August 1, 2023

**End of Document**



[***‘Daddy’ Review: Deeper Into the Internet’s Darkest Corners; Critic’s Pick***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:686R-K031-JBG3-650Y-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

May 11, 2023 Thursday 00:16 EST

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**Section:** THEATER

**Length:** 869 words

**Byline:** Laura Cappelle

**Highlight:** In Marion Siéfert’s much-anticipated new show, the French director explores the dynamics of online grooming.

**Body**

In Marion Siéfert’s much-anticipated new show, the French director explores the dynamics of online grooming.

The French stage director Marion Siéfert has her finger on the pulse of our digital lives. In “2 or 3 Things I Know About You,” she playfully tackled oversharing on Facebook, before turning to the perils of online streaming in “\_jeanne\_dark\_” — a show that [*fell foul of Instagram’s moderation policies*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/11/theater/instagram-jeanne-dark-marion-siefert.html) when it was relayed live on the platform.

With “Daddy,” a sharp, no-holds-barred new production at the Odéon-Théâtre de l’Europe, in Paris, Siéfert has ventured even further into the internet’s dark corners. In it, a 13-year-old is groomed online by an older man and gets lost in a virtual reality game that exploits teenage girls for profit.

It also marks a new stage in Siéfert’s career. “Daddy” is her first big-budget production for a major playhouse, and one of the Paris season’s most anticipated premieres. So Siéfert is swinging much bigger, on every level: larger cast, more atmospheric sets and a somewhat indulgent running time of three and a half hours. Yet her biting originality remains intact.

Reality is no match for screen entertainment in “Daddy.” The central character, Mara, is a quiet teenager from southern France. A subtly written scene, early on, introduces her family: Her parents, a nurse and a security guard, are too exhausted by their poorly paid jobs to devote much attention to their daughters. It’s no surprise that whenever she can, Mara escapes to the brighter landscape of online gaming.

In an unnamed video game, she joins Julien, a smooth-talking 27-year-old who is her frequent online partner in crime. The easy intimacy they have built is showcased through a spectacular video sequence: On a screen the size of the Odéon’s stage, we see a 3-D game designed by the video artist Antoine Briot in which Mara and Julien’s avatars who shoot at enemies with assault rifles before hopping on fluorescent skateboards.

Throughout, we hear Mara and Julien banter over their headsets. “You’re the most badass girl in this game,” Julien says.

The groundwork is laid for the abusive dynamic that ensues. When they first meet outside the game, on a video call, Mara confides in Julien that she dreams of being an actress. He compliments her, and tells her about “Daddy” — a new game that allows players, Julien says, to become avatars sponsored by sugar daddies, and showcase their talents to a “fan base.”

Siéfert has a knack for assembling captivatingly unconventional actors, and just as “\_jeanne\_dark\_” was tailor-made for Helena de Laurens, a shape-shifter unafraid to lean into grotesque physicality, “Daddy” owes much to its two central performers. As Mara, the 15-year-old Lila Houel, who came to the production with limited stage experience, is coarsely candid in these early scenes, with turns of phrase that emphasize the character’s ***working-class*** background. Opposite her, Louis Peres, best known as a screen actor, is a startling tech-generation descendant of Christian Bale in “American Psycho”: clean-cut, in control, smoothly scary.

Siéfert’s smartest move is to leave video and special effects behind once the two enter the game world of “Daddy.” The virtual space becomes a sinister, near-empty stage dotted with what look like snow mounds, where Mara encounters other preyed-upon young women.

The rules of “Daddy” aren’t wholly clear. Men invest so teenage girls can perform routines that earn them points with fans. Houel, for instance, interprets a scene from the movie “Interview with the Vampire”; the sparkling Jennifer Gold, who plays the game’s reigning star Jessica, delivers cabaret-style numbers, including Marilyn Monroe’s “My Heart Belongs to Daddy” from the 1960 film “Let’s Make Love.”

The points and the fans are never shown — Siéfert keeps things deliberately vague. The focus is on the dynamics of child abuse, and the erosion of Mara’s individuality and willpower by Julien. While some scenes of verbal and physical violence are troubling enough to make you fear for Houel’s mental health, she rises to the occasion with astonishing sang-froid, quietly haunted then seething in the second act.

Siéfert co-wrote “Daddy” with Matthieu Bareyre, and some of the points they make don’t need so much time to come across: Cuts would be welcome. Yet “Daddy” speaks to the zeitgeist and the lives of teenagers today with a mix of ease and critical distance that few stage directors can match.

And even at 11:30 p.m., one final scene had the audience sitting up and leaning forward. After a bloody narrative twist, the back wall of the stage slid away to reveal the street outside, and a performer staggered out of the game into the Odéon’s leafy neighborhood — while a few passers-by stopped, puzzled, to peek at the action onstage. In Siéfert’s theater, the real and the virtual keep colliding in invigorating ways.

Daddy

Through May 26 at the Odéon — Théâtre de l’Europe in Paris; [*theatre-odeon.eu*](https://theatre-odeon.eu/fr/daddy).

PHOTOS: Top, Jennifer Gold delivers cabaret-style numbers in “Daddy.” Right, Louis Peres and Lila Houel are the central performers in the play, written by Marion Siéfert and Matthieu Bareyre. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY MATTHIEU BAREYRE) This article appeared in print on page C6.

**Load-Date:** May 16, 2023

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[***Trying to Sell Austerity in Already Lean Times***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:66WT-JCH1-DXY4-X480-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

November 19, 2022 Saturday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; Foreign Desk; Pg. 10

**Length:** 1164 words

**Byline:** By Mark Landler and Stephen Castle

**Body**

The country's new prime minister must now persuade ordinary Britons that they should support his government through a painful ordeal of tax increases, spending cuts and a recession.

LONDON -- Jeremy Hunt, Britain's finance chief, presented a doom-and-gloom budget this week, but it is ultimately the job of his boss, Rishi Sunak, to sell it. And it is hard to imagine a more improbable evangelist than this 42-year-old Conservative prime minister and former Goldman Sachs banker.

With an elite pedigree and a privileged lifestyle, Mr. Sunak must now persuade ordinary Britons that they should support his government through a painful ordeal of tax increases, spending cuts and a recession that could result in the biggest fall in household income since the records began in 1956.

While Mr. Sunak has tried to cushion the blow by increasing the national living wage, which protects lower-income people, and by lifting funding for schools and the National Health Service, his budget also reinforced stereotypes about the Tory Party as a defender of the establishment.

Amid a raft of tax increases on individuals and companies, for example, the government lowered taxes on banks. Mr. Sunak did not reverse a decision by his predecessor, Liz Truss, to lift a cap on bonuses paid to bankers, a measure that even Prime Minister Boris Johnson resisted because he feared a backlash.

Most symbolically, Mr. Sunak has rejected calls to eliminate a loophole that allows people to claim non-domiciled status in Britain and avoid paying British tax on income from outside the country. His wife, Akshata Murty, the daughter of an Indian technology billionaire, was a beneficiary of this loophole, though she agreed to pay British taxes after an outcry over the situation threatened her husband.

The opposition Labour Party lost no time in making this an issue, suggesting that Mr. Hunt, a wealthy former entrepreneur who also has a foreign-born wife, would have been unable to persuade Mr. Sunak to approve getting rid of the loophole.

''He refuses to act, and I wonder why. Maybe that was the one policy that couldn't get signed off by No. 10,'' said Labour's shadow chancellor, Rachel Reeves, alluding to the prime minister's residence. ''I say, if you make Britain your home, you should pay your taxes here too.''

Some political analysts said they were surprised the government did not seize the chance to close the loophole and neutralize an easy line of attack. They suggested it was less a reflection of Mr. Sunak's family circumstances than of his party's deep-rooted resistance to eliminating it.

''It would be such an easy thing to do and yet they didn't do it,'' said Steven Fielding, emeritus professor of political history at the University of Nottingham. ''It does suggest that he hasn't got the capacity to transcend the problems his party is in.''

Mr. Sunak inherited a party exhausted and divided after 12 years in power. Its image has been tarnished by Mr. Johnson's lockdown-breaking parties during the coronavirus pandemic, and by Ms. Truss' ill-fated experiment in trickle-down tax policy, which rattled the financial markets and led to her ouster after only 50 days in office.

Mr. Sunak's swift return to fiscal orthodoxy has soothed the markets. Even before Mr. Hunt's speech, the government had largely removed what market wags referred to as Britain's ''moron risk premium,'' the extra borrowing costs it was forced to pay because investors no longer trusted it.

''This was not about the market's reaction,'' said Mujtaba Rahman, an analyst at the political risk consultancy Eurasia Group. ''The story now is political. Has Sunak done this in a way that will keep the Tory Party together?''

Mr. Sunak's strategy is to stabilize the public finances, without prolonging a recession, in the hopes that a recovery would begin before the next election, which must take place by January 2025. By then, the Conservatives could try to persuade voters that, having weathered the storm, it was not worth risking a change of government that could jeopardize any recovery.

But Mr. Sunak, however competent, lacks charisma. Analysts said he has yet to hone a compelling political message, particularly for the far-flung coalition forged by Mr. Johnson in 2019, which included ***working-class*** voters in England's industrial north drawn by his promise to ''Get Brexit done.''

The headwinds he faces are immense. The projected 7 percent decline in household income over the next two years means that Britons may not return to the living standard they had last year until 2027, said Matthew Goodwin, a professor of politics at the University of Kent. That would be a lost decade of prosperity, which he said voters are currently blaming on the Conservative government.

''Sunak is going to have to try somehow to hold together an electorate that is about to be pounded,'' Professor Goodwin said. ''How on earth, in that economic context, do you hold together an electorate that has become more ***working class*** and more economically precarious than it was in the 2010s?''

In postponing most of the spending cuts until after the next election, Mr. Hunt did put off some of the pain. He also confronted Labour with a dilemma because the party will be challenged on whether it would stick to those plans if elected.

When Labour last came to power, in 1997, it adhered to the outgoing Conservative government's fiscal plans for two years after winning power. But doing so this time would be a big constraint. At a time of proliferating labor unrest, Mr. Sunak may also try to exploit Labour's ties to trade unions.

The opposition, some analysts said, should emphasize the damage that would be done to Britain's public services if the spending cuts proposed by Mr. Hunt were carried out. Unlike the last round of austerity, engineered by Prime Minister David Cameron in 2010, there is far less fat to cut this time.

''If I were Labour, I would say, 'You're still proposing very large pay cuts for public servants and for public services, which are already flat on their backs,''' said Jonathan Portes, a professor of economics and public policy at Kings College London. ''We need to rebuild the public sector.''

There is no evidence in polling that Mr. Sunak's family wealth is, by itself, a problem for voters. But the disclosure of his wife's tax status almost derailed his political career last April because, analysts said, it raised fairness issues. His thin-skinned reaction to the criticism, they said, revealed a lack of political instincts.

Though Mr. Sunak may be proficient at the basics of governance, Professor Fielding of the University of Nottingham likened him to the captain of the Titanic, who sees the electoral dangers looming ahead but has not fully changed course.

''He's not going to sufficiently change public perceptions of his government, which are uniquely bad,'' Professor Fielding said. ''He's hoping the iceberg moves -- and icebergs tend not to move.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2022/11/18/world/europe/rishi-sunak-uk-budget-economy.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/11/18/world/europe/rishi-sunak-uk-budget-economy.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: Rishi Sunak This article appeared in print on page A10.

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[***Democrats Lost the Midterms, Too***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:66WT-JCH1-DXY4-X469-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

November 19, 2022 Saturday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; Editorial Desk; Pg. 22; GUEST ESSAY

**Length:** 1254 words

**Byline:** By Yuval Levin

**Body**

The surprising results of the midterm elections were understandably received by Democrats with an elated mix of relief and vindication. A president's party normally does much worse in his first midterms, and polls suggested this time would be no different.

But just because a catastrophe was averted does not mean all is well. Democrats would be sorely mistaken to assume that a durable majority of voters endorsed their agenda in this election -- and such a mistake could prove costly in 2024 and beyond.

We know the Democrats risk such a misreading because it is just what they did after the last election. In 2020, Democrats highlighted the repugnant tone and character of the Donald Trump-era G.O.P. while Republicans highlighted radical elements of the Democrats' agenda -- and the public essentially said no to both. Voters narrowly threw out Mr. Trump but gave Democrats the thinnest possible Senate majority while slightly increasing the number of Republicans in the House.

Democrats responded by behaving as though they had won a mandate, trying to advance an ambitious partisan agenda without the majorities to do it -- and so generally without success.

Republicans, too, responded to the rebuke they received by pretending it didn't happen, with many advancing delusional conspiracy theories about a stolen election and doubling down on the very Trumpism voters had just rejected.

The 2022 election was therefore basically a rerun of 2020. Voters made the same grudging choice -- they rejected the Trumpist style and substance of the G.O.P. but without embracing the Democrats -- because they were given the same unappetizing menu. Democrats netted one Senate seat at most, in a state where the Republican candidate particularly resembled Mr. Trump, while again losing a small handful of House seats.

Such a rerun can easily look like an endorsement of the status quo. This is apparently how President Biden interpreted it. In his postelection news conference, he was asked what he would do differently in light of what the results showed about voter desires. He answered: ''Nothing, because they're just finding out what we're doing. The more they know about what we're doing, the more support there is.''

Democrats should be alarmed by these embarrassing remarks, but so far they seem to share the sentiment.

Acting on the lesson of the election would be tough for the Democratic Party, to be sure. It's pretty clear what Republicans are doing wrong and what the way forward might look like. As this election demonstrated yet again, swing voters do exist, and they are open to voting for Republicans, including quite conservative ones, but they do not like Trumpism. Republicans clearly need to put Mr. Trump and his style of politics behind them. Now that he has announced another run for the presidency, that won't be easy to do, but it is easy to see that it is what needs doing.

For Democrats, the path to winning swing voters is much harder to see. Republicans have moved closer to some of the median voter's policy inclinations in the Trump era, even as Mr. Trump's behavior turned off those voters. A decade ago, the G.O.P. was too libertarian for many winnable voters -- on public spending and taxes but also on immigration, trade and family policy. The party is more palatable for such voters on those issues now. That might explain why it looks as though Republicans won a majority of the votes for House seats nationwide in this election, edging Democrats by around three or four percentage points.

Democrats are generally farther from the median voter than they were a decade ago, particularly on cultural issues, education, crime and immigration. The party increasingly represents an unpopular cultural elite, and the agenda required to hold its coalition together makes for poor general-election strategy in many places.

For all that the Democrats averted defeat this year, some warning signs that they were beginning to perceive were only reinforced. Even in many places where Trumpism hurt Republican candidates (at least in part), like Ohio and North Carolina, support for Democrats among ***working-class*** swing voters clearly has low ceilings. Their standing with Hispanic ***working-class*** voters is precarious at best, and success in Texas or Florida, recently imaginable, now looks to be increasingly slipping out of reach.

Democrats also face a very challenging Senate map in 2024. They will have to defend 23 seats, quite a few in right-leaning states like Montana and Ohio, while Republicans defend just 10. Given that they will start out nearly tied, Republicans are almost certain to win a Senate majority that year. This means, at the very least, that Democrats would be mad to push for eliminating the filibuster in the next Congress, as they repeatedly did over the past two years. But it also means that they need to be preparing the ground for a more moderate agenda to minimize their losses.

They should look to the kinds of legislation advanced through bipartisan negotiations in this Congress but mostly absent from their election pitches -- on infrastructure, manufacturing and guns. If instead Democrats double down on their activists' agenda or conclude from this election that the public wants permissive abortion laws everywhere, they will pay a heavy price, and will deserve to -- particularly if Republicans do learn their lesson and begin to put Trumpism behind them.

The election actually provided models for both parties in the states. For Republicans, Gov. Ron DeSantis's smashing re-election victory in Florida should offer real hope. Mr. DeSantis not only defeated his Democratic opponent by 20 points but also won Mr. Trump's own vote in Florida while Mr. Trump was calling him names -- which is roughly the magic act that the party's next leader will need to pull off. For Democrats, an analogous figure may be Gov. Jared Polis of Colorado, who also won a huge re-election victory. Mr. Polis's biography and disposition are a good fit for the party's activist base, but his style of governance is decidedly centrist, which is the mix Democrats will need to compete against a post-Trump Republican Party.

If the parties were up to their jobs, the 2024 presidential election might look like a race between two such savvy, effective governors, both in their 40s yet already proven executives. But if both parties refuse to learn from this election, that race might be a rematch between an 81-year-old and a 78-year-old who embody a set of options voters have now repeatedly rejected.

If one party can learn its lesson while the other doesn't, it could find itself with an extraordinary opportunity to break out of our age of deadlock with a real majority. But that would require understanding the 2022 midterms as a loss -- which, much as Democrats might hate to hear it, Republicans are better positioned to do.

Yuval Levin, a contributing Opinion writer, is the editor of National Affairs and the director of social, cultural and constitutional studies at the American Enterprise Institute. He is the author of ''A Time to Build: From Family and Community to Congress and the Campus, How Recommitting to Our Institutions Can Revive the American dream.''

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**Graphic**

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[***Does No Shutdown Mean There's a Sanity Caucus?***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:699M-7YJ1-DXY4-X06M-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

October 3, 2023 Tuesday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; Editorial Desk; Pg. 18; THE CONVERSATION

**Length:** 1666 words

**Byline:** By Gail Collins and Bret Stephens

**Body**

Gail Collins: I didn't think I'd be saying this, Bret, but we've dodged a shutdown. It's a stupendous moment for Kevin McCarthy. Now if he gets tossed out as House speaker by the right wing, he'll go down in history as the guy who sacrificed his career for the common good. As opposed to the best possible previous scenario: the boring career pol who was too scared to keep the government running.

What's your reaction?

Bret Stephens: Cutting billions in funding for Ukraine was a shame, but I'm guessing the aid will be restored to Kyiv pretty soon. Otherwise, it's a vast relief that the government will stay open. And, of course, watching someone like Matt Gaetz get politically humiliated is always pleasing.

Gail: And there was Gaetz, on cue, announcing Sunday that he would try to remove McCarthy from the speakership. Lord knows it's been a long trek, listening to the Republicans' constant yelping about deficit spending. Is it fair to point out that the national debt rose $7.8 trillion during the Trump administration?

Bret: Not fair at all, Gail. Everything that happened when Trump was president was so perfect, so beautiful.

OK, I'm kidding. One of my many laments about Trump is that he spent like a sailor on land and governed like a drunk at sea. I wish this would count against him with G.O.P. primary voters, but the truth is that ordinary Republicans aren't all that eager to really slash government spending, even if they say they don't like the government. I think Trump intuitively understood this, which is why attacks from Ron DeSantis or Nikki Haley aren't making a dent in Trump's poll numbers.

Which reminds me: Your thoughts on last week's Republican presidential debate? Whom did you dislike the least?

Gail: I suspect this is a setup to get me to praise your fave, Nikki Haley.

Bret: Not a setup. An ... invitation.

Gail: And hey, I can't argue that she wasn't the sanest of the group. Along with Chris Christie, the Republican Republicans love to hate.

Haley lightly criticized Trump's performance as president, and after the debate was over, he called her a ''birdbrain.''

You know, I have this tiny hope that the New Hampshire Republican voters will exercise a little independence and give her the top primary vote and an early lift. But kinda worried Christie will be in there, too, dividing the sanity caucus.

Bret: A great point. Christie should get out now and throw his support behind Haley. The only reason he got in the race in the first place was to chuck spears at Trump. It hit the wrong Donald -- Duck, not Trump -- and now all Christie is doing is dividing the anti-Trump field. I also wish Mike Pence would recognize reality and tuck back into bed with his wife of 38 years. That would give Haley a fighting chance to further destroy Vivek Ramaswamy and replace DeSantis as the most plausible Republican alternative to Trump. But I have to admit, my hopes of Trump not being the nominee are dwindling fast.

Gail: OK, New Hampshire Republicans, are you listening? Counting on you for a primary miracle.

Bret: Speaking of Trump crushing his opponents, I nearly jumped out of my skin when I saw that Washington Post/ABC News poll last week, giving Trump a 10-point lead over Joe Biden in a head-to-head matchup. I realize it might be an outlier, but I don't understand why no serious Democrat is willing to challenge Biden for the nomination. Help me out here.

Gail: The poll, if accurate, is a cry of crankiness from middle-of-the-roaders who wanted a more exciting candidate. Still, the only reason for a loyal Democrat to oppose Biden's nomination is that he's too old. I think he's been a darned good president. And while I do wish he had stepped aside, I'm certainly not going to have any trouble whatsoever arguing he's the better option.

This is when I get to point out that Trump is 77 and in worse physical condition than Biden. And has been saying some very weird things lately -- even for him.

Bret: Biden's main problem isn't that he's too old. There are plenty of sharp, fit and healthy 80-year-olds. His problem is that he looks and sounds feeble. Trump may be awful and insane and nearly as old as Biden, but one thing he isn't is low energy. And even if you think Biden is the best president since F.D.R. or Abe Lincoln, for that matter, he's got a 41.5 percent approval rating, a vice president who's even more unpopular than he is and major political liabilities on immigration, crime and inflation. Also now Robert F. Kennedy Jr. is hinting that he'll run as a third-party candidate in the general election, which would be on top of Biden's Cornel West problem.

Gail: Thank you for giving me a chance to howl about third-party candidates, who have no possibility of winning but every possibility of screwing up the majority's right to choose.

Bret: I suppose that, in theory, Kennedy could subtract a lot of votes from Trump, since both of them draw from the same well of Looney Tunes conspiracy theories. But my guess is that, as a Democrat, Biden would be the bigger loser from an independent Kennedy campaign. And if West persists in running, drawing progressive and Black voters away from Biden, then the chances of a Trump victory grow even larger.

Gail: But we were talking about President Joe ----

Bret: If you see Biden jumping out of the political hole he's in, please tell me how.

Gail: Just being sane, not under multitudinous indictments or facing a stupendous financial collapse is ... going to help. This is not going to be one of those sunny remember-when election victories like Barack Obama's or, I guess for Republicans, Ronald Reagan's. But given the Donald's multiple upcoming trials, I think it'll be a wow-what-a-crazy-year episode that ends with the majority rationally rejecting the worst possible option.

Bret: If a second Trump administration is the national nightmare you and I think it will be, then Democrats need a better political strategy than getting angry at third-party candidates while hoping that Trump goes to prison before he returns to the White House. The death of California's Dianne Feinstein is a sad event, and there's a lot to celebrate in her long and distinguished career, but it was hubris on her part to run for re-election in 2018, just as it was hubris for Ruth Bader Ginsburg not to step down while Obama was still president. Although in Feinstein's defense, at least she could be reasonably sure that a Democratic governor would choose her successor.

Gail: Yeah, when you've got a great job in the spotlight, it's hard to just let it go.

Bret: Which maybe explains the guy in the White House. Sorry, go on.

Gail: I thought Feinstein should have resigned when she became incapacitated. And Ginsburg diminished a great legacy by hanging on to her job when she was sick and close to death, thereby paving the way for Trump to complete his takeover of the Supreme Court.

We have to celebrate the people who surrender the spotlight voluntarily, like Nancy Pelosi, who is still serving the country as a member of Congress but gave up her party's House leadership to let the next generation be in the center of attention.

Hey -- a positive thought! Any good news you want to share?

Bret: I don't know if this is good news per se, but I was delighted to hear Mark Milley, the retiring chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, dismiss Trump as a ''wannabe dictator'' after his former boss suggested the general's actions with regard to China would have once been punishable by death. Milley emphasized the military's fidelity to the Constitution, which is yet another reminder that Democrats should put aside their 50 years of misgivings about the Defense Department and embrace its vital role in defending democracy at home and abroad.

Hoping for agreement ...

Gail: Total agreement about the Defense Department having a vital role. Not so much about the Defense Department having an efficient operation. Way too much waste, which mostly comes from members of Congress lobbying to keep job-creating military facilities in their districts and pressure to pick up wasteful contracts because they're supported by, um, members of Congress.

Bret: I'll make a modest bet that, in another few years, Democrats will be the strong-on-defense party, just as they were in the days of Jack Kennedy. It's part of the great ideological switcheroo taking place right now between the parties: Republicans sound a lot like Democrats of yesteryear -- ***working-class*** values, quasi-isolationist in their foreign policy, indifferent to the moral character of their leaders -- while Democrats have become the party of college-educated managerial types who want to stand up to Russia and uphold moral integrity in political leadership.

Gail: Well, we'll see. At least we're ending on a consensus of sorts: that Trump is going to be doing something awful soon. Granted, that's not the toughest prediction to make. So before we go, give me one of your great quotes to celebrate the arrival of October.

Bret: Not really a celebration, but a Gerard Manley Hopkins poem I love:

Márgarét, áre you gríevingOver Goldengrove unleaving?Leáves like the things of man, youWith your fresh thoughts care for, can you?Ah! ás the heart grows olderIt will come to such sights colderBy and by, nor spare a sighThough worlds of wanwood leafmeal lie;And yet you wíll weep and know why.Now no matter, child, the name:Sórrow's spríngs áre the same.Nor mouth had, no nor mind, expressedWhat heart heard of, ghost guessed:It ís the blight man was born for,It is Margaret you mourn for.

I memorized it many years ago, thanks to my teacher and friend Dr. Peter Bach. He, better than anyone, knows its meaning.

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**Graphic**

PHOTO (PHOTOGRAPH BY HAIYUN JIANG FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A18.

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[***1-Percenters Are Skewered With Gusto***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:66WK-KFB1-DXY4-X2KW-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

November 18, 2022 Friday

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**Length:** 461 words

**Byline:** By Jeannette Catsoulis

**Body**

Ralph Fiennes and Anya Taylor-Joy face off in this pitch-black satire of class and high-end dining.

There is nothing subtle about ''The Menu,'' but that's a large part of its charm. Like Hawthorn, the exclusive upscale restaurant where most of the action takes place, this brutal satire of class division -- viewed through the lens of high-end gorging -- is ruthlessly focused and gleamingly efficient. And by unabashedly flaunting its crowd-pleasing ambitions, the script (by Seth Reiss and Will Tracy) cheekily skirts the very pretentiousness it aims to skewer.

At Hawthorn, set on its own island in the Pacific Northwest, every dish comes with a side of ego and a lecture on its provenance by Julian Slowik (Ralph Fiennes), a rock-star chef with a drill-sergeant's demeanor. In his dining room, mere feet from an army of obsequious underlings, drooling one-percenters have each dropped $1,250 to wrap their gums around Slowik's fabled tasting menu. Among them are a star-struck foodie (Nicholas Hoult) and his last-minute date, Margot (Anya Taylor-Joy); an arrogant restaurant critic (Janet McTeer); three odious tech workers (Rob Yang, Arturo Castro and Mark St. Cyr); and a fading movie star (John Leguizamo) hoping to pitch a culinary travel show. All except Margot have been carefully chosen, and all are about to become players in Slowik's elaborate opera of humiliation, self-loathing and revenge.

[Video: Watch on YouTube.]

From amuse-bouche to dessert, Slowik's creations -- and the diners' punishments -- grow steadily more bizarre and threatening. In service to a gleefully malicious tone, Mark Mylod's direction is cool, tight and clipped, the actors slotting neatly into characters so unsympathetic we become willing accessories to their suffering. Fiennes is fabulous as a man so determined to turn food into art that he's forgotten its very purpose; his disgust for the act of eating has long extinguished any joy in cooking.

''Even your hot dishes are cold,'' spits Margot, the audience surrogate and the first to challenge the insult embedded in each course, like the ''bread plate'' with no bread. Intrigued by her ***working-class*** wiliness, Slowik is unsettled: He can see that she's willing to take him on.

Whisking splashes of horror into culinary comedy (''Don't touch the protein, it's immature,'' admonishes the forbidding hostess during a smokehouse tour), ''The Menu'' is black, broad and sometimes clumsy, attacking its issues more often with cleaver than paring knife. Yet everyone is having such a good time, it's impossible not to join them. The movie's eye might be on haute cuisine, but its heart is pure fish and chips.

The MenuRated R for slaying, suicide and exuberant oversaucing. Running time: 1 hour 46 minutes. In theaters.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2022/11/17/movies/the-menu-review.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/11/17/movies/the-menu-review.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: Ralph Fiennes as an imperious chef and Anya Taylor-Joy as a resistant diner in ''The Menu,'' directed by Mark Mylod. (PHOTOGRAPH BY ERIC ZACHANOWICH/20TH CENTURY STUDIOS) This article appeared in print on page C6.

**Load-Date:** November 18, 2022

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[***Rishi Sunak, With Elite Pedigree, Must Now Sell Britain on Austerity***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:66WN-CNR1-DXY4-X393-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Byline:** Mark Landler and Stephen Castle

**Highlight:** The country’s new prime minister must now persuade ordinary Britons that they should support his government through a painful ordeal of tax increases, spending cuts and a recession.

**Body**

The country’s new prime minister must now persuade ordinary Britons that they should support his government through a painful ordeal of tax increases, spending cuts and a recession.

LONDON — Jeremy Hunt, Britain’s finance chief, presented a doom-and-gloom budget this week, but it is ultimately the job of his boss, Rishi Sunak, to sell it. And it is hard to imagine a more improbable evangelist than this 42-year-old Conservative prime minister and former Goldman Sachs banker.

With an elite pedigree and a privileged lifestyle, Mr. Sunak must now persuade ordinary Britons that they should support his government through a painful ordeal of tax increases, spending cuts and a recession that could result in the biggest fall in household income since the records began in 1956.

While Mr. Sunak has tried to cushion the blow by increasing the national living wage, which protects lower-income people, and by lifting funding for schools and the National Health Service, his budget also reinforced stereotypes about the Tory Party as a defender of the establishment.

Amid a raft of tax increases on individuals and companies, for example, the government lowered taxes on banks. Mr. Sunak did not reverse a decision by his predecessor, Liz Truss, to lift a cap on bonuses paid to bankers, a measure that even Prime Minister Boris Johnson resisted because he feared a backlash.

Most symbolically, Mr. Sunak has rejected calls to eliminate a loophole that allows people to claim non-domiciled status in Britain and avoid paying British tax on income from outside the country. His wife, Akshata Murty, the daughter of an Indian technology billionaire, was a beneficiary of this loophole, though she agreed to pay British taxes after an outcry over the situation threatened her husband.

The opposition Labour Party lost no time in making this an issue, suggesting that Mr. Hunt, a wealthy former entrepreneur who also has a foreign-born wife, would have been unable to persuade Mr. Sunak to approve getting rid of the loophole.

“He refuses to act, and I wonder why. Maybe that was the one policy that couldn’t get signed off by No. 10,” said Labour’s shadow chancellor, Rachel Reeves, alluding to the prime minister’s residence. “I say, if you make Britain your home, you should pay your taxes here too.”

Some political analysts said they were surprised the government did not seize the chance to close the loophole and neutralize an easy line of attack. They suggested it was less a reflection of Mr. Sunak’s family circumstances than of his party’s deep-rooted resistance to eliminating it.

“It would be such an easy thing to do and yet they didn’t do it,” said Steven Fielding, emeritus professor of political history at the University of Nottingham. “It does suggest that he hasn’t got the capacity to transcend the problems his party is in.”

Mr. Sunak inherited a party exhausted and divided after 12 years in power. Its image has been tarnished by Mr. Johnson’s lockdown-breaking parties during the coronavirus pandemic, and by Ms. Truss’ ill-fated experiment in trickle-down tax policy, which rattled the financial markets and led to her ouster [*after only 50 days in office*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/20/world/europe/liz-truss-resigns-conservative-party.html).

Mr. Sunak’s swift return to fiscal orthodoxy has soothed the markets. Even before Mr. Hunt’s speech, the government had largely removed what market wags referred to as Britain’s “moron risk premium,” the extra borrowing costs it was forced to pay because investors no longer trusted it.

“This was not about the market’s reaction,” said Mujtaba Rahman, an analyst at the political risk consultancy Eurasia Group. “The story now is political. Has Sunak done this in a way that will keep the Tory Party together?”

Mr. Sunak’s strategy is to stabilize the public finances, without prolonging a recession, in the hopes that a recovery would begin before the next election, which must take place by January 2025. By then, the Conservatives could try to persuade voters that, having weathered the storm, it was not worth risking a change of government that could jeopardize any recovery.

But Mr. Sunak, however competent, lacks charisma. Analysts said he has yet to hone a compelling political message, particularly for the far-flung coalition forged by Mr. Johnson in 2019, which included ***working-class*** voters in England’s industrial north drawn by his promise to “Get Brexit done.”

The headwinds he faces are immense. The projected 7 percent decline in household income over the next two years means that Britons may not return to the living standard they had last year until 2027, said Matthew Goodwin, a professor of politics at the University of Kent. That would be a lost decade of prosperity, which he said voters are currently blaming on the Conservative government.

“Sunak is going to have to try somehow to hold together an electorate that is about to be pounded,” Professor Goodwin said. “How on earth, in that economic context, do you hold together an electorate that has become more ***working class*** and more economically precarious than it was in the 2010s?”

In postponing most of the spending cuts until after the next election, Mr. Hunt did put off some of the pain. He also confronted Labour with a dilemma because the party will be challenged on whether it would stick to those plans if elected.

When Labour last came to power, in 1997, it adhered to the outgoing Conservative government’s fiscal plans for two years after winning power. But doing so this time would be a big constraint. At a time of proliferating labor unrest, Mr. Sunak may also try to exploit Labour’s ties to trade unions.

The opposition, some analysts said, should emphasize the damage that would be done to Britain’s public services if the spending cuts proposed by Mr. Hunt were carried out. Unlike the last round of austerity, engineered by Prime Minister David Cameron in 2010, there is far less fat to cut this time.

“If I were Labour, I would say, ‘You’re still proposing very large pay cuts for public servants and for public services, which are already flat on their backs,’” said Jonathan Portes, a professor of economics and public policy at Kings College London. “We need to rebuild the public sector.”

There is no evidence in polling that Mr. Sunak’s family wealth is, by itself, a problem for voters. But the disclosure of his wife’s tax status almost derailed his political career last April because, analysts said, it raised fairness issues. His thin-skinned reaction to the criticism, they said, revealed a lack of political instincts.

Though Mr. Sunak may be proficient at the basics of governance, Professor Fielding of the University of Nottingham likened him to the captain of the Titanic, who sees the electoral dangers looming ahead but has not fully changed course.

“He’s not going to sufficiently change public perceptions of his government, which are uniquely bad,” Professor Fielding said. “He’s hoping the iceberg moves — and icebergs tend not to move.”

PHOTO: Rishi Sunak This article appeared in print on page A10.

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**End of Document**



[***Biden Hammers Republicans on the Economy, With Eye on 2024***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67DC-5JF1-JBG3-61N2-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** Jim Tankersley

**Highlight:** The president has found a welcome foil in a new conservative House majority and its tax and spending plans, sharpening a potential re-election message.

**Body**

The president has found a welcome foil in a new conservative House majority and its tax and spending plans, sharpening a potential re-election message.

WASHINGTON — President Biden on Thursday assailed House Republicans over their tax and spending plans, including potential changes to popular retirement programs, ahead of what is likely to be a run for re-election.

In a speech in Springfield, Va., Mr. Biden sought to reframe the economic narrative away from the rapid price increases that have dogged much of his first two years in office and toward his stewardship of an economy that has churned out steady growth and strong job gains.

Mr. Biden, speaking to members of a steamfitters union, sought to take credit for the strength of the labor market, moderating inflation and news from the Commerce Department on Thursday morning that the [*economy had grown at an annualized pace of 2.9 percent*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2023/01/26/business/gdp-growth-inflation) at the end of last year. In contrast, he cast House Republicans and their economic policy proposals as roadblocks to continued improvement.

“At the time I was sworn in, the pandemic was raging and the economy was reeling,” Mr. Biden said before ticking through the actions he had taken to aid the recovery. Those included [*$1.9 trillion in pandemic and economic aid*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2021/stimulus-check-plan-details); a bipartisan bill to repair and upgrade roads, bridges, water pipes and other infrastructure; and a [*sweeping industrial policy bill*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/01/01/technology/us-chip-making-china-invest.html) to spur domestic investment in advanced manufacturing sectors like semiconductors and speed research and development to seed new industries.

Republicans have accused the Biden administration of fanning inflation by funneling too much federal money into the economy, and have called for deep spending cuts and other fiscal changes.

Mr. Biden denounced those proposals, including a plan to replace federal income taxes with a national sales tax, curb safety net spending and risk a government default by refusing to raise the federal borrowing limit without deep spending cuts. Why, he asked, “would the Americans give up the progress we’ve made for the chaos they’re suggesting?”

“I will not let anyone use the full faith and credit of the United States as a bargaining chip,” Mr. Biden said, reiterating his refusal to negotiate over raising the debt limit. “The United States of America — we pay our debts.”

But the president also sought to reach out to ***working-class*** voters — in places like his native Scranton, Pa. — who have increasingly voted for Republicans in recent elections. Mr. Biden said those voters had been left behind by American economic policy in recent years, and he tried to woo them back by promising that his policies would continue to bring high-paying manufacturing jobs that do not require a college degree to people who feel “invisible” in the economy.

“They remember, in my old neighborhoods, why the jobs went away,” Mr. Biden said, vowing that under his policies “nobody’s left behind.”

The speech built on a pattern for Mr. Biden, who has found the new and narrow Republican majority to be both a political threat and an opportunity.

Republicans in the chamber have begun a series of investigations into Mr. Biden, his family and his administration. They have also demanded deep cuts in federal spending in exchange for raising the borrowing limit, a position that risks an economic catastrophe given the huge sums of money that the United States borrows to pay for its financial obligations.

The president has refused to tie any spending cuts to raising the debt limit and has called on Congress to increase the [*$31.4 trillion cap*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/01/22/business/economy/federal-debt-history.html) so the nation can continue paying its bills and avoid a federal default.

But Mr. Biden, who is facing a divided Congress for the first time in his presidency, is increasingly acting as if the newly empowered conservatives have given him a political opening on economic policy. As he prepares for a likely re-election bid in 2024, he is seizing on the least popular proposals floated by House members to cast himself as a champion of the ***working class***, retirees and economic progress.

Mr. Biden’s speech on Thursday waded deep into policy details, including the acreage of western timber burned in fires linked to climate change, the global breakdown of advanced chip production and the average salary of new manufacturing jobs, as he recounted his legislative accomplishments.

House Republicans have not yet released a detailed or unified economic agenda, and they have not made a clear set of demands for raising the debt limit, though they largely agree that Mr. Biden must accept significant spending curbs.

But members and factions of the Republican conference have pushed for votes on a variety of proposals that have little support among voters, including [*raising the retirement age for Social Security*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/11/02/us/politics/republicans-social-security-medicare.html) and Medicare and replacing the federal income tax with a national sales tax.

Mr. Biden has sought to brand the entire Republican Party with those proposals, even though it is not clear if the measures have majority support in the conference or will ever come to a vote.

Former President Donald J. Trump, who has already announced his 2024 bid for the White House, has [*urged Republicans not to touch the safety-net program*](https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2023/01/20/trump-house-republicans-social-security-medicare/)s. Other party leaders have urged Republicans not to rule out those cuts. “We should not draw lines in the sand or dismiss any option out of hand, but instead seriously discuss the trade-offs of proposals,” Senator Michael D. Crapo of Idaho, the top Republican on the Finance Committee, [*wrote in an opinion piece*](https://www.foxnews.com/opinion/biden-derelict-duty-debt-limit-step-up-game) for Fox News, in which he called for Mr. Biden to negotiate over raising the debt limit.

Representative Kevin Hern, Republican of Oklahoma, who sits on the House Ways and Means Committee, told a tax conference in Washington this week that there are “lots of problems” with the plan to replace the income tax with a so-called fair tax on consumption. Those include incentives for policymakers to allow prices to rise rapidly in the economy in order to generate more revenue from the sales tax, he noted.

“Let’s just say it’s going to be very interesting,” Mr. Hern said at the D.C. Bar Taxation Community’s annual tax conference. “I haven’t found a Ways and Means member that’s for it.”

Despite those internal disagreements, Mr. Biden has been happy to pick and choose unpopular Republican ideas and frame them as the true contrast to his economic agenda. He has pointedly refused to cut safety-net programs and threatened to veto such efforts.

“The president is building an economy from the bottom up and the middle out, and protecting Social Security and Medicare,” Karine Jean-Pierre, the White House press secretary, told reporters this week. “Republicans want to cut Social Security, want to cut Medicare — programs Americans have earned, have paid in — and impose a 30 percent national sales tax that will increase taxes on working families. That is what they have said they want to do, and that is clearly their plan.”

The focus on Republicans has allowed Mr. Biden to divert the economic conversation from inflation, which hit 40-year highs last year but receded in the past several months, though it remains above historical norms. On Thursday, he chided Republicans for a vote to reduce funding for I.R.S. enforcement against wealthy tax cheats — a move the Congressional Budget Office says would add to the budget deficit, and which Mr. Biden cast as inflationary.

“They campaigned on inflation,” Mr. Biden said. “They didn’t say if elected, they planned to make it worse.”

Progressive groups see an opportunity for Mr. Biden to score political points and define the economic issue before the 2024 campaign begins in earnest. That is in part because polls suggest Americans have little appetite for Social Security or Medicare cuts, and have far less focus on the national debt than House Republicans do.

“It is a political gift,” said Lindsay Owens, the executive director of the Groundwork Collaborative, a liberal nonprofit in Washington.

PHOTO: Speaking to union members in Springfield, Va., President Biden tried to cast proposals by House Republicans as roadblocks to economic improvement. Mr. Biden is facing a divided Congress for the first time in his presidency (PHOTOGRAPH BY DOUG MILLS/THE NEW YORK TIMES) (B4) This article appeared in print on page B1, B4.

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**End of Document**



[***Three Great Documentaries to Stream***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68V2-KWM1-DXY4-X3TY-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** Ben Kenigsberg

**Highlight:** This month’s picks include a Vietnam War portrait, an analysis of Los Angeles as a film subject and a look into the admissions process for an elite film school.

**Body**

This month’s picks include a Vietnam War portrait, an analysis of Los Angeles as a film subject and a look into the admissions process for an elite film school.

The proliferation of documentaries on streaming services makes it difficult to choose what to watch. Each month, we’ll choose three nonfiction films — classics, overlooked recent docs and more — that will reward your time.

‘Hearts and Minds’ (1975)

Stream it on the [*Criterion Channel*](https://www.criterionchannel.com/hearts-and-minds) and [*Max*](https://www.max.com/movies/2c43837c-73a0-4de2-af8e-43a7410b27a8). Rent it on [*Amazon*](https://www.amazon.com/Hearts-Minds-Georges-Bidault/dp/B004D73YLI) and [*Apple TV*](https://tv.apple.com/us/movie/hearts-and-minds/umc.cmc.pp7uw3y1pzwd6lobam1mzxyz).

“We must be ready to fight in Vietnam,” President Lyndon Johnson [*said in 1965*](https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/remarks-dinner-meeting-the-texas-electric-cooperatives-inc), “but the ultimate victory will depend upon the hearts and the minds of the people who actually live out there.” Putting that notion to the test, Peter Davis’s landmark documentary on the war, first shown in 1974, methodically makes the case that the hearts and minds of the Vietnamese people were impossibly far apart from those of the government and military officials in the United States.

Davis advances his argument through pointed, polemical juxtapositions. For instance, he shows the American lieutenant George T. Coker, who had been a prisoner of war from 1966 to 1973, enthusiastically discussing the technological prowess of air operations in Vietnam (“A World War II aviator would not even dream of doing the things we did. It’s definitely the ultimate in aviation”) before immediately cutting to a shot of a Vietnamese man driving a horse-drawn carriage. He jumps from Diem Chau, a Vietnamese magazine editor, describing the war as a fight for independence to a tame American Revolutionary War re-enactment in Westchester County.

This dialectical back-and-forth struck some critics in the 1970s as cheap. [*Reviewing the film in The New York Times*](https://www.nytimes.com/1975/03/24/archives/hearts-and-minds-a-film-study-of-power.html), Vincent Canby, responding to the detractors, cited a moment in which Davis cuts from a burial in Vietnam to an interview with Gen. William C. Westmoreland — who claims that the Vietnamese don’t “put the same high price on life as does the Westerner” — as an instance in which Davis had “loaded his dice.”

But the filmmaker’s strategy, and the interweaving of news footage and interviews, has only become more prevalent in documentaries in the past 50 years. It’s hard not to look at “Hearts and Minds” as ahead of its time. The material itself is still jaw-dropping. A Vietnamese man walks around the rubble of his home and lists all the relatives who were killed in a bombing. (His daughter was feeding pigs. “She is dead,” he says through an interpreter. “The pigs are alive.”) At the film’s end, the former Marine Corps pilot Randy Floyd is asked if the United States has learned anything from its involvement in Vietnam. “I think we’re trying not to,” he says.

‘Los Angeles Plays Itself’ (2004)

Stream it on [*Kanopy*](https://www.kanopy.com/en/product/5430733) and [*Mubi*](https://mubi.com/films/los-angeles-plays-itself). Rent it on [*Google Play*](https://play.google.com/store/movies/details/Los_Angeles_Plays_Itself?id=wIMZ9rUbv4s&amp;hl=en_US&amp;gl=US) and [*Vudu*](https://www.vudu.com/content/movies/details/Los-Angeles-Plays-Itself/575785).

[Video: [*Watch on YouTube.*](http://youtube.com/embed/Ifii8LvR-ss)]

Although [*it has been 20 years*](https://www.nytimes.com/2004/07/25/movies/film-la-residential.html) since the premiere of “Los Angeles Plays Itself,” the filmmaker and [*academic*](https://directory.calarts.edu/film-video/thom-andersen) Thom Andersen’s sprawling critique of how cinema has depicted and distorted the city, you still occasionally hear its title referred to incorrectly, as “L.A. Plays Itself.” Shortening the name in this context is wrong for two reasons. For one, Andersen’s narration — it’s his text, but Encke King recites the voice-over — states outright that the abbreviation makes him cringe. (Andersen blames movies for introducing the “slightly derisive diminutive.”) For another, “L.A. Plays Itself” is an entirely different film, directed by Fred Halsted, from 1972 — a “gay porn masterpiece,” in Andersen’s estimation, that, its acronym notwithstanding, “Los Angeles Plays Itself” holds up as an example of how to get the city right.

Many of Andersen’s other touchstones are works of independent or outsider cinema. He praises the original “Gone in 60 Seconds” (1974) for the “stubbornly, even perversely literalist” geography of its action sequences. He holds up neorealist-inflected work like Kent Mackenzie’s “The Exiles” and the films of the [*L.A. Rebellion directors*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/11/movies/la-rebellion-charles-burnett.html) Charles Burnett, Billy Woodberry and Haile Gerima as movies that deigned to acknowledge a ***working-class*** Los Angeles beyond Hollywood. They showed that people of color live in Los Angeles, portrayed the hard work of keeping a job and raising a family, and — in the case of Gerima’s “Bush Mama” — saw the police’s presence from the vantage point of Black residents.

Part of Andersen’s project is to dispel myths about Los Angeles history that even widely admired films like “Chinatown” and “L.A. Confidential” have propagated. But the misrepresentations interest him too. “If we can appreciate documentaries for their dramatic qualities,” Andersen posits at the beginning, “perhaps we can appreciate fiction films for their documentary revelations.” He looks at recognizable architectural marvels that have frequently stood in for somewhere else, like the Bradbury Building downtown (which has played Burma, London, San Francisco and New York) and Frank Lloyd Wright’s [*Ennis House*](https://franklloydwright.org/site/ennis-house/). Along with “The Exiles,” noirs like “Kiss Me Deadly” and “Criss Cross” are singled out for serving as photographic records of the demolished neighborhood of Bunker Hill. Mack Sennett filmed in Edendale, an area that, per the narration, “somehow got lost between Echo Park and Silver Lake.”

And while “Los Angeles Plays Itself” has been tweaked since it first appeared (the original cut [*didn’t include “Mulholland Drive,” for example*](https://web.archive.org/web/20050109035253/https:/cinema-scope.com/cs20/spo_andersen_collat.htm)), it remains, as it was two decades ago, a brilliant act of preservation and contextualization in its own right.

‘The Competition’ (2016)

Stream it on [*Kanopy*](https://www.kanopy.com/en/product/competition-1) and [*Metrograph*](https://metrograph.com/at-home-movie/?at_home_movie_id=61ba2dc2efacaf71905777fd). Rent it on [*Amazon*](https://www.amazon.com/Competition-Alain-Bergala/dp/B087791J64/ref=tmm_aiv_swatch_0?_encoding=UTF8&amp;qid=&amp;sr=), [*Apple TV*](https://tv.apple.com/us/movie/the-competition/umc.cmc.1dblv43g42upr7vy5sixramjk), [*Google Play*](https://play.google.com/store/movies/details/The_Competition?gl=US&amp;hl=en&amp;id=A6TQGdd6yAE.P), [*Kino Now*](https://kinonow.com/film/the-competition/5e90ab3d88724e0001f3fbdb), and [*Vudu*](https://www.vudu.com/content/movies/details/The-Competition/1398773).

[Video: [*Watch on YouTube.*](http://youtube.com/embed/o2FR9D6kZZ0)]

The documentarian Claire Simon won acclaim at this year’s Berlin International Film Festival for “Our Body,” shot at a hospital in Paris; it observes patients undergoing types of medical care that are specific to women. You can prepare for the film, which opens in New York on Friday, with Simon’s likewise excellent [*“The Competition,”*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/02/21/movies/the-competition-review.html) which takes a similar fly-on-the-wall approach to capturing the cutthroat admissions process at La Fémis, France’s pre-eminent film school.

The applicants are vetted by industry professionals — programmers and filmmakers from a variety of disciplines — who are themselves often at loggerheads about exam scores and who to admit. Simon’s film captures several steps in what must be one of the most thorough film-school-entry ordeals anywhere in the world. We see applicants sitting in a packed auditorium with hundreds of others writing down their reactions to a blind screening. Elsewhere, some are grilled about their screenplay and set design ideas. The examiners themselves harbor doubts about their verdicts. (“Imagine Cronenberg at 18,” one says of a student who registers as kind of crazy. “Dreyer wouldn’t exactly have been full of the joys of life in an interview,” says another.) The sheer subjectivity of predicting how anyone might develop as an artist — and whether school would help with that — is daunting.

For 45 minutes in the second hour, Simon lets viewers sit in on one interview after another. Her approach offers lessons applicable not just to admissions at La Fémis, but also to admissions and self-presentations anywhere. We watch a prospective student answer questions; he or she leaves the room; and then the interviewing panelists discuss what they just saw. This strategy puts viewers in the same position as the interrogators. You quickly develop a sense of when a student might be dismissed for being too polished (one panelist says he’s “wary of people who try to come off too well”), but much of what impresses and underwhelms the judges is a surprise. Ultimately, “The Competition” isn’t merely about film school. It’s a sobering depiction of how random success can be.

PHOTO: An American soldier in the Vietnam War documentary “Hearts and Minds.” (PHOTOGRAPH BY Rialto Pictures FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

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**End of Document**



[***Making Manufacturing Greater Again***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:682F-2641-JBG3-61DM-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** By Paul Krugman

**Body**

It can be hard to remember, but initially MAGA seemed to be about more than election lies and cultural/racial grievance. One central theme of Donald Trump's 2016 campaign was a promise to bring manufacturing jobs back to the United States. And once in office he tried to make good on this promise by slapping tariffs on many imports and engineering tax cuts that were supposed to induce corporations to invest in America rather than overseas.

Unfortunately, his policies were a flop: The promised manufacturing revival never happened.

Remarkably, however, President Biden appears to be presiding over the kind of manufacturing surge Trump had promised. If you follow such things, it seems as if hardly a week goes by without the announcement of plans to build a major new factory in response to Biden-era legislation.

This impression turns out to be true. The advocacy group Climate Power has tracked plans to build scores of clean-energy factories, producing batteries, electric vehicles and more since the passage of the Inflation Reduction Act (which, despite its name, is largely a climate law). There have also been many factory announcements tied to the CHIPS and Science Act, intended to promote domestic semiconductor production.

And all of this isn't just talk. While many of the announced projects will presumably take time to get fully underway, spending on manufacturing construction has already soared; it's currently running about 75 percent higher than at any point during the Trump years, and it seems set to go much higher. Goldman Sachs predicts that the Inflation Reduction Act will involve substantially higher government outlays than was initially projected but will also induce trillions of dollars in private investment.

Before I get into the reasons Biden's manufacturing push is succeeding where Trump's failed, a few caveats:

First, no policy can restore the economy of the 1950s, when 30 percent of U.S. workers were employed in manufacturing. All advanced nations, even those like Germany that run persistent trade surpluses, are increasingly becoming service economies with a declining share of manufacturing in employment.

Second, we shouldn't fetishize manufacturing. A good job is a good job; there's nothing inherently superior about manufacturing as opposed to health care or even entertainment (a major U.S. export).

Third, some of the current manufacturing surge reflects Buy American rules that are problematic in a couple of ways: They raise costs and create trade frictions with our allies.

The defense of Biden policy goes something like this: The CHIPS Act promotes domestic manufacturing because it's about national security in a time of growing tension with China. The Inflation Reduction Act is de facto protectionist in part because that was the only way to get crucial climate legislation passed, but it also promotes domestic manufacturing to help lagging regions within the United States and blue-collar workers.

We can argue about these pros and cons, but my question right now is about results: Why is Biden's manufacturing push succeeding where Trump's failed?

Trump's tariffs seem to have failed to boost manufacturing in part out of sheer incompetence: By raising the cost of steel and other industrial inputs, they made U.S. industry as a whole less competitive, and overall probably reduced manufacturing employment.

As for Trump's tax cut, it was basically trickle-down economics: Increase corporations' after-tax profits and hope they create more jobs. This failed (as trickle-down consistently does) because the underlying premise was wrong: Taxes on corporate profits weren't a significant factor deterring investment in the United States, so the tax cut didn't boost U.S. manufacturing. All it did was give corporations a financial windfall.

Biden's policies, by contrast, might be described as trickle-up economics. Instead of offering corporations broad tax cuts, they provide incentives for the transition to an economy that runs on renewable energy: tax credits for production of or investment in clean energy, for consumers who purchase electric vehicles or energy-efficient appliances, and so on. Combined with Buy American provisions, these incentives will create increased demand for a wide range of U.S.-produced manufactured goods, from batteries to electric motors.

And business is responding to that prospective increase in demand by investing a lot more in American manufacturing than it has for a long time.

Can this policy be criticized? Of course. Biden may be trying to kill too many birds with one stone -- using targeted tax credits to save the planet and create good blue-collar jobs and lift up lagging regions. Trying to do all these things at once may lead to doing none of them especially well.

And it's not at all clear whether these policies will succeed in their implicit political goal: winning back ***working-class*** voters who have gone down the MAGA rabbit hole.

Still, the fact is that Biden is actually doing something Trump boasted about but never achieved: promoting a significant revival in U.S. manufacturing.

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**Graphic**

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[***There's No Such Thing As a Bad Movie Accent***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6901-JT81-JBG3-6005-00000-00&context=1519360)

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Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section C; Column 0; The Arts/Cultural Desk; Pg. 1

**Length:** 1285 words

**Byline:** By Kyle Buchanan

**Body**

Even the over-the-top ones, like Uma Thurman's Southern drawl in ''Red, White & Royal Blue,'' can be awfully fun.

''Red, White & Royal Blue'' waits just seven and a half minutes to get to the good stuff, and by that I'm not referring to the movie's big romance, between a hot British prince and the hot son of the American president, but to its even bigger accent, a syrupy Southern drawl from Uma Thurman that may be this season's most audacious special effect. Imagine Gina Gershon in ''Showgirls'' crossed with Ross Perot and you'll get halfway there -- the rest of the distance must be traveled holding a mint julep that's in constant, delicious danger of spilling.

President Uma Thurman (the actual character name is incidental, since you will never not be thinking ''President Uma Thurman'' when she's onscreen) is introduced accent-first, with her back to the camera, because encountering this voice head-on would surely be too much for the unprepared Prime Video viewers who stumbled upon the movie after bingeing ''Bosch.'' We meet her as she's busy lecturing her hot son about his initial clash with the hot prince. ''Darlin','' President Uma Thurman says, ''yew've dun some pretty stupid things in yur day, buh this ...''

To say my ears perked up is an understatement: It was as though Arianna Huffington had appeared before me reciting a monologue from ''True Blood.'' This is not an accent you should attempt while operating heavy machinery, but Thurman ladles it on so thick that you have to admire the movie-star chutzpah. I even started to miss her whenever ''Red, White & Royal Blue'' cut back to the hot boys' romantic misadventures: Why are we spending time on these tedious hunks when the most suspenseful thing about the movie is how President Uma Thurman will pronounce any given word?

[Video: Watch on YouTube.]

Some reviews have taken issue with Thurman's performance, a complaint I only agree with up to a point. Is she miscast? Well, maybe! If you're looking for someone to play a salt-of-the-earth politician with ***working-class*** roots, you wouldn't naturally think of the ''Pulp Fiction'' star, whose bearing is so patrician that she was once the go-to actress for noblewomen and goddesses. And though President Thurman's hot gay son is hesitant to come out to her, that didn't really track for me: How can you fear homophobia from a woman who once did a five-episode arc on ''Smash''?

So yes, I'll concede all that, but I have to push back when people start complaining about Thurman's accent. Can something that brings us this much pleasure possibly be ''bad''? Thurman adds a jolt of oh-you're-really-going-for-it gusto to each of her scenes in ''Red, White & Royal Blue,'' and the performance is a hoot; though her lines may be as Southern-smothered as grits, I found them every bit as tasty. Others may nitpick, but all I know is that I was gaga for it -- and I don't mean ''gaga'' as in enthusiastic, I mean ''gaga'' as in whatever Lady Gaga was doing in ''House of Gucci.''

[Video: Watch on YouTube.]

Then again, I've never been a stickler for cinematic accents. Some people want to be impressed by a movie, but I ask only to be entertained. Sure, it's technically imposing when someone nails an accent, but what kind of buzzkill waits in the audience with a poised red pen? In the era of the ultra-glossy $200 million blockbuster, a little bit of artifice can be welcome and even touching: It's a reminder that every movie comes down to a whole bunch of human beings who've decided to play pretend for you.

Some people complain that an over-the-top accent takes them out of the reality of the film, but I find it pulls me into the pocket of surreality that every movie must muster. For instance, I have no idea if Benny Safdie's jarring Hungarian accent in ''Oppenheimer'' is realistic, and frankly, I don't care: That focus-pulling voice feels right for the physicist Edward Teller, an overweening character who refuses to mesh with the other scientists. Some critics quibbled with the Italian accents in ''House of Gucci,'' but I can't imagine those two and a half hours without them. If Lady Gaga and Jared Leto weren't talking like Wario by way of ''Moonstruck,'' the movie would have been sapped of all its fun!

The ''House of Gucci'' director Ridley Scott is hardly a purist when it comes to accents. His forthcoming war film ''Napoleon'' and recent drama ''The Last Duel'' both take place in France, but the actors are basically speaking ... well, let's say affected English. Scott once said that forcing French accents on the stars of ''The Last Duel'' would have been ''a disaster,'' but on that count, I beg to differ. Imagine Ben Affleck winding up to crucial lines with a snooty ''a-hon-hon-hon!'' Now that you have, you won't want to go without.

Often, the people who get angriest about accents are the ones who say, ''I'm actually from there, and that's not how people talk in real life.'' But movies aren't real life and were never supposed to be. They're fun-house mirrors meant to reflect us back in unusual ways, dream worlds that ask us to believe in things as outlandish as multiverses, 10-foot-tall blue people, or Mark Wahlberg playing a science teacher.

As a native of Southern California, I am absolutely thrilled when actors try our valley cadences (has Emma Watson ever been better than in ''The Bling Ring''?) and I wouldn't dream of fact-checking them for accuracy. I'm even amused by how many Brits speak American in a monotone clench that recalls Mira Sorvino in ''Romy and Michele's High School Reunion'': You're doing that to entertain me? How cute!

When it comes to accent work, you don't have to be good, you just have to be interesting. I admit, though, that I may be speaking from personal experience. A high school teacher once challenged me to speak in a British accent in front of the class, and in a panic, my mind seized on Katharine Hepburn (notably, not British). Attempting to mimic her exotic manner of speaking, I landed somewhere north of Mid-Atlantic and drowned.

But what a way to go. I still remember the other students' faces: shocked, delighted, appalled, compelled. It's all the things I feel now when an actor tries an accent that either falls short of the mark or overshoots it wildly. There is a clip from a British stage production of ''Cat on a Hot Tin Roof'' that regularly makes the rounds because the actress Sienna Miller recites her Tennessee Williams dialogue like she's Jodie Foster in ''Nell.'' I watch it every single time, analyzing those few seconds like they're Zapruder footage. I have even come to the conclusion that if Southern people don't actually sound like that, well, maybe they should start.

So as far as I'm concerned, Uma Thurman has nothing to apologize for. Sure, it's hard to buy her as a character who hails from Austin, but the city's motto is ''Keep Austin Weird,'' and you can't fault Thurman's accent for trying. To me, it's far more embarrassing that ''Red, White & Royal Blue'' rips a page from Ryan Murphy's handbook and forces Thurman to drawl about Truvada and bottoming just so the moment can go viral on Gay Twitter. Her accent was already enough for that!

If nothing else, I hope I've convinced you that a little more latitude is needed when viewers are determined to declare a movie accent as something that's either "good'' or ''bad.'' It's astonishing when an actor like Meryl Streep can pull out an impeccable accent like it's nothing, but it's just as fascinating when people try. We can often be high-minded about the craft of performance, but sometimes it's good to be reminded of one awfully entertaining truth: A whole lot of acting is just funny talking.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/18/movies/uma-thurman-red-white-royal-blue-accent.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/18/movies/uma-thurman-red-white-royal-blue-accent.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: Uma Thurman, right, with Sharon D Clarke in ''Red, White & Royal Blue.'' Thurman's character is from Texas

her accent is as big as the state. (PHOTOGRAPH BY PRIME VIDEO) (C1)

In ''House of Gucci,'' Lady Gaga sounds like Wario by way of ''Moonstruck.'' (PHOTOGRAPH BY FABIO LOVINO/MGM, VIA ASSOCIATED PRESS) This article appeared in print on page C1, C4.

**Load-Date:** August 19, 2023

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[***Democrats Lost the Midterms, Too; Guest Essay***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:66WD-3VY1-JBG3-652S-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 1252 words

**Byline:** Yuval Levin

**Highlight:** Just because a catastrophe was averted does not mean all is well.

**Body**

The surprising results of the midterm elections were understandably received by Democrats with an elated mix of relief and vindication. A president’s party normally does much worse in his first midterms, and polls suggested this time would be no different.

But just because a catastrophe was averted does not mean all is well. Democrats would be sorely mistaken to assume that a durable majority of voters endorsed their agenda in this election — and such a mistake could prove costly in 2024 and beyond.

We know the Democrats risk such a misreading because it is just what they did after the last election. In 2020, Democrats highlighted the repugnant tone and character of the Donald Trump-era G.O.P. while Republicans highlighted radical elements of the Democrats’ agenda — and the public essentially said no to both. Voters narrowly threw out Mr. Trump but gave Democrats the thinnest possible Senate majority while slightly increasing the number of Republicans in the House.

Democrats responded by behaving as though they had won a mandate, trying to advance an ambitious partisan agenda without the majorities to do it — and so generally without success.

Republicans, too, responded to the rebuke they received by pretending it didn’t happen, with many advancing delusional conspiracy theories about a stolen election and doubling down on the very Trumpism voters had just rejected.

The 2022 election was therefore basically a rerun of 2020. Voters made the same grudging choice — they rejected the Trumpist style and substance of the G.O.P. but without embracing the Democrats — because they were given the same unappetizing menu. Democrats netted one Senate seat at most, in a state where the Republican candidate particularly resembled Mr. Trump, while again losing a small handful of House seats.

Such a rerun can easily look like an endorsement of the status quo. This is apparently how President Biden interpreted it. In his [*postelection*](https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2022/11/09/remarks-by-president-biden-in-press-conference-8/) news conference, he was asked what he would do differently in light of what the results showed about voter desires. He answered: “Nothing, because they’re just finding out what we’re doing. The more they know about what we’re doing, the more support there is.”

Democrats should be alarmed by these embarrassing remarks, but so far they seem to share the sentiment.

Acting on the lesson of the election would be tough for the Democratic Party, to be sure. It’s pretty clear what Republicans are doing wrong and what the way forward might look like. As this election demonstrated yet again, swing voters do exist, and they are open to voting for Republicans, including quite conservative ones, but they do not like Trumpism. Republicans clearly need to put Mr. Trump and his style of politics behind them. Now that he has announced another run for the presidency, that won’t be easy to do, but it is easy to see that it is what needs doing.

For Democrats, the path to winning swing voters is much harder to see. Republicans have moved closer to some of the median voter’s policy inclinations in the Trump era, even as Mr. Trump’s behavior turned off those voters. A decade ago, the G.O.P. was too libertarian for many winnable voters — on public spending and taxes but also on immigration, trade and family policy. The party is more palatable for such voters on those issues now. That might explain why it looks as though Republicans [*won*](https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2022/11/14/republican-popular-vote-seats/) a majority of the votes for House seats nationwide in this election, edging Democrats by around three or four percentage points.

Democrats are generally farther from the median voter than they were a decade ago, particularly on cultural issues, education, crime and immigration. The party increasingly represents an unpopular cultural elite, and the agenda required to hold its coalition together makes for poor general-election strategy in many places.

For all that the Democrats averted defeat this year, some warning signs that they were beginning to perceive were only reinforced. Even in many places where Trumpism hurt Republican candidates (at least in part), like Ohio and North Carolina, support for Democrats among ***working-class*** swing voters clearly has low ceilings. Their standing with Hispanic ***working-class*** voters is precarious at best, and success in Texas or Florida, recently imaginable, now looks to be increasingly slipping out of reach.

Democrats also face a [*very challenging*](https://www.politico.com/news/2022/10/05/senate-dems-reelection-00060062) Senate map in 2024. They will have to defend 23 seats, quite a few in right-leaning states like Montana and Ohio, while Republicans defend just 10. Given that they will start out nearly tied, Republicans are almost certain to win a Senate majority that year. This means, at the very least, that Democrats would be mad to push for eliminating the filibuster in the next Congress, as they repeatedly did over the past two years. But it also means that they need to be preparing the ground for a more moderate agenda to minimize their losses.

They should look to the kinds of legislation advanced through bipartisan negotiations in this Congress but mostly absent from their election pitches — on infrastructure, manufacturing and guns. If instead Democrats double down on their activists’ agenda or conclude from this election that the public wants permissive abortion laws everywhere, they will pay a heavy price, and will deserve to — particularly if Republicans do learn their lesson and begin to put Trumpism behind them.

The election actually provided models for both parties in the states. For Republicans, Gov. Ron DeSantis’s smashing [*re-election victory*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2022/11/08/us/elections/results-florida-governor.html) in Florida should offer real hope. Mr. DeSantis not only defeated his Democratic opponent by 20 points but also won Mr. Trump’s own vote in Florida while Mr. Trump was calling him names — which is roughly the magic act that the party’s next leader will need to pull off. For Democrats, an analogous figure may be Gov. Jared Polis of Colorado, who also won a huge [*re-election victory*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2022/11/08/us/elections/results-colorado-governor.html). Mr. Polis’s biography and disposition are a good fit for the party’s activist base, but his style of governance is decidedly centrist, which is the mix Democrats will need to compete against a post-Trump Republican Party.

If the parties were up to their jobs, the 2024 presidential election might look like a race between two such savvy, effective governors, both in their 40s yet already proven executives. But if both parties refuse to learn from this election, that race might be a rematch between an 81-year-old and a 78-year-old who embody a set of options voters have now repeatedly rejected.

If one party can learn its lesson while the other doesn’t, it could find itself with an extraordinary opportunity to break out of our age of deadlock with a real majority. But that would require understanding the 2022 midterms as a loss — which, much as Democrats might hate to hear it, Republicans are better positioned to do.

Yuval Levin, a contributing Opinion writer, is the editor of National Affairs and the director of social, cultural and constitutional studies at the American Enterprise Institute. He is the author of “[*A Time to Build*](https://www.basicbooks.com/titles/yuval-levin/a-time-to-build/9781541699281/): From Family and Community to Congress and the Campus, How Recommitting to Our Institutions Can Revive the American dream.”

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[***Kevin McCarthy Surprised Us All; The Conversation***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:699D-R0Y1-JBG3-6447-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 1668 words

**Byline:** Gail Collins and Bret Stephens

**Highlight:** Does this mean there’s a sanity caucus out there for the taking?

**Body**

Gail Collins: I didn’t think I’d be saying this, Bret, but we’ve dodged a shutdown. It’s a stupendous moment for Kevin McCarthy. Now if he gets tossed out as House speaker by the right wing, he’ll go down in history as the guy who sacrificed his career for the common good. As opposed to the best possible previous scenario: the boring career pol who was too scared to keep the government running.

What’s your reaction?

Bret Stephens: Cutting billions in funding for Ukraine was a shame, but I’m guessing the aid will be restored to Kyiv pretty soon. Otherwise, it’s a vast relief that the government will stay open. And, of course, watching someone like Matt Gaetz get politically humiliated is always pleasing.

Gail: And there was Gaetz, on cue, announcing Sunday that he would try to remove McCarthy from the speakership. Lord knows it’s been a long trek, listening to the Republicans’ constant yelping about deficit spending. Is it fair to point out that the national debt rose $7.8 trillion during the Trump administration?

Bret: Not fair at all, Gail. Everything that happened when Trump was president was so perfect, so beautiful.

OK, I’m kidding. One of my many laments about Trump is that he spent like a sailor on land and governed like a drunk at sea. I wish this would count against him with G.O.P. primary voters, but the truth is that ordinary Republicans aren’t all that eager to really slash government spending, even if they say they don’t like the government. I think Trump intuitively understood this, which is why attacks from Ron DeSantis or Nikki Haley aren’t making a dent in Trump’s poll numbers.

Which reminds me: Your thoughts on last week’s Republican presidential debate? Whom did you dislike the least?

Gail: I suspect this is a setup to get me to praise your fave, Nikki Haley.

Bret: Not a setup. An … invitation.

Gail: And hey, I can’t argue that she wasn’t the sanest of the group. Along with Chris Christie, the Republican Republicans love to hate.

Haley lightly criticized Trump’s performance as president, and after the debate was over, he called her a “birdbrain.”

You know, I have this tiny hope that the New Hampshire Republican voters will exercise a little independence and give her the top primary vote and an early lift. But kinda worried Christie will be in there, too, dividing the sanity caucus.

Bret: A great point. Christie should get out now and throw his support behind Haley. The only reason he got in the race in the first place was to chuck spears at Trump. It hit the wrong Donald — [*Duck*](https://apnews.com/article/election-2024-debate-takeaways-073f7912d708c0512e26a1e771b6cd08), not Trump — and now all Christie is doing is dividing the anti-Trump field. I also wish Mike Pence would recognize reality and [*tuck back into bed*](https://www.politico.com/video/2023/09/27/pence-ive-been-sleeping-with-a-teacher-for-38-years-1070157) with his wife of 38 years. That would give Haley a fighting chance to further destroy Vivek Ramaswamy and replace DeSantis as the most plausible Republican alternative to Trump. But I have to admit, my hopes of Trump not being the nominee are dwindling fast.

Gail: OK, New Hampshire Republicans, are you listening? Counting on you for a primary miracle.

Bret: Speaking of Trump crushing his opponents, I nearly jumped out of my skin when I saw that Washington Post/ABC News poll last week, giving Trump a 10-point lead over Joe Biden in a head-to-head matchup. I realize it might be an outlier, but I don’t understand why no serious Democrat is willing to challenge Biden for the nomination. Help me out here.

Gail: The poll, if accurate, is a cry of crankiness from middle-of-the-roaders who wanted a more exciting candidate. Still, the only reason for a loyal Democrat to oppose Biden’s nomination is that he’s too old. I think he’s been a darned good president. And while I do wish he had stepped aside, I’m certainly not going to have any trouble whatsoever arguing he’s the better option.

This is when I get to point out that Trump is 77 and in worse physical condition than Biden. And has been saying some very weird things lately — even for him.

Bret: Biden’s main problem isn’t that he’s too old. There are plenty of sharp, fit and healthy 80-year-olds. His problem is that he looks and sounds feeble. Trump may be awful and insane and nearly as old as Biden, but one thing he isn’t is low energy. And even if you think Biden is the best president since F.D.R. or Abe Lincoln, for that matter, he’s got a [*41.5 percent approval rating*](https://www.realclearpolitics.com/epolls/other/president-biden-job-approval-7320.html), a vice president who’s even more unpopular than he is and major political liabilities on immigration, crime and inflation. Also now Robert F. Kennedy Jr. is hinting that [*he’ll run as a third-party candidate*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/29/us/politics/robert-f-kennedy-third-party-democrats-primary.html) in the general election, which would be on top of Biden’s Cornel West problem.

Gail: Thank you for giving me a chance to howl about third-party candidates, who have no possibility of winning but every possibility of screwing up the majority’s right to choose.

Bret: I suppose that, in theory, Kennedy could subtract a lot of votes from Trump, since both of them draw from the same well of Looney Tunes conspiracy theories. But my guess is that, as a Democrat, Biden would be the bigger loser from an independent Kennedy campaign. And if West persists in running, drawing progressive and Black voters away from Biden, then the chances of a Trump victory grow even larger.

Gail: But we were talking about President Joe ——

Bret: If you see Biden jumping out of the political hole he’s in, please tell me how.

Gail: Just being sane, not under multitudinous indictments or facing a stupendous financial collapse is … going to help. This is not going to be one of those sunny remember-when election victories like Barack Obama’s or, I guess for Republicans, Ronald Reagan’s. But given the Donald’s multiple upcoming trials, I think it’ll be a wow-what-a-crazy-year episode that ends with the majority rationally rejecting the worst possible option.

Bret: If a second Trump administration is the national nightmare you and I think it will be, then Democrats need a better political strategy than getting angry at third-party candidates while hoping that Trump goes to prison before he returns to the White House. The death of California’s Dianne Feinstein is a sad event, and there’s a lot to celebrate in her long and distinguished career, but it was hubris on her part to run for re-election in 2018, just as it was hubris for Ruth Bader Ginsburg not to step down while Obama was still president. Although in Feinstein’s defense, at least she could be reasonably sure that a Democratic governor would choose her successor.

Gail: Yeah, when you’ve got a great job in the spotlight, it’s hard to just let it go.

Bret: Which maybe explains the guy in the White House. Sorry, go on.

Gail: I thought Feinstein [*should have resigned*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/24/opinion/feinstein-senate-judiciary-resignation-age.html) when she became incapacitated. And Ginsburg diminished a great legacy by hanging on to her job when she was sick and close to death, thereby paving the way for Trump to complete his takeover of the Supreme Court.

We have to celebrate the people who surrender the spotlight voluntarily, like Nancy Pelosi, who is still serving the country as a member of Congress but gave up her party’s House leadership to let the next generation be in the center of attention.

Hey — a positive thought! Any good news you want to share?

Bret: I don’t know if this is good news per se, but I was delighted to hear Mark Milley, the retiring chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, [*dismiss Trump*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/29/us/politics/general-cq-brown-joint-chiefs.html) as a “wannabe dictator” after his former boss suggested the general’s actions with regard to China would have once been punishable by death. Milley emphasized the military’s fidelity to the Constitution, which is yet another reminder that Democrats should put aside their 50 years of misgivings about the Defense Department and embrace its vital role in defending democracy at home and abroad.

Hoping for agreement …

Gail: Total agreement about the Defense Department having a vital role. Not so much about the Defense Department having an efficient operation. Way too much waste, which mostly comes from members of Congress lobbying to keep job-creating military facilities in their districts and pressure to pick up wasteful contracts because they’re supported by, um, members of Congress.

Bret: I’ll make a modest bet that, in another few years, Democrats will be the strong-on-defense party, just as they were in the days of Jack Kennedy. It’s part of the great ideological switcheroo taking place right now between the parties: Republicans sound a lot like Democrats of yesteryear — ***working-class*** values, quasi-isolationist in their foreign policy, indifferent to the moral character of their leaders — while Democrats have become the party of college-educated managerial types who want to stand up to Russia and uphold moral integrity in political leadership.

Gail: Well, we’ll see. At least we’re ending on a consensus of sorts: that Trump is going to be doing something awful soon. Granted, that’s not the toughest prediction to make. So before we go, give me one of your great quotes to celebrate the arrival of October.

Bret: Not really a celebration, but a Gerard Manley Hopkins poem I love:

Márgarét, áre you gríeving

Over Goldengrove unleaving?

Leáves like the things of man, you

With your fresh thoughts care for, can you?

Ah! ás the heart grows older

It will come to such sights colder

By and by, nor spare a sigh

Though worlds of wanwood leafmeal lie;

And yet you wíll weep and know why.

Now no matter, child, the name:

Sórrow’s spríngs áre the same.

Nor mouth had, no nor mind, expressed

What heart heard of, ghost guessed:

It ís the blight man was born for,

It is Margaret you mourn for.

I memorized it many years ago, thanks to my teacher and friend [*Dr. Peter Bach*](https://trend.ccnysites.cuny.edu/portfolio_page/dr-peter-bach/). He, better than anyone, knows its meaning.

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[***Democrat in Arizona Challenges Sinema For Her Senate Seat***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67CW-RS31-JBG3-642C-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Length:** 1406 words

**Byline:** By Jazmine Ulloa and Katie Glueck

**Body**

Representative Ruben Gallego of Phoenix is set to challenge Ms. Sinema from the left, after she resigned from the Democratic Party.

The announcement on Monday that Representative Ruben Gallego, a progressive Democrat from Phoenix, would run for the Senate in 2024 sets up a potential face-off with Senator Kyrsten Sinema over a seat that carries immense stakes for Democrats' control of the upper chamber.

Ms. Sinema left the Democratic Party in December to become an independent, though she has kept her Democratic committee assignments. She has not yet announced re-election plans, but if she runs again, national Democrats will have to decide whether or not to support her, even as the state party has strongly rebuked her and some polling has shown her to be deeply unpopular among Arizona Democrats, signs of a possibly divisive battle to come.

The state, once a bastion of McCain Republicans, has transformed into one of the nation's pre-eminent political battlegrounds, fueled by demographic shifts and a Republican Party that has lurched far to the right. The Senate race is set to be closely watched by both parties, and Mr. Gallego, a 43-year-old former state lawmaker and U.S. Marine veteran, instantly caught national attention with his challenge to Ms. Sinema.

He began his campaign with a video declaring his run to a group of fellow veterans at American Legion Post 124 in Guadalupe, Ariz., near Phoenix. In it, he highlights his humble Chicago origins and his combat experience in Iraq, and he pledges to fight to extend the American dream to more families.

''It's the one thing that we give every American, no matter where they're born in life,'' he says, crediting belief in the dream for his own climb into the halls of Congress.

Mr. Gallego is a member of the Congressional Progressive Caucus, and organizations and activists on the left have long been eager to see a credible challenge to Ms. Sinema. But in his video, he leaned into economic arguments around supporting the ***working class*** rather than center-left ideological battles, and his allies expect he will also continue to emphasize his military experience.

In his campaign ad, Mr. Gallego sought to draw sharp contrasts between himself and Ms. Sinema, taking subtle swipes at the first-term senator over her leadership and ties to corporate interests. Ms. Sinema's opposition to key elements of her party's agenda has repeatedly angered Democrats.

''We could argue different ways about how to do it, but at the core, if you're more likely to be meeting with the powerful than the powerless, you're doing this job incorrectly,'' he says in the video, which was released in English and Spanish. ''I'm sorry that politicians have let you down, but I'm going to change that.''

Mr. Gallego's campaign team includes veterans from Senator Mark Kelly's re-election bid in Arizona, as well as Democratic consultants who served on the successful 2022 Senate campaigns for Raphael Warnock in Georgia and John Fetterman in Pennsylvania. Mr. Gallego's campaign also has taken on Chuck Rocha, a longtime Democratic strategist focused on mobilizing Latino voters.

Representative Greg Stanton, a Democrat who had also shown interest in running for the seat, said this month that now was ''not the right time,'' helping clear the path for Mr. Gallego in the primary.

''The Arizona Democratic Party wishes Congressman Gallego the best of luck,'' said Morgan Dick, a representative for the party, in a statement. ''In continuing with tradition, for the 2024 general election, the Arizona Democratic Party intends to endorse and support the Democrat on the ballot.''

A representative for Ms. Sinema declined to comment on Mr. Gallego's entry into the race, and Ms. Sinema waved off the prospect of the challenge in an interview on Friday.

''We just got through a really grueling election cycle, and I think most Arizonans want a break,'' Ms. Sinema said in an interview with the Arizona station KTAR News. ''I'm incredibly proud of the work I've been able to accomplish in the United States Senate in the last couple years, and I'm going to stay focused on the work that I have ahead of us.''

But a matchup between Mr. Gallego and Ms. Sinema in the general election is likely to split the coalition of Democrats and independents who have powered Democratic victories in Arizona in recent elections.

The divide could provide an opening for a Republican to retake a seat that has helped Democrats retain their narrow majority in the Senate.

Among the Republicans weighing Senate runs are Kari Lake, the Trump-endorsed news anchor who last year narrowly lost her race for governor, and Blake Masters, who was defeated in a Senate race by Mr. Kelly. Already, Republicans are seeking to paint Mr. Gallego as radically left-wing, and signaling that they intend to make immigration a focal point of their criticisms.

''The Democrat civil war is on in Arizona,'' said Philip Letsou, a spokesman for the National Republican Senatorial Committee.

Nora Keefe, a spokeswoman for the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee, noted that the state had moved away from Republicans in several recent statewide elections.

''Republicans have suffered resounding Senate defeats in Arizona the last three election cycles in a row,'' she said. ''We are confident we will stop Republicans in their effort to take this Senate seat.''

She declined to comment on the committee's plans for the race beyond that.

For both Mr. Gallego and Ms. Sinema, the greatest factor will be the Republican nominee, said Mike Noble, a longtime nonpartisan pollster based in Phoenix.

A center-right candidate could consolidate Republican and right-leaning independent voters, most likely narrowing the chances for both Ms. Sinema and Mr. Gallego. A hard-right candidate like Ms. Lake or Mr. Masters, on the other hand, would most likely intensify the contest between Mr. Gallego and Ms. Sinema for moderates and the state's large independent electorate, about one-third of voters.

''Heading into next year's election, Kyrsten Sinema would like nothing else for Christmas than to have Kari Lake as the Republican nominee come 2024,'' Mr. Noble said. ''They both would love it.''

Ms. Sinema was elected to the Senate in a groundbreaking victory in 2018, in the first Democratic triumph since 1976 in a contest for an open Senate seat in Arizona. Her victory pointed to broader political shifts in the state. Once a longtime conservative bastion, Arizona has become fiercely competitive as the state's Republican Party has veered further right, while growing numbers of Latino and independent voters have pushed the state to the center.

Ms. Sinema embraced solidly centrist positions in defeating her Republican opponent. Voter drives to register more Latinos, who generally vote Democratic in Arizona, also paid off for Ms. Sinema. But distaste for the senator has been growing among Latino activists and other parts of her Democratic base as she has positioned herself as a bulwark against major parts of her former party's agenda, mainly attempts to increase taxes on corporate America and Wall Street.

National Democrats have been tight-lipped about their approach to the 2024 race, as some worry that a full-on offensive against Ms. Sinema in the general election might inadvertently help elect a Republican.

Mr. Gallego, who has been among Ms. Sinema's fiercest critics, had been fielding input from his family over the holidays over whether he would run. He would be the first Latino senator from Arizona should he prevail. (He is of Colombian and Mexican descent.)

In his campaign video released Monday, he describes his hard upbringing as one of four children raised by a single mother in Chicago. He made it to Harvard and worked to pay his way through school before enlisting in the Marine Corps. His combat experience on the front lines in Iraq, where he came under heavy fire and lost some of his closest friends, left him with post-traumatic stress disorder but also inspired him to go into public service, he said.

The ad positions Mr. Gallego as an advocate of strong government and a fighter for ***working-class*** families who he said ''feel they are one or two paychecks away from going under.''

''The rich and the powerful, they don't need more advocates,'' he said. ''It's the people that are still trying to decide between groceries and utilities that need a fighter for them.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/01/23/us/politics/ruben-gallego-kyrsten-sinema-senate.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/01/23/us/politics/ruben-gallego-kyrsten-sinema-senate.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Representative Ruben Gallego, one of Senator Kyrsten Sinema's sharpest critics, released a video Monday declaring his run. (PHOTOGRAPH BY ANNA MONEYMAKER/GETTY IMAGES)

Senator Kyrsten Sinema, second from right, with Cindy McCain, Senator John McCain's widow, at Gov. Katie Hobbs's inauguration. (PHOTOGRAPH BY REBECCA NOBLE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A16.

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[***Can a Reboot Save the DeSantis Campaign?***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68TT-1MS1-DXY4-X11V-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

July 30, 2023 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section SR; Column 0; Sunday Review Desk; Pg. 7; MICHELLE COTTLE

**Length:** 1348 words

**Byline:** By Michelle Cottle

**Body**

Admitting you've made mistakes is tough for anyone. For a hard-charging, hyperscrutinized political candidate who presents himself as infallible, it can be as excruciating as a root canal without anesthetic.

But Ron DeSantis clearly has hit the point where his presidential quest is crying out for a serious course correction. I know it. You know it. Anxious Republican strategists and donors know it. And Team DeSantis knows it, no matter what kind of happy talk the candidate was spewing in his interview with CNN last week. (Tip: If you find yourself babbling about being one of the few folks who knows how to define ''woke,'' you are not nailing your message.)

If things were going well for Mr. DeSantis -- if he were catching fire as the less erratic, unindicted alternative to Donald Trump -- there's not a snowball's chance he would have set foot in CNN. But as things stand, consorting with nonconservative media outlets, which he until recently avoided like a pack of rabid raccoons, is part of a bigger overhaul.

Team Trump intends to have some fun with this. ''Some reboots were never going to be successful, like 'Dynasty,' 'Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles' or even 'MacGyver,''' the campaign mocked in a statement last week. ''And now we can add Ron DeSantis's 2024 campaign to the list of failures.''

But campaign reboots are nothing to be ashamed of. Honest! They are a common, even healthy, part of the process. Handled properly, they give candidates the chance to show off their decisiveness, tenacity, adaptability, unflappability -- you name it.

Not all overhauls are created equal, of course. Ronald Reagan's in the 1980 presidential race? Golden. Jeb Bush's in 2016? Oof. And plenty have fallen somewhere in between: John Kerry 2004, John McCain 2008, Hillary Clinton 2008. As the DeSantis campaign starts down this path, it has an abundance of recent cases to consult for potential tips, tricks and red flags.

While every floundering candidacy is floundering in its own way, there are a few foundational moves common to presidential campaign reboots:

1. Slash spending, which typically involves cutting campaign staff and salaries.

2. Shake up the leadership team.

3. Shift the focus toward more grass roots stumping in the early voting states.

Spending issues are almost a political rite of passage. So many campaigns get carried away early on with high-priced advisers or an overabundance of staff members, especially with front-runners eager to project an aura of inevitability.

The DeSantis campaign is still doing solidly with fund-raising, but there have been warning signs (especially in the small-donor department) that have it cutting staff and rethinking priorities. (Even more Iowa!) This is obviously no fun and may presage even less fun to come. But it is better to start making these adjustments before things get really ugly. During the summer of 2007, the struggling McCain campaign found itself nearly broke, prompting massive layoffs and pay cuts and causing general upheaval as the high-level finger-pointing spiraled.

Money matters aside, a campaign's top leadership not infrequently requires tweaking -- or tossing. The candidate needs to lock down savvy people he trusts and will listen to, even as he jettisons the troublemakers. When making such assessments, there is little room for sentimentality. Sometimes even (maybe especially) longtime friends and advisers need to be ... repurposed ... particularly if the chain of command has become confused and internal bickering is taking its toll. This can lead to even more tumult. When Mr. McCain cut loose a couple of his top advisers in 2007, several senior staff members followed them out the door.

But a failure to deal with such a situation can leave the whole enterprise feeling increasingly dysfunctional, as was often the case with Mrs. Clinton's 2008 campaign. So much infighting and backbiting. So many competing power centers. This is when a candidate really needs to step up and impose order.

In many cases, a reboot may call for pushing out a new narrative. Postdownsizing, Team McCain sought to reassure donors and supporters with a plan to get lean and mean and start ''living off the land.'' The candidate doubled down on wooing New Hampshire (Iowa's social conservatives were never a natural fit for him), playing up his bus tours and broadly aiming to recapture the underdog, maverick spirit of his 2000 presidential run. John Kerry, way down in the polls behind Howard Dean in 2003, wanted to create a comeback-kid narrative by notching back-to-back victories in Iowa and New Hampshire; he lent money to his campaign and basically lived in Iowa for weeks to help execute his one-two punch.

It's hard to say how a DeSantis variation of something like this would work. He plans to start talking less about his record leading the state ''where woke goes to die'' and double down on an ''us against the world'' theme, according to NBC News. This latter bit sounds very Trumpian, maybe a tad too much so, considering Mr. Trump himself is still running with a version of that line. Mr. DeSantis's heavy investment in Iowa, along with his chummy relationship with the state's governor, could bring Kerry-like benefits. Then again, multiple candidates are campaigning hard there and could wind up splitting the non-Trump vote.

The harsh reality of reboots is that some presidential hopefuls are just too out of step with the political moment to rescue. Mr. Bush strode into the 2016 race as the man to beat. But Republicans were in no mood for his policy-heavy, mellow style of politics. (Mr. Trump's ''low energy'' insult was brutally resonant.) By the fall of 2015, Team Jeb was slashing staff and hoping for the debates to help him win free media. No one cared.

To be sure, Mr. DeSantis has proved himself willing to get much nastier and more reactionary than did Mr. Bush in appealing to his base's basest instincts. (That Trump-trashing anti-L.G.B.T.Q. video his campaign shared on social media -- at once homophobic and homoerotic -- was certainly something special.) No way anyone is going to catch Governor Pudding Fingers being squishy on a culture-war hot topic like trans rights or immigration.

Yet the governor does carry a whiff of out-of-touch wonkiness. He can't help but get all right-wing jargony at times -- ''accreditation cartels''? Really? -- and his bungled Twitter-based campaign announcement was clearly designed more to impress the online bros than the ***working-class*** voters he needs to woo away from Mr. Trump. Someone really should be working with him to fix this.

In the end, of course, it may be that Mr. DeSantis is on track to crash into that highest and hardest of reboot hurdles: likability.

This was, fundamentally, what kept the presidency just out of Mrs. Clinton's reach. Even beyond the Republican haters, too many voters found her off-putting. She was not a natural retail politician. She struck people as standoffish and inauthentic. Time and again, her advisers tried to address this, but to no avail. Presidential contests have a lot to do with vibes, and she never quite managed to radiate the ones needed to go all the way.

Mr. DeSantis seems to be in a dangerously similar spot. He is famously awkward on the campaign trail -- and with people in general. He stinks at the whole backslapping, glad-handing thing. He has trouble making eye contact. He presents as brusque, impatient, uninterested. He's got the obnoxious parts of Trumpism down, without the carnival barker fun.

This doesn't mean his presidential dreams are doomed. But it does suggest that a key element of his reboot should be figuring out how not to come across as a stilted, smug jerk who doesn't care about voters.

Hey, no one said this would be easy.

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[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/07/24/opinion/ron-desantis-campaign.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/07/24/opinion/ron-desantis-campaign.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO (PHOTOGRAPH BY DAMON WINTER/THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page SR7.

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[***Making Manufacturing Greater Again; Paul Krugman***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6829-RPW1-DXY4-X42N-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

April 20, 2023 Thursday 22:56 EST

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 903 words

**Byline:** Paul Krugman

**Highlight:** Why Biden is succeeding where Trump failed.

**Body**

It can be hard to remember, but initially MAGA seemed to be about more than election lies and cultural/racial grievance. One central theme of Donald Trump’s [*2016 campaign*](https://www.npr.org/2016/08/18/490192497/bringing-back-manufacturing-jobs-would-be-harder-than-it-sounds) was a promise to bring manufacturing jobs back to the United States. And once in office he tried to make good on this promise by slapping tariffs on many imports and engineering tax cuts that were supposed to induce corporations to invest in America rather than overseas.

Unfortunately, his policies were a flop: The promised manufacturing revival [*never happened*](https://www.americanmanufacturing.org/blog/what-did-donald-trump-accomplish-for-american-manufacturing/).

Remarkably, however, President Biden appears to be presiding over the kind of manufacturing surge Trump had promised. If you follow such things, it seems as if hardly a week goes by without the announcement of plans to build a major new factory in response to Biden-era legislation.

This impression turns out to be true. The advocacy group [*Climate Power*](https://climatepower.us/wp-content/uploads/sites/23/2023/02/Clean-Energy-Boom-100K-Report.pdf) has tracked plans to build scores of clean-energy factories, producing batteries, electric vehicles and more since the passage of the [*Inflation Reduction Act*](https://www.democrats.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/inflation_reduction_act_one_page_summary.pdf) (which, despite its name, is largely a climate law). There have also been many factory [*announcements*](https://www.jackconness.com/ira-chips-investments) tied to the [*CHIPS and Science Act*](https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/public-and-social-sector/our-insights/the-chips-and-science-act-heres-whats-in-it), intended to promote domestic semiconductor production.

And all of this isn’t just talk. While many of the announced projects will presumably take time to get fully underway, spending on manufacturing construction has already [*soared*](https://fred.stlouisfed.org/series/TLMFGCONS); it’s currently running about 75 percent higher than at any point during the Trump years, and it seems set to go much higher. Goldman Sachs predicts that the Inflation Reduction Act will involve substantially higher government outlays than was initially projected but will also induce [*trillions of dollars*](https://www.benzinga.com/news/23/03/31487462/goldman-sachs-predicts-bidens-clean-energy-law-to-cost-1-2t-triple-the-estimated-amount) in private investment.

Before I get into the reasons Biden’s manufacturing push is succeeding where Trump’s failed, a few caveats:

First, no policy can restore the [*economy of the 1950s*](https://fred.stlouisfed.org/graph/fredgraph.png?g=12GKG), when 30 percent of U.S. workers were employed in manufacturing. All advanced nations, even those like [*Germany*](https://fred.stlouisfed.org/graph/fredgraph.png?g=12GKT) that run persistent trade surpluses, are increasingly becoming service economies with a declining share of manufacturing in employment.

Second, we shouldn’t fetishize manufacturing. A good job is a good job; there’s nothing inherently superior about manufacturing as opposed to health care or even entertainment (a [*major U.S. export*](https://www.motionpictures.org/press/new-data-the-american-film-and-television-industry-continues-to-drive-economic-growth-in-all-50-states/)).

Third, some of the current manufacturing surge reflects Buy American rules that are [*problematic*](https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2021-04-20/america-price-nostalgia) in a couple of ways: They raise costs and create trade frictions with our allies.

The defense of Biden policy goes something like this: The CHIPS Act promotes domestic manufacturing because it’s about national security in a time of growing tension with China. The Inflation Reduction Act is de facto protectionist in part because that was the only way to get crucial climate legislation passed, but it also promotes domestic manufacturing to help lagging regions within the United States and blue-collar workers.

We can argue about these pros and cons, but my question right now is about results: Why is Biden’s manufacturing push succeeding where Trump’s failed?

Trump’s tariffs seem to have failed to boost manufacturing in part out of [*sheer incompetence*](https://www.brookings.edu/policy2020/votervital/did-trumps-tariffs-benefit-american-workers-and-national-security/): By raising the cost of steel and other industrial inputs, they made U.S. industry as a whole less competitive, and overall probably [*reduced*](https://www.federalreserve.gov/econres/feds/files/2019086pap.pdf) manufacturing employment.

As for Trump’s tax cut, it was basically trickle-down economics: Increase corporations’ after-tax profits and hope they create more jobs. This failed (as trickle-down consistently does) because the [*underlying premise*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/04/09/opinion/trump-corporate-tax-reform.html) was wrong: Taxes on corporate profits weren’t a significant factor deterring investment in the United States, so the tax cut didn’t boost U.S. manufacturing. All it did was give corporations a financial windfall.

Biden’s policies, by contrast, might be described as trickle-up economics. Instead of offering corporations broad tax cuts, they provide incentives for the transition to an economy that runs on renewable energy: tax credits for [*production of or investment in*](https://www.whitehouse.gov/cleanenergy/clean-energy-tax-provisions/) clean energy, for consumers who [*purchase*](https://www.whitehouse.gov/cleanenergy/) electric vehicles or energy-efficient appliances, and so on. Combined with Buy American provisions, these incentives will create increased demand for a wide range of U.S.-produced manufactured goods, from batteries to electric motors.

And business is responding to that prospective increase in demand by investing a lot more in American manufacturing than it has for a long time.

Can this policy be criticized? Of course. Biden may be trying to kill too many birds with one stone — using targeted tax credits to save the planet and create good blue-collar jobs and lift up lagging regions. Trying to do all these things at once may lead to doing none of them especially well.

And it’s not at all clear whether these policies will succeed in their implicit political goal: winning back ***working-class*** voters who have gone down the MAGA rabbit hole.

Still, the fact is that Biden is actually doing something Trump boasted about but never achieved: promoting a significant revival in U.S. manufacturing.

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[***There’s No Such Thing as a Bad Movie Accent***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68YT-YHP1-DXY4-X0JP-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Section:** MOVIES

**Length:** 1331 words

**Byline:** Kyle Buchanan

**Highlight:** Even the over-the-top ones, like Uma Thurman’s Southern drawl in “Red, White &amp; Royal Blue,” can be awfully fun.

**Body**

Even the over-the-top ones, like Uma Thurman’s Southern drawl in “Red, White &amp; Royal Blue,” can be awfully fun.

“[*Red, White &amp; Royal Blue*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/10/movies/red-white-royal-blue-review.html)” waits just seven and a half minutes to get to the good stuff, and by that I’m not referring to the movie’s big romance, between a hot British prince and the hot son of the American president, but to its even bigger accent, a syrupy Southern drawl from Uma Thurman that may be this season’s most audacious special effect. Imagine [*Gina Gershon in “Showgirls”*](https://youtu.be/kCuVR_kV4rc?t=12) crossed with [*Ross Perot*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s6UYwEUVGkE) and you’ll get halfway there — the rest of the distance must be traveled holding a mint julep that’s in constant, delicious danger of spilling.

President Uma Thurman (the actual character name is incidental, since you will never not be thinking “President Uma Thurman” when she’s onscreen) is introduced accent-first, with her back to the camera, because encountering this voice head-on would surely be too much for the unprepared Prime Video viewers who stumbled upon the movie after bingeing “Bosch.” We meet her as she’s busy lecturing her hot son about his initial clash with the hot prince. “Darlin’,” President Uma Thurman says, “yew’ve dun some pretty stupid things in yur day, buh this …”

To say my ears perked up is an understatement: It was as though Arianna Huffington had appeared before me reciting a monologue from “True Blood.” This is not an accent you should attempt while operating heavy machinery, but Thurman ladles it on so thick that you have to admire the movie-star chutzpah. I even started to miss her whenever “Red, White &amp; Royal Blue” cut back to the hot boys’ romantic misadventures: Why are we spending time on these tedious hunks when the most suspenseful thing about the movie is how President Uma Thurman will pronounce any given word?

[Video: [*Watch on YouTube.*](http://youtube.com/embed/lZ6V1cfMZq0)]

[*Some reviews*](https://nypost.com/2023/08/13/red-white-and-royal-blue-is-a-cute-rom-com-with-an-awful-uma-thurman/) have taken issue with Thurman’s performance, a complaint I only agree with up to a point. Is she miscast? Well, maybe! If you’re looking for someone to play a salt-of-the-earth politician with ***working-class*** roots, you wouldn’t naturally think of the “Pulp Fiction” star, whose bearing is so patrician that she was once the go-to actress for noblewomen and goddesses. And though President Thurman’s hot gay son is hesitant to come out to her, that didn’t really track for me: How can you fear homophobia from a woman who once did [*a five-episode arc on “Smash”*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MGe3kzJpUm4&amp;t=20s)

So yes, I’ll concede all that, but I have to push back when people start complaining about Thurman’s accent. Can something that brings us this much pleasure possibly be “bad”? Thurman adds a jolt of oh-you’re-really-going-for-it gusto to each of her scenes in “Red, White &amp; Royal Blue,” and the performance is a hoot; though her lines may be as Southern-smothered as grits, I found them every bit as tasty. Others may nitpick, but all I know is that I was gaga for it — and I don’t mean “gaga” as in enthusiastic, I mean “gaga” as in whatever Lady Gaga was doing in “House of Gucci.”

[Video: [*Watch on YouTube.*](http://youtube.com/embed/eGNnpVKxV6s)]

Then again, I’ve never been a stickler for cinematic accents. Some people want to be impressed by a movie, but I ask only to be entertained. Sure, it’s technically imposing when someone nails an accent, but what kind of buzzkill waits in the audience with a poised red pen? In the era of the ultra-glossy $200 million blockbuster, a little bit of artifice can be welcome and even touching: It’s a reminder that every movie comes down to a whole bunch of human beings who’ve decided to play pretend for you.

Some people complain that an over-the-top accent takes them out of the reality of the film, but I find it pulls me into the pocket of surreality that every movie must muster. For instance, I have no idea if Benny Safdie’s jarring Hungarian accent in “Oppenheimer” is realistic, and frankly, I don’t care: That focus-pulling voice feels right for the physicist Edward Teller, an overweening character who refuses to mesh with the other scientists. Some critics quibbled with the Italian accents in “House of Gucci,” but I can’t imagine those two and a half hours without them. If Lady Gaga and Jared Leto weren’t talking like [*Wario*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ir6oK58mXYM) by way of “[*Moonstruck*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MN3sPq9RJKM),” the movie would have been sapped of all its fun!

The “House of Gucci” director Ridley Scott is hardly a purist when it comes to accents. His forthcoming war film “[*Napoleon*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CBmWztLPp9c)” and recent drama “[*The Last Duel*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mgygUwPJvYk)” both take place in France, but the actors are basically speaking … well, let’s say affected English. Scott once said that forcing French accents on the stars of “The Last Duel” would have been “[*a disaster,*](https://deadline.com/2021/11/ridley-scott-house-of-gucci-lady-gaga-adam-driver-the-last-duel-oscar-season-1234872529/)” but on that count, I beg to differ. Imagine Ben Affleck winding up to crucial lines with a snooty “a-hon-hon-hon!” Now that you have, you won’t want to go without.

Often, the people who get angriest about accents are the ones who say, “I’m actually from there, and that’s not how people talk in real life.” But movies aren’t real life and were never supposed to be. They’re fun-house mirrors meant to reflect us back in unusual ways, dream worlds that ask us to believe in things as outlandish as multiverses, 10-foot-tall blue people, or [*Mark Wahlberg playing a science teacher.*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5y4ZUMVTGcI&amp;t=24s)

As a native of Southern California, I am absolutely thrilled when actors try our valley cadences (has Emma Watson ever been better than [*in “The Bling Ring”*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TOcZTB-pRjw)?) and I wouldn’t dream of fact-checking them for accuracy. I’m even amused by how many Brits speak American in a monotone clench that recalls Mira Sorvino in “Romy and Michele’s High School Reunion”: You’re doing that to entertain me? How cute!

When it comes to accent work, you don’t have to be good, you just have to be interesting. I admit, though, that I may be speaking from personal experience. A high school teacher once challenged me to speak in a British accent in front of the class, and in a panic, my mind seized on Katharine Hepburn (notably, not British). Attempting to mimic her exotic manner of speaking, I landed somewhere north of Mid-Atlantic and drowned.

But what a way to go. I still remember the other students’ faces: shocked, delighted, appalled, compelled. It’s all the things I feel now when an actor tries an accent that either falls short of the mark or overshoots it wildly. There is a clip from a British stage production of “Cat on a Hot Tin Roof” that [*regularly makes the rounds*](https://twitter.com/keatonkildebell/status/1203366973603745792?lang=en) because the actress Sienna Miller recites her Tennessee Williams dialogue like she’s [*Jodie Foster in “Nell.”*](https://youtu.be/c0P_u-zs5-I?t=45) I watch it every single time, analyzing those few seconds like they’re Zapruder footage. I have even come to the conclusion that if Southern people don’t actually sound like that, well, maybe they should start.

So as far as I’m concerned, Uma Thurman has nothing to apologize for. Sure, it’s hard to buy her as a character who hails from Austin, but the city’s motto is “Keep Austin Weird,” and you can’t fault Thurman’s accent for trying. To me, it’s far more embarrassing that “Red, White &amp; Royal Blue” rips a page from Ryan Murphy’s handbook and forces Thurman to drawl about Truvada and bottoming just so the moment can go viral on Gay Twitter. Her accent was already enough for that!

If nothing else, I hope I’ve convinced you that a little more latitude is needed when viewers are determined to declare a movie accent as something that’s either "good” or “bad.” It’s astonishing when an actor like Meryl Streep can pull out an impeccable accent like it’s nothing, but it’s just as fascinating when people try. We can often be high-minded about the craft of performance, but sometimes it’s good to be reminded of one awfully entertaining truth: A whole lot of acting is just funny talking.

PHOTO: Uma Thurman, right, with Sharon D Clarke in “Red, White &amp; Royal Blue.” Thurman’s character is from Texas; her accent is as big as the state. (PHOTOGRAPH BY PRIME VIDEO) (C1); In “House of Gucci,” Lady Gaga sounds like Wario by way of “Moonstruck.” (PHOTOGRAPH BY FABIO LOVINO/MGM, VIA ASSOCIATED PRESS) This article appeared in print on page C1, C4.

**Load-Date:** August 19, 2023

**End of Document**



[***Glamorous Festivals Put Poverty Onstage***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68MV-TR51-JBG3-6548-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section C; Column 0; Movies, Performing Arts/Weekend Desk; Pg. 8; CRITIC'S NOTEBOOK

**Length:** 1131 words

**Byline:** By Laura Cappelle

**Body**

The opening productions of the Avignon and Aix-en-Provence Festivals brought tales of the down-and-out to well-heeled spectators. It got awkward.

Two events tower over France's summer festival season each July, held in cities less than 50 miles apart. One, the Avignon Festival, is a bustling, overcrowded celebration of theater; the other, the Aix-en-Provence Festival, offers a more genteel operatic lineup.

This week, well-heeled audiences sat down to opening productions at both festivals. Aix, in lieu of opera singers, unusually welcomed actors from the Comédie-Française, France's most storied theater troupe, for ''The Threepenny Opera,'' directed by Thomas Ostermeier; in Avignon, the theater collective In Vitro was supplemented with some new faces for Julie Deliquet's ''Welfare.''

Both productions touched on a subject that was an awkward fit for those affluent crowds: poverty.

Since France has seen the cost of living rise quickly over the past year, it might have felt like an appropriate nod to the times. Yet few things are trickier onstage than asking actors -- a profession in which the ***working class*** is hardly well-represented -- to act ''poor.''

In the event, the Comédie-Française fares better than Deliquet's actors, if only because Bertolt Brecht and Kurt Weill's 1928 ''The Threepenny Opera'' is a riotous satire. Its amoral criminals and beggars are over-the-top inventions, and Ostermeier's visually subdued production derives most of its pleasures from letting the cast's superb talents loose.

''Welfare'' is another matter. It is a close adaptation of a searing 1975 documentary by Frederick Wiseman, who brought his cameras to a New York welfare center and bore witness as claimants dealt desperately with a rigid system. Wiseman himself long wanted to see the material translated onto the stage, and brought the idea to Deliquet, the director of the Théâtre Gérard-Philipe in Saint-Denis, France.

Yet ''Welfare,'' which shared the opening honors in Avignon with a dance production, Bintou Dembélé's ''G.R.O.O.V.E.,'' looks as absurd onstage as it is affecting on-screen. No one involved seems to have realized the insurmountable issue: Re-enacting the hardships of real people with performers turns those people into characters, so their stories lose the ring of truth. Fostering the same empathy takes more work, but here, Deliquet seems hesitant to step in.

It doesn't help that the unaffected black-and-white cinematography of Wiseman's film has been replaced here with a technicolor recreation of a school gymnasium, including a bright teal floor that stretches across the vast outdoor stage of the Cour d'Honneur, Avignon's most imposing performance venue. It's as if the sitcom ''That 70s Show'' had opted to tackle welfare benefits, complete with well-cut, visibly new costumes. (Nothing says ''my children are about to starve'' like a neatly placed red beret.)

The stories told in Wiseman's film are loosely reorganized here into a day in the life of a welfare center, as case workers deal with one exasperated claimant after the next. One man lost his home in a fire. A couple of recovering addicts are trying to get their lives back on track. A heavily pregnant woman is asked for medical proof of her condition, while the husband of an older lady is withholding her checks.

There are comedic moments in the film, but in Deliquet's stage version, they start to feel involuntarily farcical. The energetic delivery of the cast may be because they need to project in the cavernous space, which holds around 2,000 spectators. The actors playing the claimants use their moments in the spotlight to play up the injustice of the system, instead of simply exemplifying it, as Wiseman's subjects did so effectively.

''Welfare'' means well, and it's easy to see why the new director of the Avignon Festival, Tiago Rodrigues, opted to put the project in a prestigious spot. It acts as a statement of change after the lumbering tenure of his predecessor, Olivier Py, and Deliquet is only the second woman director to receive a Cour d'Honneur slot in the 76-year history of the Avignon Festival.

Deliquet deserves it: She is one of France's top theater-makers, with a string of successes to her name. In ''Welfare,'' however, she is too respectful of Wiseman's source material. Some directors, like Alexander Zeldin with his ''Inequalities'' trilogy, have found the right tone in recent years to tackle underprivileged lives, but ''Welfare'' looks as if it is playing at poverty.

In Aix, ''The Threepenny Opera'' may not be an unqualified triumph for Ostermeier, its German director, but at least the show's roll-call of lowlife misfits is luxuriously cast, and with help from Alexandre Pateau's sharp new French translation, comes across as it was presumably intended: wry, charismatic, brilliantly individual.

Christian Hecq and Véronique Vella are exuberantly, wackily brilliant as the shallow Mr. and Mrs. Peachum, who set out to take down the notorious criminal Macheath for eloping with their daughter Polly. Not all the actors are equally fine singers, so Vella's powerful voice is an asset here. So are the vocal talents of Marie Oppert, a recent recruit to the Comédie-Française troupe and a trained singer who, in the role of Polly, turned ''Pirate Jenny'' into a showstopping number.

Well-crafted scenes come thick and fast in the first half, but the energy tails off later. It's as if Ostermeier, directing for the first time in an operatic context, stopped short of going truly big. The set designs are minimalistic: four mics downstage, a black platform behind the actors and a few screens above it that show repetitive Russian constructivism-inspired collages. On the main stage of the Comédie-Française in Paris, where the production will transfer in the fall, the company could simply repurpose the very similar set of Ivo van Hove's 2022 ''Tartuffe.''

Maxime Pascal conducts his own ensemble, Le Balcon, who play off the actors well: At one point, a musician even caught a mic Benjamin Lavernhe -- a whimsical highlight as the corrupt policeman Tiger Brown -- had inadvertently dropped into the pit. Pascal's reorchestration, adding electronic instruments, lent an intriguing edge to the biting momentum of Weill's score.

As in Avignon, the production was staged on an open-air stage of historical significance, in the courtyard of the Palais de l'Archevêché, where the festival was born in 1948. While it is reasonably sized compared to the Cour d'Honneur, it's a prestigious venue, where audience members pay up to $180 for the privilege of seeing ''The Threepenny Opera.''

As with ''Welfare,'' there is whiplash in watching impoverished characters in such rarefied company. But that's the reality of prestige theater today.

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: A scene from ''Welfare,'' an adaptation of a 1975 film documentary by Frederick Wiseman. (PHOTOGRAPH BY CHRISTOPHE RAYNAUD DE LAGE) (C8)

Christian Hecq and Véronique Vella in ''The Threepenny Opera'' from the Comédie-Française and the German director Thomas Ostermeier. (PHOTOGRAPH BY JEAN-LOUIS FERNANDEZ) (C9) This article appeared in print on page C8.

**Load-Date:** July 8, 2023

**End of Document**



[***‘This Is Grim,’ One Democratic Pollster Says; Guest Essay***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69T8-X8T1-JBG3-61D6-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 3055 words

**Highlight:** This is what’s keeping the Biden campaign up at night.

**Body**

The predictive power of horse-race polling a year from the presidential election [*is weak at best*](https://www.weekendreading.net/p/a-cure-for-mad-poll-disease?utm_source=profile&amp;utm_medium=reader2). The Biden campaign can take some comfort in that. But what recent surveys do reveal is that the coalition that put Joe Biden in the White House in the first place is nowhere near as strong as it was four years ago.

These danger signs include fraying support among core constituencies, including young voters, Black voters and Hispanic voters, and the decline, if not the erasure, of traditional Democratic advantages in representing the interests of the middle class and speaking for the average voter.

Any of these on their own might not be cause for alarm, but taken together, they present a dangerous situation for Biden.

From Nov. 5 through Nov. 11, Democracy Corps, a Democratic advisory group founded by [*Stan Greenberg and James Carville*](https://democracycorps.com/the-founders/), [*surveyed 2,500 voters*](https://democracycorps.com/national-surveys/the-change-campaign-that-can-contest-america/) in presidential and Senate battleground states as well as competitive House districts.

In an email, Greenberg summarized the results: “This is grim.” The study, he said, found that collectively, voters in the Democratic base of “Blacks, Hispanics, Asians, L.G.B.T.Q.+ community, Gen Z, millennials, unmarried and college women give Trump higher approval ratings than Biden.”

On 32 subjects ranging from abortion to China, the Democracy Corps survey asked voters to choose which would be better: “Biden and the Democrats” or “Trump and the Republicans.”

Biden and the Democrats led on six: women’s rights (ahead by 17 percentage points), climate change (15 points), addressing racial inequality (10 points), health care (three points), the president will not be an autocrat (two points) and protecting democracy (one point). There was a tie on making democracy more secure.

Donald Trump and the Republicans held leads on the remaining subjects, including being for working people (a seven-point advantage), standing up to elites (eight points), being able to get things done for the American people (12 points), feeling safe (12 points) and keeping wages and salaries up with the cost of living (17 points).

In the case of issues that traditionally favor Republicans, Trump and his allies held commanding leads: patriotism (11 points), crime (17 points), immigration (20 points) and border security (22 points).

Particularly worrisome for Democrats, who plan to demonize Trump as a threat to democracy, are the advantages Trump and Republicans have on opposing extremism (three points), getting beyond the chaos (six points) and protecting the Constitution (eight points).

There is some evidence in both the Democracy Corps survey and in other polls that concerns specific to Biden — including his age and the surge in prices during his presidency — are driving the perception of Democratic weakness rather than discontent with the party itself.

The survey found, for example, that Democratic candidates in House battleground districts are running even with their Republican opponents among all voters and two points ahead among voters who say they are likely to cast ballots on Election Day.

Along similar lines, a November 2023 [*NBC News poll*](https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/24171452-230343-nbc-november-2023-poll_111923-release-v2) found Trump leading Biden by two points, 46 to 44, but when voters were asked to choose between Trump and an unnamed Democratic candidate, the generic Democrat won 46 to 40.

In a reflection of both Biden’s and Trump’s high unfavorability ratings, NBC reported that when voters were asked to choose between Biden and an unnamed generic Republican, the Republican candidate led Biden 48 to 37.

Other nonpartisan polls describe similar Democratic weaknesses. A [*September Morning Consult survey*](https://pro.morningconsult.com/analysis/voter-confidence-democratic-party-2024-election) found, for example, that “voters are now more likely to see the Republican Party as capable of governing, tackling big issues and keeping the country safe compared with the Democratic Party” and that “by a nine-point margin, voters also see the Democratic Party as more ideologically extreme than the G.O.P.”

In the main, according to Morning Consult, these weaknesses result from declining confidence in their party within Democratic ranks rather than strong support for Trump and the Republican Party: “The trends against the Democratic Party are largely driven by worsening perceptions among its own voter base, which suggests that the party will have to rely more than ever on negative partisanship to keep control of the White House.”

Morning Consult posed the same set of questions to voters about the political parties in 2020 and again this year in order to track shifting voter attitudes.

Asked, for example, which party is more “capable of governing,” 48 percent of voters in 2020 said the Democrats, and 42 percent said the Republicans. This year, 47 percent said the Republicans, and 44 percent said the Democrats.

Similar shifts occurred on the question of which party will “keep the nation safe” and which party can “tackle the big issues.”

In what amounts to a body blow to Biden and his Democratic allies, Republicans are now virtually tied with Democrats on a matter that has been a mainstay of Democratic support since the formation of the New Deal coalition during the Great Depression. A [*September 2023 NBC News survey*](https://www.nbcnews.com/meet-the-press/first-read/poll-republicans-advantages-immigration-crime-economy-rcna117054) “found that 34 percent of voters believe Republicans are better at looking out for the middle class, while 36 percent say the same of Democrats. The two-point margin in favor of Democrats is the lowest it has been in the history of the poll.”

“Democrats have held over 30 years as high as a 29-point advantage as being the party better able to deal with and handle issues of concern to the middle class,” [*Bill McInturff*](https://pos.org/partners/bill-mcinturff/), a partner in the Republican firm Public Opinion Strategies, which joined with the Democratic firm Hart Research to conduct the NBC poll, told me.

[*Neil Newhouse*](https://pos.org/partners/neil-newhouse/), who is also a partner at Public Opinion Strategies, emailed me to say that the opinion trends among Black and Hispanic voters “are figures G.O.P.ers could only dream about a few years ago.”

Although many of those with whom I discussed the data voiced deep concern over Biden’s prospects, let me cite a couple of experts who are more optimistic.

[*Simon Rosenberg*](https://www.ndn.org/about/staff/simon-rosenberg), a veteran Democratic operative and former president of the New Democratic Network, emailed me a series of points:

The last four presidential elections have gone 51 percent-46 percent Democratic, best run for Dems since F.D.R.’s elections. Only 1 R — George W. Bush 2004 — has broken 48 percent since the 1992 election, and Dems have won more votes in seven of last eight presidential elections. If there is a party with a coalition problem, it is them, not us.

Our performance since Dobbs remains remarkable and important. In 2022 we gained in Arizona, Colorado, Georgia, Michigan, Minnesota, New Hampshire, Pennsylvania over 2020, getting to 59 percent in Colorado, 57 percent in Pennsylvania, 55 percent in Michigan, 54 percent in New Hampshire in that “red wave” year. This year we’ve won and outperformed across the country in every kind of election, essentially leaving this a blue wave year.

We got to 56 percent in the Wisconsin SCOTUS race, 57 percent in Ohio, flipped Colorado Springs and Jacksonville, flipped the Virginia House. Kentucky governor, Andrew Beshear, grew his margin. We won mayoralties and school board races across the United States. Elections are about winning and losing, and we keep winning, and they keep losing.

In a recent post on his Substack, “[*Why I Am Optimistic About 2024*](https://www.hopiumchronicles.com/p/i-am-very-optimistic-about-2024-on),” Rosenberg elaborated:

Opposition and fear of MAGA is the dominant force in U.S. politics today, and that is a big problem for super-MAGA Trump in 2024. Fear and opposition to MAGA has been propelling our electoral wins since 2018 and will almost certainly do so again next year.

[*Alex Theodoridis*](https://polsci.umass.edu/people/alexander-theodoridis), a political scientist at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, expressed similar optimism concerning Biden’s chances: “Once Democrats come to terms with the fact that Biden will be the nominee (and, more importantly, that Trump will in all likelihood be the G.O.P. nominee), a lot of the internal malaise expressed in current polls should dissipate.”

When Biden begins campaigning in earnest, Theodoridis wrote,

he will likely still come across as relatively competent and steady. And, while Trump always looms over G.O.P. politics, we will certainly see more coverage of him as G.O.P. nominee to remind less engaged Democrats and the few true independents that he is a deeply flawed figure who has and would again pose a real threat to our Republic.

When voters finally make up their minds, Theodoridis predicted, “the anti-MAGA, pro-democracy, pro-reproductive-rights message that has boosted turnout and served Democratic candidates well the last two Novembers will likely do so again.”

[*Jim Kessler*](https://www.thirdway.org/about/staff/jim-kessler), a senior vice president of Third Way, a Democratic think tank, was nowhere near as confident in Democratic prospects as Rosenberg and Theodoridis were. In an email, Kessler observed that polls at this time need to be taken with a grain of salt — remarking that in 1991, George H.W. Bush appeared to be the prohibitive favorite to win a second term and that in 2011, Mitt Romney was well ahead of President Barack Obama.

In addition, Kessler wrote, in the past month,

the price of gasoline [*has fallen 20 cents*](https://gasprices.aaa.com) to a national average of $3.24 a gallon. [*Headline and core inflation*](https://www.federalreserve.gov/newsevents/speech/mishkin20071020a.htm) have begun their final descent toward benign, historic levels. Interest rates have fallen about 40 basis points in the past several months. The so-called misery index (inflation plus unemployment rate) could very well be at a level that is incumbent friendly.

That said, Kessler continued, there are clear danger signs:

Biden won in 2020 because he was perceived as having a more positive brand than the Democratic Party. That brand advantage over the Democratic Party is now gone. Exhibits A and B are crime and immigration. In 2020, Biden was perceived as tougher on crime and the border than the typical Democrat.

In one primary debate, Kessler pointed out,

Biden was the only candidate onstage not to raise his hand on a question that essentially could be interpreted as wanting open borders. He also loudly and repeatedly voiced his opposition to defund the police and never ran away from the 1994 crime bill that he authored in the Senate.

That, in Kessler’s view, “is not the Joe Biden voters are hearing today. Voters actually hear almost nothing from the administration on crime or the border, and this allows the opposition to define them on an issue of great salience.”

Biden, Kessler argued, has a credible record on tougher border enforcement and cracking down on crime, but he and other members of the administration don’t promote it

because these are issues on which our active, progressive base is split. But if you are silent on these issues, it is like an admission of guilt to voters. They believe you do not care or are dismissive of their very real concerns. That means Biden must accept some griping from the left to get this story out to the vast middle.

[*Will Marshall*](https://www.progressivepolicy.org/people/will-marshall-2/), the president and founder of the center-left [*Progressive Policy Institute*](https://www.progressivepolicy.org/) think tank, responded to my query with an emailed question: “Trump is kryptonite for American democracy, so why isn’t President Biden leading him by 15 points?”

Marshall’s answer:

Biden’s basic problem is that the Democratic Party keeps shrinking, leaving it with a drastically slender margin of error. It’s losing ***working-class*** voters — whites — by enormous, 30-point margins — but nonwhites without college degrees are slipping away, too.

The ascendance of largely white, college-educated liberals within party ranks, in Marshall’s view, has

pushed Democrats far to the dogmatic left, even as their base grows smaller. Young progressives have identified the party with stances on immigration, crime, gender, climate change and Palestinian resistance that are so far from mainstream sentiment that they can even eclipse MAGA extremism.

Democrats, Marshall wrote, in a line of argument similar to Kessler’s,

have been aiming at the wrong target and have less than a year to adjust their sights. That means putting high prices and living costs front and center, embracing cultural pragmatism, confronting left-wing radicalism on the border, public safety and Israel and embracing a postpopulist economics that speaks to working Americans’ aspirations for growth and upward mobility rather than their presumed sense of economic victimhood.

[*Jacob Hacker*](https://politicalscience.yale.edu/people/jacob-hacker), a political scientist at Yale, contended that the view of Biden and the Democratic Party as elitist and weak on the very values that were Democratic strengths in the past lacks foundation in practice. Instead, the adverse portrait of the Democrats indicates a major success on the part of right-wing media — and a complicit mainstream media — in creating a false picture of the party.

In a forthcoming paper, “Bridging the Blue Divide: The Democrats’ New Metro Coalition and the Unexpected Prominence of Redistribution,” Hacker said he and three colleagues found that

Democrats have not changed their orientation nearly as much as critics of the party argue. In particular, the party has not shifted its emphasis from economic to social/identity issues, nor has it moderated its economic positions overall. Instead, it has placed a high priority on an ambitious economic program that involves a wider range of policy aims and instruments than in the past (including industrial policy and pro-labor initiatives as well as social and health policies and public investments) as well as levels of public spending that dwarf those contemplated by party elites in at least a half-century.

Why then, Hacker asked, is “the Democratic Party widely perceived to have abandoned pocketbook politics in favor of identity politics?”

His answer:

Conservative media have relentlessly focused on this critique, and there’s strong evidence that media framing shapes how voters view the parties. Indeed, the role of the media in shaping the negative current climate — including more mainstream sources — should not be neglected. The obsessions of right-wing media with the “wokeness” of the Democratic Party seeps into the broader media coverage, and mainstream sources focus on criticisms of the Democrats, in part to uphold their nonpartisan ideal.

[*Ryan Enos*](https://www.gov.harvard.edu/directory/ryan-d-enos/), a political scientist at Harvard, warned that there are major consequences that could result from the weakness of Biden’s support. In an email, Enos wrote:

There is no doubt that Democrats and — given that the likely Republican nominee is a would-be authoritarian — Americans more generally should be alarmed by Biden’s poll numbers. He is saddled with the need to dig economic perceptions out of a deep inflationary hole, an unsteady international world and the view that his party went too far to the left on social issues.

If the election were held today, Enos argued, “Biden would likely lose.”

During the campaign, “Biden’s numbers will improve,” Enos wrote, but Biden faces a large number of idealistic young voters who may

never come back to him because they believe that he has abandoned the core values that animated their support in the first place. Faced with the reality of surging immigration across the southern border, Biden has largely failed to liberalize his administration’s approach to immigration — in fact, he has left much of the Trump-era policies in place. To many young voters, who were first attracted to Biden’s social progressivism, such moves may feel like a betrayal. Additionally, Biden has seemed to greenlight Israel’s campaign of violence against civilians in Gaza. Especially for young voters of color, this seems like a betrayal and could cost Biden crucial states such as Michigan.

[*Jonathan Weiler*](https://globalstudies.unc.edu/people/core-faculty/jonathan-weiler/), a political scientist at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, stands somewhere between Rosenberg and Marshall.

“There’s no gainsaying Biden’s poor polling numbers at the present,” Weiler wrote by email.

However unhinged Trump appears increasingly to be, for now, that’s an abstraction for many voters. In the meantime, what they see in ways that feel up close and personal are signs of an unsettled and unsettling world impinging on their day-to-day lives, including inflation, higher crime and a big increase in migrants across our southern border and into cities around the United States.

On the plus side for Biden, Weiler wrote, “the data show clearly that inflation is trending substantially downward.” In addition,

violent crime has returned to prepandemic levels. Americans always think crime is going up, no matter what the data say. But if the actual drop in crime results in people thinking about it less, that could also lessen people’s sense of a chaotic and unsettled reality.

[*Rogers Smith*](https://live-sas-www-polisci.pantheon.sas.upenn.edu/people/standing-faculty/rogers-smith), a political scientist at the University of Pennsylvania, made the case that Biden’s age and his visible infirmities interfere with his ability to reassure the electorate:

The biggest factor that is neglected in many polls is the widespread belief that Biden is simply too old and insufficiently vigorous to remain president for four more years. This belief is reinforced by the reality that Biden does not inspire confidence in his vigor or energy in most of his public presentations. The problem is particularly acute among young voters but goes throughout the electorate, Democrats and Republicans alike. It means that voters don’t give much weight to Biden’s arguments on the issues.

Democrats are trapped, Smith maintained:

None will challenge Biden; he must choose to step aside. If he did so, he would feel compelled to support Kamala Harris. But most Democrats, and probably Biden himself, rightly believe that she would do even worse than he is doing.

The one ace in the hole for Democrats is Donald Trump himself. As the center of attention in the elections of 2018, 2020 and even 2022, he was the key to Democratic victories. Trump is doing all he can to become the focus in 2024, but the question remains whether the Democrats, with Biden at the top of the ticket, can successfully demonize him again.

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PHOTO: (PHOTOGRAPH BY Andrew Caballero-Reynolds/Agence France-Presse — Getty Images FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

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**End of Document**



[***Workers Continue to Get Priced Out of the Hamptons***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:689P-DXN1-DXY4-X1GJ-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** REALESTATE

**Length:** 948 words

**Byline:** Heather Senison

**Highlight:** Business owners and local leaders are scrambling to create housing for workers in low-wage jobs, but residents who are opposed to development say land must be preserved.

**Body**

Business owners and local leaders are scrambling to create housing for workers in low-wage jobs, but residents who are opposed to development say land must be preserved.

For decades, residents and seasonal visitors to the Hamptons and other towns on the East End of Long Island have braced for spending summer mornings and evenings in the “trade parade,” the congested procession of contractors, hospital staff and other workers who commute to the East End to work every day.

Priced out of the area, many workers have long lived up-island in less expensive locales like Manorville and Mastic-Shirley, forced to commute for hours each day.

But the parade is thinning, business owners warned. Fewer and fewer workers are willing to endure wall-to-wall traffic for low-wage jobs, punctuating the longtime dilemma that the workers who keep the North and South Forks running cannot afford to live there.

“I don’t throw the word crisis around very easily, but it’s at that point,” said Fred Thiele Jr., a state assemblyman whose district includes Southampton. He said a staff member was forced to vacate the house she rented in Sag Harbor when the landlord sold it to capitalize on soaring home prices, part of a wave of sales that turned yearlong rentals into seasonal vacation homes. The staffer moved in with her boyfriend, he said, “but for a lot of people in that situation, they didn’t have options."

Complaints about the lack of affordability are not new, but the pandemic brought on a panic and changes in the rhythm of the summer season. Many restaurants now close one or two days a week, even in the summer, without enough staff to work in them, business owners say. “Who’s going to drive from Shirley and sit in that traffic to clean hotel rooms?” said Jay Schneiderman, the town supervisor of Southampton and the owner of a hotel in Montauk.

Residents are once again debating proposed solutions, including where to build high-density housing developments and how to best use funds that are designated for affordable housing measures.

The Hamptons had pockets of affordability, such as the Springs, a densely wooded neighborhood along Three Mile Harbor Road in East Hampton, but the mad dash to the suburbs during the pandemic pushed prices out of reach for people with lower incomes.

Even real estate agents making an average $100,000 a year can’t afford the market, said Ben Dixon, a [*salesperson with Douglas Elliman*](https://mackaydixon.com/) in both New York City and the Hamptons.

The average sales price on the South Fork, which includes the Towns of East Hampton and Southampton, was $3.222 million in the first quarter of 2023, a 73 percent increase from $1.86 million in 2019, according to Corcoran data.

On the North Fork, which includes the Towns of Southold and Shelter Island, the average price was $1.188 million in the first quarter of 2023, up 64 percent from $723,000 in 2019.

The towns offer some subsidized rental and sales units, including 344 in Southampton and 818 in East Hampton. The wait-lists of applicants far exceed the demand: 1,334 applicants in Southampton and 3,107 applicants in East Hampton, as of last month.

In November, the four Towns on the North and South Forks — Southampton, East Hampton, Southold and Shelter Island — passed a 0.5 percent real estate transfer tax to build up a Community Housing Fund. The tax applies to the sale of all properties, with the first $400,000 exempt for those sold for less than $2 million. Mr. Thiele’s office expects the new tax to raise $25 million in 2024, its first full year of implementation, and $600 million by the time it’s up for renewal in 2050.

Local governments can use the fund for initiatives, like down payment assistance for home buyers, public-private construction projects and the creation of accessory dwelling units on existing home properties. If the community housing fund raises $10 million annually, it would equate to 66 new units each year, Mr. Schneiderman said.

Residents are skeptical of affordable housing; they believe that the preservation of the Hamptons’ lush environment is a priority, too, said Bob DeLuca, president of the land conservation organization [*Group for the East End*](https://www.groupfortheeastend.org/).

“You should be concerned about what happens in your backyard. Why wouldn’t you be?” he said.

Land in the Hamptons is guarded by the Peconic Bay Tax, a real estate transfer tax enacted in 1998 that has generated more than $1 billion since 2000 for a Community Preservation Fund.

It has been so successful that there is little land left for development. About 68 percent of Montauk is preserved, said Scott Wilson, director of land acquisition and management for the Town of East Hampton.

While officials navigate policies and politics, local business owners are determining where their employees will live in the meantime.

Jesse Matsuoka, 37, who co-owns four restaurants, including Sen and K Pasa in Sag Harbor, now has six “staff houses”: a single-family and a multifamily home in Sag Harbor, three apartments above Sen, his parents’ guest bedrooms and a spare room in his own house.

His wife, Jessica Matsuoka, moonlights as their property manager.

Still, Mr. Matsuoka needs housing for more than 100 seasonal employees and isn’t sure that his restaurants will operate at full capacity this summer.

“They’re trying to sell this lifestyle to others to live here, but they’ve pushed out the ***working class***, so how are businesses supposed to operate?” he asked.

PHOTO: Business owners and local residents in the Hamptons are debating whether to prioritize land preservation or the creation of affordable housing, like this HUD development, the Sandy Hollow Cove apartments in Southampton. (PHOTOGRAPH BY ANDY RYAN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** May 27, 2023

**End of Document**



[***The Walk***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65N8-7F11-DXY4-X33G-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

June 10, 2022 Friday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section C; Column 0; Movies, Performing Arts/Weekend Desk; Pg. 6

**Length:** 316 words

**Byline:** By Devika Girish

**Body**

Set in South Boston in 1974, in the riotous aftermath of court-ordered school desegregation, Daniel Adams's ''The Walk'' shows its hand early on. We first meet Billy (Justin Chatwin), a ***working-class*** Irish cop, as he lets a Black shoplifter off the hook and even pays for the man's stolen baby formula. The perp responds incredulously with a comment that emerges as the film's thematic refrain: ''Damn, I guess there are some good white pigs left.''

It's a dubious choice, centering a film about anti-Black racism on a ''noble'' Caucasian policeman -- no matter that Billy responds to the thief's comment by gratuitously slamming him against the wall and threatening to arrest him.

As the film opens, the Federal District Court has just mandated busing as a means of integrating Boston's public schools. Much to the chagrin of his prejudiced neighbors, Billy is assigned to escort Black high school students as they are bused to the all-white school attended by his (increasingly, noxiously bigoted) daughter.

Among the Black kids is the bright, brave Wendy (Lovie Simone), the daughter of an emergency medical worker (Terrence Howard). The film occasionally switches perspectives from Billy and his family to Wendy and her father, though their arcs all tie up in a melodramatic display of Billy's heroism that reaffirms tired white-savior clichés.

The topic is, of course, timely. (When is racism not?) Yet ''The Walk'' feels dated. Every exchange among Adams's schema of archetypes -- the radical, quick-tempered Black man and the peace-loving Black woman; the impoverished, racist white people and the do-gooding liberals -- lands like a platitudinous lecture about ''fighting hate,'' with the stilted performances (featuring too-forced Bah-stin accents) adding to the after-school-special vibe.

The WalkRated R for racist epithets and violence. Running time: 1 hour 45 minutes. In theaters.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2022/06/09/pageoneplus/09walk-rex.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/06/09/pageoneplus/09walk-rex.html)

**Load-Date:** June 10, 2022

**End of Document**



[***President Biden’s First Day***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:60CC-5NW1-DXY4-X2DD-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

July 16, 2020 Thursday 19:48 EST

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 914 words

**Byline:** David Brooks

**Highlight:** Imagining Jan. 20, 2021.

**Body**

Imagining Jan. 20, 2021.

The first thing you’ll notice is the quiet. If Joe Biden wins this thing, there will be no disgraceful presidential tweets and no furious cable segments reacting to them on Inauguration Day.

Donald Trump himself may fume, but hated and alone. The opportunists who make up his administration will abandon him. Republicans will pretend they never heard his name. Republican politicians are not going to hang around a guy they privately hate and who publicly destroyed their majority.

But there will be a larger quiet, too. For two decades American politics has centered on a bitter culture war between the white ***working-class*** heartland and university-bred coastal elites.

Bill Clinton, Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton were all emblems of this university class, and it was easy for the Republican media wing to gin up resentment against them. In 2016, Trump beat Clinton among the white ***working class*** by a crushing 28 points.

But Biden is not an emblem of this coastal elite. His sensibility was nurtured by his ***working-class*** family during the postwar industrial boom of the 1950s and 1960s. He graduated from the University of Delaware in 1965 and missed the late 1960s culture war that divided a generation.

It’s very hard for conservatives to demonize Biden because he comes from the sort of background that Trumpian conservatives celebrate. He elides all the culture war divides. He doesn’t act superior to the “deplorables,” because his family taught him to despise status games of all sorts.

It will become immediately clear that in a Biden era politics will shrink back down to normal size. It will be about government programs, not epic wars about why my sort of people are morally superior to your sort of people. In the Trump era a lot of people who don’t care about government got manic about politics.

It will also become immediately clear that in a highly ideological age, America will be led by a man who is not ideological.

This week a few of us columnist types spoke with Biden about his economic plans. His most telling sentence was, “I’ve kind of tried to shed the labels and focus on the nuts and bolts of this.”

I asked him to describe the big forces that have flattened ***working-class*** wages over the past decades. Other people would have spun grand theories about broken capitalism or the rise of the corporate oligarchy. But Biden pointed to two institutional failures — the way Republicans have decentralized power and broken Washington and the way Wall Street forces business leaders to focus obsessively on the short term.

Biden’s worldview seems to come mainly from lived experience, not a manifesto somewhere. He has lived experience of a time when there were good manufacturing jobs, when unions protected workers, when the less affluent had a ladder to climb.

His economic agenda, promoted under the slogan “Build Back Better,” is about that, not some vast effort to remake capitalism or build a Nordic-style welfare system. The agenda is more New Deal than New Left.

In the two speeches he has delivered so far there are constant references to our manufacturing base — infrastructure, steelworkers, engineers, ironworkers, welders, 500,000 charging stations for electric cars. “When I think of climate change, the word I think of is jobs,” he declared.

The agenda pushes enormous resources toward two groups: first, African-Americans, who have been pummeled by deindustrialization for decades; and second, white ***working-class*** Trump voters. This looks like an attempt to rebuild the New Deal coalition and win back the white ***working class*** who should be a core of the Democratic base. Biden’s populist “Buy American” messaging is just icing on that cake.

Can he pull off this manufacturing revival and this political realignment?

I’ll be curious to see if it’s possible to create millions of manufacturing jobs — or if technology means there’s only a need for relatively few workers. I’ll be curious to see if he can tamp down the Democratic media and activist wings, with their penchant for wildly unpopular moral gestures like “defund the police” and “decriminalize the border.”

I wonder if the economic crisis will obviate all this. With mass unemployment the need will be to get money out the door immediately on Day 1. Launching infrastructure projects and clean energy industries takes a lot of time.

But I do know that if he can win a chunk of the white ***working class*** ([*44 percent of the electorate*](https://www.persuasion.community/p/demography-is-not-destiny?utm_medium=email&amp;utm_campaign=cta), according to Ruy Teixeira), he will realign American politics. I also know that from that first day the Biden agenda will put the surviving Republicans in Congress in an awful bind. Do they cooperate and work with Biden’s infrastructure and manufacturing plans? If they oppose him they give him a clear shot to win their voters while also inviting him to end the filibuster.

Everybody says Biden is a moderate, and in intellectual and temperamental terms that is true. But he has found a way to craft an agenda that could reshape the American economy and the landscape of American politics in fundamental ways.

Joe Biden may turn out to be what radical centrism looks like.

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PHOTOS (PHOTOGRAPHS BY HILARY SWIFT FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES; ALEXANDER DRAGO/REUTERS)

**Load-Date:** July 17, 2020

**End of Document**



[***President Biden's First Day***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:60CG-DXM1-DXY4-X2RK-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

July 17, 2020 Friday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; Editorial Desk; Pg. 24

**Length:** 910 words

**Byline:** By David Brooks

**Body**

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[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/16/opinion/biden-2020.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/16/opinion/biden-2020.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS (PHOTOGRAPHS BY HILARY SWIFT FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

ALEXANDER DRAGO/REUTERS)

**Load-Date:** July 17, 2020

**End of Document**



[***To Experience Paris Up Close and Personal, Plunge Into a Public Pool; Paris Dispatch***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6938-06V1-JBG3-6179-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

September 3, 2023 Sunday 06:37 EST

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**Section:** WORLD; europe

**Length:** 1436 words

**Byline:** Catherine Porter

**Highlight:** Swimming in Paris is a full-on cultural experience, offering intimate views into the French psyche, which is on near-naked display in the swimming lanes, locker rooms and (mostly coed) showers.

**Body**

Swimming in Paris is a full-on cultural experience, offering intimate views into the French psyche, which is on near-naked display in the swimming lanes, locker rooms and (mostly coed) showers.

I slip into the water and push off quickly before the man swimming like a breast-stroking porpoise gets any closer. Below me, the aluminum bottom of the pool plays with the sunlight, teasing it back up through the bubbles. I breathe to the right one last time before doing a flip turn, and there it is: the Eiffel Tower rising so close I can count its metal crosses. The pool windows offer an unobstructed, third-story view.

Swimming in Paris is a full-on cultural experience. Many public pools don’t just feel like historical monuments, they are historical monuments. Backstroking beneath the buttresses stretching across the vaulted ceiling of the 99-year-old Butte-aux-Cailles pool feels like backstroking through a cathedral.

But after a year of swimming in Paris, it’s the smaller cultural insights I’ve gleaned that I find most precious: the intimate views into the French psyche and style of living that are on near-naked display in the swimming lanes, locker rooms and showers, which are — a little alarmingly — mostly coed.

I have been a swimmer since I was a kid. I competed on my high school team and for a year in college. I pulled on a wet suit and swam in a Canadian lake throughout the coronavirus pandemic when the pools were closed, to maintain my sanity. It’s my form of exercise and stress release.

So when I moved to Paris last August, I quickly developed a to-visit list of public pools across the city, many dating from the 1930s, during the height of the Art Deco architectural craze. They’re stunning.

Take the Piscine des Amiraux, built in 1930 on the city’s ***working-class*** northern edge. It’s a long, thin pool, with walls covered in white subway tiles. Look up, and you see a skylight roof, above two rings of balconies lined with the green doors of individual changing rooms. You hang your stuff on anchor-shaped hooks, and when you are done swimming, a cabin boy comes and opens the door for you.

It all feels like swimming back through time.

But even the more modern pools offer touches of beauty that seem luxurious to a North American eye raised on functionality.

Most have huge windows, letting natural light pour in. Many open onto lush gardens. I was so taken with two trees spilling lush pink blooms down one side of the Jean Taris pool that I didn’t notice the dome of the Panthéon rising behind them until the lifeguard, helping me identify the trees, pointed it out. (Crepe myrtle, by the way.)

I figured out some of the rules and unspoken systems pretty quickly: no shoes in the changing room, bathing caps required and no board shorts, just snug fits. The coed showers were harder to get used to, even though bathers keep their suits on.

Paris introduced “mixité” to the showers in 2006 to cut costs and to reflect the city’s liberal attitudes about gender, explained Franck Guilluy, a former world champion pentathlete who oversees the city’s 50 pools. The transformation, however, solved fewer problems than it created — including exhibitionism — and the city is bringing the experiment to an end, putting in separate showers as it renovates pools.

Still, however squeamish it has made me — notably when men lather up and vigorously scrub what’s beneath their suits and then rinse off by holding their shorts open to the water as they stand right beside me — some swimmers like it.

The writer Colombe Schneck, together with her artist sister Marine Schneck, visited all 50 pools and published a guide, “Paris à la Nage.” Colombe Schneck considers the public pools one of the few places in the city where there is true social mixing, disrobed of sex, gender and class.

The coed showers reinforce that communal ideal, she said.

“We are only bodies swimming — men and women. We don’t care. We should all go together,” Ms. Schneck tells me over a post-swim drink and snack at a nearby cafe, in keeping with the sisters’ mantra: “We don’t swim to get thin.” (Each pool in their guide is accompanied by a local restaurant or cafe recommendation.)

She had no answer as to why the most perfectly appointed Parisians, so consumed with fashion rules and rigid etiquette on the city’s streets, have no issue flaunting their informality in the showers.

“We are all a mix of contradictions,” she said.

That’s just one of the many cultural enigmas I’ve discovered in Paris pools. For a country [*renowned for bureaucracy and regulations*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/04/26/world/europe/france-covid-lockdowns.html), there’s shockingly little order in the lanes.

On a typical morning at my local pool, most lanes are full with a mix of swimmers: the serious athletes pushing buttons on their watches between sets; the competent-but-slow breaststrokers who prove difficult to get past; and those I call the sensualists: People who come to commune with the water and enter their own dream world. You might find them doing a few strokes and then drifting down to the bottom of the pool.

Technically, the lanes are supposed to be separated into fast, medium and slow. But I have seen that at only one pool.

The French bring their devotion to liberty into the water with them. You might have passed a swimmer three times already, but he won’t wait at the wall to let you by again. Instead, he’ll push off right in front of you.

“I almost never go to public pools — it’s impossible to swim,” commiserated Arthur Germain, a celebrated young French swimmer who in 2021 [*swam*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8lq3GkGXQ_0) the full length of the Seine over 49 days.

French bureaucracy almost killed his project — despite his being the son of Paris’s mayor, Anne Hidalgo. Mr. Germain needed approval from 14 government authorities and 330 mayors. He sees the pandemonium in swim lanes as the natural response to living with all of those rules.

“When people have liberty in France, it’s very chaotic,” Mr. Germain said. “People don’t reflect. They don’t think of swimmers around them.”

As for the sensualists, the French sports historian Thierry Terret helped me understand them.

The first swimming pools in Paris were built literally floating atop the Seine and resembled a mix between a single-sex social club and a Turkish bath. People would go for the day to visit the barber, bob in the water, have a sumptuous wine-soaked meal and then take a two-hour nap.

When the first year-round pools were built on land in the later part of the 19th century, they were constructed to resemble rivers — long and thin, with changing depths and even rocks and waterfalls.

“The first real pools were built for every other reason but sport,” Mr. Terret said.

Only later, particularly during the Cold War when winning Olympic medals offered ideological superiority, would competition become part of swimming culture.

The mixed cultures displayed in pools today are a legacy of this.

At first, I found swimming here frustrating: too much dodging and motorboat-style kicking to make a pass.

But over time, I’ve adapted. Rather than battle them, I’m learning from the sensualists.

I’ve slowed down enough to absorb the architectural and botanical beauty around me. Rather than chopping through the water, I’ve started to feel its silky threads weave through my fingers. I’ve worked to notice the light bending through the water. It now feels less like a harried game of Frogger and more like swimming through an Impressionist painting.

There are a few less-beautiful pools in the city, Mr. Guilluy says — underground, no garden, no Art Deco features. They tend to be less busy.

I could try one of them to get in a true workout, I suppose.

But given the choice between beauty and exercise, I’ll take beauty. In that way, I’m becoming a Parisian.

PHOTOS: In Paris, backstroking under the buttresses stretching across the vaulted ceiling of the 99-year-old Butte-aux-Cailles pool is like swimming through a cathedral.; The Butte-aux-Cailles pool, above and at right. For a country renowned for bureaucracy and regulations, there’s shockingly little order in the lanes at public pools in Paris. “When people have liberty in France, it’s very chaotic,” said Arthur Germain, who swam the full length of the Seine over 49 days. “People don’t reflect. They don’t think of swimmers around them.”; Outside the Butte-aux-Cailles pool, left. Many pools don’t just feel like historical monuments, they are historical monuments. More modern pools also offer touches of beauty.; COLOMBE SCHNECK, co-author of a guide to public pools in Paris, about the coed showers at the facilities, introduced in 2006. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY DMITRY KOSTYUKOV FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A4.

**Load-Date:** September 4, 2023

**End of Document**



[***Jodie Comer to Make Broadway Debut in ‘Prima Facie’ Next Spring***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65N3-C6S1-JBG3-62VW-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

June 9, 2022 Thursday 23:18 EST

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**Section:** THEATER

**Length:** 264 words

**Byline:** Nicole Herrington

**Highlight:** The “Killing Eve” star will reprise her role in Suzie Miller’s solo show, which is wrapping up a run in London.

**Body**

The “Killing Eve” star will reprise her role in Suzie Miller’s solo show, which is wrapping up a run in London.

Jodie Comer, known for playing the charismatic assassin [*Villanelle*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/04/05/arts/television/killing-eve-villanelle-jodie-comer.html) on “Killing Eve,” has received glowing reviews for her West End stage debut in the [*one-woman play “Prima Facie.”*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/26/theater/jodie-comer-prima-facie.html) Now she’s setting her sights on Broadway.

Next spring, Comer will reprise her role, as a lawyer named Tessa who discovers the limitations of the law after being sexually assaulted, when the show arrives on Broadway at a yet-to-be-announced Shubert theater. This will be her Broadway debut.

The play, written by Suzie Miller, is currently in the final weeks of its run in London’s West End. Critics praised Comer for her breakneck performance in an emotionally demanding role that, under Justin Martin’s busy staging, is quite physical. It calls for her to leap onto furniture, endure a brief onstage rainstorm and more as she tells the story of working her way up from ***working-class*** origins and later being assaulted by a colleague whom she brings to trial.

“There’s no denying the visceral power of an evening that owes its sellout status to a theatrical neophyte who possesses the know-how of a seasoned pro,” Matt Wolf wrote in his review for The New York Times.

The play originally premiered in 2019 in Miller’s native Australia. The playwright is a former human rights and children’s rights lawyer.

No dates have been announced for the Broadway production, which will be directed by Martin. The lead producer is Empire Street Productions, led by James Bierman.

PHOTO: Jodie Comer in “Prima Facie.”

**Load-Date:** June 14, 2022

**End of Document**



[***At Glamorous French Festivals, Poverty Is Only Onstage; Critic’s Notebook***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68MP-H9R1-JBG3-64WV-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

July 6, 2023 Thursday 21:56 EST

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**Section:** THEATER

**Length:** 1179 words

**Byline:** Laura Cappelle

**Highlight:** The opening productions of the Avignon and Aix-en-Provence Festivals brought tales of the down-and-out to well-heeled spectators. It got awkward.

**Body**

The opening productions of the Avignon and Aix-en-Provence Festivals brought tales of the down-and-out to well-heeled spectators. It got awkward.

Two events tower over France’s summer festival season each July, held in cities less than 50 miles apart. One, the Avignon Festival, is a bustling, overcrowded celebration of theater; the other, the Aix-en-Provence Festival, offers a more genteel operatic lineup.

This week, well-heeled audiences sat down to opening productions at both festivals. Aix, in lieu of opera singers, unusually welcomed actors from the Comédie-Française, France’s most storied theater troupe, for [*“The Threepenny Opera,” directed by Thomas Ostermeier*](https://festival-aix.com/en/program/opera/threepenny-opera); in Avignon, the theater collective In Vitro was supplemented with some new faces for [*Julie Deliquet’s “Welfare.”*](https://festival-avignon.com/en/edition-2023/programme/welfare-331806)

Both productions touched on a subject that was an awkward fit for those affluent crowds: poverty.

Since France has seen [*the cost of living rise*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/16/world/europe/paris-protest-inflation.html) quickly over the past year, it might have felt like an appropriate nod to the times. Yet few things are trickier onstage than asking actors — a profession in which the ***working class*** is hardly well-represented — to act “poor.”

In the event, the Comédie-Française fares better than Deliquet’s actors, if only because Bertolt Brecht and Kurt Weill’s 1928 “The Threepenny Opera” is a riotous satire. Its amoral criminals and beggars are over-the-top inventions, and Ostermeier’s visually subdued production derives most of its pleasures from letting the cast’s superb talents loose.

“Welfare” is another matter. It is a close adaptation of [*a searing 1975 documentary by Frederick Wiseman*](https://www.nytimes.com/1975/09/21/archives/probing-the-kafkaesque-world-of-welfare-probing-the-kafkaesque.html), who brought his cameras to a New York welfare center and bore witness as claimants dealt desperately with a rigid system. Wiseman himself long wanted to see the material translated onto the stage, and brought the idea to Deliquet, the director of the Théâtre Gérard-Philipe in Saint-Denis, France.

Yet “Welfare,” which shared the opening honors in Avignon with a dance production, Bintou Dembélé’s “G.R.O.O.V.E.,” looks as absurd onstage as it is affecting on-screen. No one involved seems to have realized the insurmountable issue: Re-enacting the hardships of real people with performers turns those people into characters, so their stories lose the ring of truth. Fostering the same empathy takes more work, but here, Deliquet seems hesitant to step in.

It doesn’t help that the unaffected black-and-white cinematography of Wiseman’s film has been replaced here with a technicolor recreation of a school gymnasium, including a bright teal floor that stretches across the vast outdoor stage of the Cour d’Honneur, Avignon’s most imposing performance venue. It’s as if the sitcom “That 70s Show” had opted to tackle welfare benefits, complete with well-cut, visibly new costumes. (Nothing says “my children are about to starve” like a neatly placed red beret.)

The stories told in Wiseman’s film are loosely reorganized here into a day in the life of a welfare center, as case workers deal with one exasperated claimant after the next. One man lost his home in a fire. A couple of recovering addicts are trying to get their lives back on track. A heavily pregnant woman is asked for medical proof of her condition, while the husband of an older lady is withholding her checks.

There are comedic moments in the film, but in Deliquet’s stage version, they start to feel involuntarily farcical. The energetic delivery of the cast may be because they need to project in the cavernous space, which holds around 2,000 spectators. The actors playing the claimants use their moments in the spotlight to play up the injustice of the system, instead of simply exemplifying it, as Wiseman’s subjects did so effectively.

“Welfare” means well, and it’s easy to see why [*the new director of the Avignon Festival, Tiago Rodrigues*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/20/theater/tiago-rodrigues-paris.html), opted to put the project in a prestigious spot. It acts as a statement of change after [*the lumbering tenure of his predecessor*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/07/08/theater/avignon-festival.html), Olivier Py, and Deliquet is only the second woman director to receive a Cour d’Honneur slot in the 76-year history of the Avignon Festival.

Deliquet deserves it: She is one of France’s top theater-makers, with a string of successes to her name. In “Welfare,” however, she is too respectful of Wiseman’s source material. Some directors, like Alexander Zeldin with his “Inequalities” trilogy, have found the right tone in recent years to tackle underprivileged lives, but “Welfare” looks as if it is playing at poverty.

In Aix, “The Threepenny Opera” may not be an unqualified triumph for Ostermeier, its German director, but at least the show’s roll-call of lowlife misfits is luxuriously cast, and with help from Alexandre Pateau’s sharp new French translation, comes across as it was presumably intended: wry, charismatic, brilliantly individual.

Christian Hecq and Véronique Vella are exuberantly, wackily brilliant as the shallow Mr. and Mrs. Peachum, who set out to take down the notorious criminal Macheath for eloping with their daughter Polly. Not all the actors are equally fine singers, so Vella’s powerful voice is an asset here. So are the vocal talents of Marie Oppert, a recent recruit to the Comédie-Française troupe and a trained singer who, in the role of Polly, turned “Pirate Jenny” into a showstopping number.

Well-crafted scenes come thick and fast in the first half, but the energy tails off later. It’s as if Ostermeier, directing for the first time in an operatic context, stopped short of going truly big. The set designs are minimalistic: four mics downstage, a black platform behind the actors and a few screens above it that show repetitive Russian constructivism-inspired collages. On the main stage of the Comédie-Française in Paris, where the production will transfer in the fall, the company could simply repurpose the very similar set of [*Ivo van Hove’s 2022 “Tartuffe.”*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/01/27/theater/moliere-taertuffe-ivo-van-hove.html)

Maxime Pascal conducts his own ensemble, Le Balcon, who play off the actors well: At one point, a musician even caught a mic Benjamin Lavernhe — a whimsical highlight as the corrupt policeman Tiger Brown — had inadvertently dropped into the pit. Pascal’s reorchestration, adding electronic instruments, lent an intriguing edge to the biting momentum of Weill’s score.

As in Avignon, the production was staged on an open-air stage of historical significance, in the courtyard of the Palais de l’Archevêché, where the festival was born in 1948. While it is reasonably sized compared to the Cour d’Honneur, it’s a prestigious venue, where audience members pay up to $180 for the privilege of seeing “The Threepenny Opera.”

As with “Welfare,” there is whiplash in watching impoverished characters in such rarefied company. But that’s the reality of prestige theater today.

PHOTOS: A scene from “Welfare,” an adaptation of a 1975 film documentary by Frederick Wiseman. (PHOTOGRAPH BY CHRISTOPHE RAYNAUD DE LAGE) (C8); Christian Hecq and Véronique Vella in “The Threepenny Opera” from the Comédie-Française and the German director Thomas Ostermeier. (PHOTOGRAPH BY JEAN-LOUIS FERNANDEZ) (C9) This article appeared in print on page C8, C9.

**Load-Date:** July 7, 2023

**End of Document**



[***All-Black School of 1800s Receives Landmark Status***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:689G-3821-JBG3-6084-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

May 24, 2023 Wednesday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; National Desk; Pg. 20

**Length:** 933 words

**Byline:** By Lola Fadulu

**Body**

New York City will also provide $6 million in funding to rehabilitate the building, which for 34 years was home to a school for Black children during segregation.

For years, New York City Department of Sanitation workers ate their lunch in a three-story yellow brick building on West 17th Street in Chelsea without knowing its history: It was once a ''colored'' school that served Black Americans during racial segregation in New York City public schools.

On Tuesday, the city's Landmarks Preservation Commission voted to designate the building, which had been known as Colored School No. 4, a protected landmark, and city officials said they would provide $6 million to rehabilitate it.

''We stand on the shoulders of the young men and women that attended this school, and while they may be gone, I am honored to ensure they will never be forgotten,'' Mayor Eric Adams said in a statement.

The schoolhouse, at 128 West 17th Street, was built around 1849, and in 1860 it became one of eight public primary schools for Black students in Manhattan; the schools served a total of 2,377 students. The building also housed an evening school for Black adults.

It was renamed Grammar School No. 81 in 1884, when the city's Board of Education stopped using the term ''colored'' in school names, but it continued to serve Black children exclusively until the city closed segregated public schools 10 years later.

The landmark designation comes as cities and states are grappling with how to address unsavory parts of American history, particularly Black history, as modern-day inequities persist in education and elsewhere.

While cities like New York appear to be moving toward speaking openly about the past, other places are heading in the opposite direction, fighting against the surfacing of such history by limiting how slavery and race are taught in American classrooms. Florida's education department, for example, rejected dozens of social studies textbooks this month in an effort to remove material on contested topics surrounding race and social justice.

Sarah Carroll, the chair of the Landmarks Preservation Commission, said in a statement that the former Colored School No. 4 represented ''a difficult, and often overlooked, period in our city's history.''

The decision to landmark it, she said, demonstrated ''the importance of preserving the sites that tell the complete, sometimes challenging, story of our city.''

The school closed in 1894, but the building remained city property and has been used for various purposes, including as a clubhouse for Civil War veterans. From 1936 through 2015, it was a satellite office and locker facility for the Sanitation Department.

City officials estimated that repairs to the building, which has water damage, would take until 2027. They said they would work with agencies and local stakeholders to decide how it would be used.

The landmark designation and funding for rehabilitation comes years after Eric K. Washington, a historian, began urging the city to protect the building. More than 2,800 people signed a petition in support.

Mr. Washington learned about the school while researching James H. Williams, the chief porter of Grand Central Terminal's Red Caps, a group of Black men who worked at the station.

Mr. Williams attended the former Colored School No. 4 and would have been one of its last students before it closed, Mr. Washington said.

''I feel delightfully exhausted,'' Mr. Washington said. He filed two requests with the landmarks commission to evaluate the site, the first in 2018, and heard very little. ''My fingers are sore from being crossed all of this time,'' he said.

Mr. Washington said that he was glad that the city was protecting the building at a time when others were making ''really concerted, mean efforts'' to erase and ban the teaching of Black history, which he described as an essential part of American history.

''I think that the fact that this school and what it represents is being landmarked in this major city will serve as an example to locales across the country, so I'm thrilled in that regard,'' Mr. Washington said.

While the Sanitation Department had expressed support for rehabilitating the school, a spokesman said last year that there were no funds to do so.

Jessica Tisch, the sanitation commissioner, praised Mr. Adams for making ''a critical investment'' to preserve the school. She said officials would work to ensure ''future generations know both about the harm caused at this site and about the resilience of the New Yorkers who resisted it.''

A mob of ***working-class*** white people upset by the first federal draft, and the fact that wealthier people were being allowed to evade it, attacked the schoolhouse during the Draft Riots of July 1863, according to The New-York Tribune. Teachers barricaded doors, and the rioters eventually gave up.

Sarah J.S. Tompkins Garnet, the school's principal, was instrumental in fighting back against that mob. She was one of the first Black female principals in the New York City public school system.

The school had several notable graduates, including Susan Elizabeth Frazier, who became the first Black teacher working in an integrated public school, and Walter F. Craig, a classical violinist.

''At a time when states are trying to erase Black history, we're celebrating it,'' Councilman Erik Bottcher, whose Manhattan district includes Chelsea, said, adding that saving the building had been one of the neighborhood's ''top priorities.''

Another former ''colored'' school, No. 3 in Brooklyn, became a landmark in the late 1990s.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/23/nyregion/nyc-segregated-school-landmark.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/23/nyregion/nyc-segregated-school-landmark.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: A view of 128 West 17th Street in Manhattan circa 1940. (PHOTOGRAPH BY MUNICIPAL ARCHIVES, CITY OF NEW YORK)

New York designated $6 million to rehabilitate the building, but has yet to decide on its future use. (PHOTOGRAPH BY CLARK HODGIN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A20.

**Load-Date:** May 24, 2023

**End of Document**



[***Democrat in Arizona Will Seek Kyrsten Sinema’s Senate Seat***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67CP-MX81-DXY4-X375-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

January 23, 2023 Monday 23:51 EST

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**Section:** US; politics

**Length:** 1457 words

**Byline:** Jazmine Ulloa and Katie Glueck

**Highlight:** Representative Ruben Gallego of Phoenix is set to challenge Ms. Sinema from the left, after she resigned from the Democratic Party.

**Body**

Representative Ruben Gallego of Phoenix is set to challenge Ms. Sinema from the left, after she resigned from the Democratic Party.

The announcement on Monday that Representative Ruben Gallego, a progressive Democrat from Phoenix, would run for the Senate in 2024 sets up a potential face-off with Senator Kyrsten Sinema over a seat that carries immense stakes for Democrats’ control of the upper chamber.

Ms. Sinema [*left the Democratic Party in December*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/12/09/us/politics/kyrsten-sinema-democrats.html) to become an independent, though she has kept her Democratic committee assignments. She has not yet announced re-election plans, but if she runs again, national Democrats will have to decide whether or not to support her, even as the state party has [*strongly rebuked her*](https://twitter.com/azdemparty/status/1601234289357557760?s=20&amp;t=MgkHd0DtmIMGJoeFRFyUDA) and some [*polling has shown*](https://civiqs.com/documents/Civiqs_AZ_banner_book_2022_11_4t7yks.pdf) her to be deeply unpopular among Arizona Democrats, signs of a possibly divisive battle to come.

The state, once a bastion of [*McCain Republicans*](https://apnews.com/article/2022-midterm-elections-presidential-censures-phoenix-donald-trump-5cccb6b2ba8d47eda24826ad5623dc36), has transformed into one of the nation’s pre-eminent political battlegrounds, fueled by [*demographic shifts*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/12/us/biden-wins-arizona.html) and a Republican Party that has [*lurched far to the right*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/15/magazine/arizona-republicans-democracy.html). The Senate race is set to be closely watched by both parties, and Mr. Gallego, a 43-year-old former state lawmaker and U.S. Marine veteran, instantly caught national attention with his challenge to Ms. Sinema.

He began his campaign with a [*video*](https://twitter.com/RubenGallego/status/1617507452198469636) declaring his run to a group of fellow veterans at American Legion Post 124 in Guadalupe, Ariz., near Phoenix. In it, he highlights his humble Chicago origins and his combat experience in Iraq, and he pledges to fight to extend the [*American dream*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/21/us/politics/republicans-american-dream.html) to more families.

“It’s the one thing that we give every American, no matter where they’re born in life,” he says, crediting belief in the dream for his own climb into the halls of Congress.

Mr. Gallego is [*a member*](https://progressives.house.gov/caucus-members) of the Congressional Progressive Caucus, and organizations and activists on the left have long been eager to see a credible challenge to Ms. Sinema. But in his video, he leaned into economic arguments around supporting the ***working class*** rather than center-left ideological battles, and his allies expect he will also continue to emphasize his military experience.

In his campaign ad, Mr. Gallego sought to draw sharp contrasts between himself and Ms. Sinema, taking subtle swipes at the first-term senator over her leadership and ties to corporate interests. Ms. Sinema’s opposition to key elements of her party’s agenda has repeatedly angered Democrats.

“We could argue different ways about how to do it, but at the core, if you’re more likely to be meeting with the powerful than the powerless, you’re doing this job incorrectly,” he says in the video, which was released in English and Spanish. “I’m sorry that politicians have let you down, but I’m going to change that.”

Mr. Gallego’s campaign team includes veterans from Senator Mark Kelly’s re-election bid in Arizona, as well as Democratic consultants who served on the successful 2022 Senate campaigns for Raphael Warnock in Georgia and John Fetterman in Pennsylvania. Mr. Gallego’s campaign also has taken on Chuck Rocha, a longtime Democratic strategist focused on mobilizing Latino voters.

Representative Greg Stanton, a Democrat who had also [*shown interest*](https://twitter.com/gregstantonaz/status/1601307744874921984?s=20&amp;t=JsFBEbxY5dXZ2Vp2SAIIng) in running for the seat, said this month that now was [*“not the right time,”*](https://twitter.com/gregstantonaz/status/1616194816437637121?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw%7Ctwcamp%5Etweetembed%7Ctwterm%5E1616194816437637121%7Ctwgr%5Ed2bba9ce24f8ff6a61202088be8fc6d869a723fa%7Ctwcon%5Es1_&amp;ref_url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.politico.com%2Fminutes%2Fcongress%2F01-19-2023%2F)helping clear the path for Mr. Gallego in the primary.

“The Arizona Democratic Party wishes Congressman Gallego the best of luck,” said Morgan Dick, a representative for the party, in a statement. “In continuing with tradition, for the 2024 general election, the Arizona Democratic Party intends to endorse and support the Democrat on the ballot.”

A representative for Ms. Sinema declined to comment on Mr. Gallego’s entry into the race, and Ms. Sinema waved off the prospect of the challenge in an[*interview*](https://ktar.com/story/5421907/arizona-sen-kyrsten-sinema-remains-steadfast-in-choice-to-not-eliminate-filibuster/) on Friday.

“We just got through a really grueling election cycle, and I think most Arizonans want a break,” Ms. Sinema said in an interview with the Arizona station KTAR News. “I’m incredibly proud of the work I’ve been able to accomplish in the United States Senate in the last couple years, and I’m going to stay focused on the work that I have ahead of us.”

But a matchup between Mr. Gallego and Ms. Sinema in the general election is likely to split the coalition of Democrats and independents who have powered Democratic victories in Arizona in recent elections.

The divide could provide an opening for a Republican to retake a seat that has helped Democrats retain their narrow majority in the Senate.

Among the Republicans weighing Senate runs are Kari Lake, the Trump-endorsed news anchor who last year narrowly [*lost her race for governor*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/11/14/us/politics/katie-hobbs-arizona-governor.html), and Blake Masters, who was [*defeated in a Senate race by Mr. Kelly*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/11/11/us/politics/arizona-senator-mark-kelly-blake-masters.html). Already, Republicans are seeking to paint Mr. Gallego as radically left-wing, and signaling that they intend to make immigration a focal point of their criticisms.

“The Democrat civil war is on in Arizona,” said Philip Letsou, a spokesman for the National Republican Senatorial Committee.

Nora Keefe, a spokeswoman for the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee, noted that the state had moved away from Republicans in several recent statewide elections.

“Republicans have suffered resounding Senate defeats in Arizona the last three election cycles in a row,” she said. “We are confident we will stop Republicans in their effort to take this Senate seat.”

She declined to comment on the committee’s plans for the race beyond that.

For both Mr. Gallego and Ms. Sinema, the greatest factor will be the Republican nominee, said Mike Noble, a longtime nonpartisan pollster based in Phoenix.

A center-right candidate could consolidate Republican and right-leaning independent voters, most likely narrowing the chances for both Ms. Sinema and Mr. Gallego. A hard-right candidate like Ms. Lake or Mr. Masters, on the other hand, would most likely intensify the contest between Mr. Gallego and Ms. Sinema for moderates and the state’s large independent electorate, about one-third of voters.

“Heading into next year’s election, Kyrsten Sinema would like nothing else for Christmas than to have Kari Lake as the Republican nominee come 2024,” Mr. Noble said. “They both would love it.”

Ms. Sinema was elected to the Senate in a groundbreaking victory in 2018, in the first Democratic triumph since [*1976*](https://kjzz.org/content/598219/when-was-last-time-democrat-won-us-senate-seat-arizona) in a contest for an open Senate seat in Arizona. Her victory pointed to broader political shifts in the state. Once a longtime conservative bastion, Arizona has become fiercely competitive as the state’s Republican Party has veered further right, while growing numbers of Latino and independent voters have pushed the state to the center.

Ms. Sinema embraced solidly centrist positions in defeating her Republican opponent. Voter drives to register more Latinos, who generally vote Democratic in Arizona, also paid off for Ms. Sinema. But distaste for the senator has been growing among Latino activists and other parts of her Democratic base as she has positioned herself as a bulwark against major parts of her former party’s agenda, mainly attempts to increase taxes on corporate America and Wall Street.

National Democrats have been tight-lipped about their approach to the 2024 race, as some worry that a full-on offensive against Ms. Sinema in the general election might inadvertently help elect a Republican.

Mr. Gallego, who has been among Ms. Sinema’s fiercest critics, had been fielding input from his family [*over the holidays*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/12/24/us/politics/holiday-political-family-summits.html) over whether he would run. He would be the first Latino senator from Arizona should he prevail. (He is of Colombian and Mexican descent.)

In his campaign video released Monday, he describes his hard upbringing as one of four children raised by a single mother in Chicago. He made it to Harvard and worked to pay his way through school before enlisting in the Marine Corps. His combat experience on the front lines in Iraq, where he came under heavy fire and lost some of his closest friends, left him with post-traumatic stress disorder but also inspired him to go into public service, he said.

The ad positions Mr. Gallego as an advocate of strong government and a fighter for ***working-class*** families who he said “feel they are one or two paychecks away from going under.”

“The rich and the powerful, they don’t need more advocates,” he said. “It’s the people that are still trying to decide between groceries and utilities that need a fighter for them.”

PHOTOS: Representative Ruben Gallego, one of Senator Kyrsten Sinema’s sharpest critics, released a video Monday declaring his run. (PHOTOGRAPH BY ANNA MONEYMAKER/GETTY IMAGES); Senator Kyrsten Sinema, second from right, with Cindy McCain, Senator John McCain’s widow, at Gov. Katie Hobbs’s inauguration. (PHOTOGRAPH BY REBECCA NOBLE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A16.

**Load-Date:** January 24, 2023

**End of Document**



[***It Was an All-Black School in 1860. Today It’s a Manhattan Landmark.***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6899-9DB1-JBG3-64CW-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

May 23, 2023 Tuesday 12:23 EST

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**Section:** NYREGION

**Length:** 975 words

**Byline:** Lola Fadulu

**Highlight:** New York City will provide $6 million in funding to rehabilitate the newly landmarked building, which for 34 years was home to a school for Black children during segregation.

**Body**

New York City will provide $6 million in funding to rehabilitate the newly landmarked building, which for 34 years was home to a school for Black children during segregation.

For years, New York City Department of Sanitation workers ate their lunch in a three-story yellow brick building on West 17th Street in Chelsea without knowing its history: It was once a “colored” school that served Black Americans during racial segregation in New York City public schools.

On Tuesday, the city’s Landmarks Preservation Commission voted to designate the building, which had been known as Colored School No. 4, a protected landmark, and city officials said they would provide $6 million to rehabilitate it.

“We stand on the shoulders of the young men and women that attended this school, and while they may be gone, I am honored to ensure they will never be forgotten,” Mayor Eric Adams said in a statement.

The schoolhouse, at 128 West 17th Street, was [*built around 1849*](https://www.nyc.gov/assets/lpc/downloads/pdf/proposed_landmarks/Colored_School_No._4_proposed.pdf), and in 1860 it became one of [*eight public primary schools for Black students*](https://www.nyc.gov/assets/lpc/downloads/pdf/proposed_landmarks/Colored_School_No._4_proposed.pdf) in Manhattan; the schools served a total of 2,377 students. The building also housed [*an evening school*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/07/realestate/segregated-school-landmark-manhattan.html) for Black adults.

It was renamed Grammar School No. 81 in 1884, when the city’s Board of Education stopped using the term “colored” in school names, but it continued to serve Black children exclusively until the city closed segregated public schools 10 years later.

The landmark designation comes as cities and states are grappling with how to address unsavory parts of American history, particularly Black history, as modern-day inequities persist in education and elsewhere.

While cities like New York appear to be moving toward speaking openly about the past, other places are heading in the opposite direction, fighting against the surfacing of such history by limiting how slavery and race are taught in American classrooms. Florida’s education department, for example, [*rejected dozens of social studies textbooks*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/09/us/desantis-florida-social-studies-textbooks.html) this month in an effort to remove material on contested topics surrounding race and social justice.

Sarah Carroll, the chair of the Landmarks Preservation Commission, said in a statement that the former Colored School No. 4 represented “a difficult, and often overlooked, period in our city’s history.”

The decision to landmark it, she said, demonstrated “the importance of preserving the sites that tell the complete, sometimes challenging, story of our city.”

The school closed in 1894, but the building remained city property and has been used for various purposes, including as [*a clubhouse for Civil War veterans*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/07/realestate/segregated-school-landmark-manhattan.html). From 1936 through 2015, it was a satellite office and locker facility for the Sanitation Department.

City officials estimated that repairs to the building, which has water damage, would take until 2027. They said they would work with agencies and local stakeholders to decide how it would be used.

The landmark designation and funding for rehabilitation comes years after Eric K. Washington, a historian, [*began urging the city*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/07/realestate/segregated-school-landmark-manhattan.html) to protect the building. More than 2,800 people [*signed a petition in support*](https://www.change.org/p/designate-chelsea-s-former-colored-school-no-4-as-a-new-york-city-landmark).

Mr. Washington learned about the school while researching James H. Williams, the chief porter of Grand Central Terminal’s Red Caps, a group of Black men who worked at the station.

Mr. Williams attended the former Colored School No. 4 and would have been one of its last students before it closed, Mr. Washington said.

“I feel delightfully exhausted,” Mr. Washington said. He filed two requests with the landmarks commission to evaluate the site, the first in 2018, and heard very little. “My fingers are sore from being crossed all of this time,” he said.

Mr. Washington said that he was glad that the city was protecting the building at a time when others were making “really concerted, mean efforts” to erase and ban the teaching of Black history, which he described as an essential part of American history.

“I think that the fact that this school and what it represents is being landmarked in this major city will serve as an example to locales across the country, so I’m thrilled in that regard,” Mr. Washington said.

While the Sanitation Department had expressed support for rehabilitating the school, a spokesman [*said last year*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/07/realestate/segregated-school-landmark-manhattan.html) that there were no funds to do so.

Jessica Tisch, the sanitation commissioner, praised Mr. Adams for making “a critical investment” to preserve the school. She said officials would work to ensure “future generations know both about the harm caused at this site and about the resilience of the New Yorkers who resisted it.”

A mob of ***working-class*** white people upset by the first federal draft, and the fact that wealthier people were being allowed to evade it, attacked the schoolhouse during the Draft Riots of July 1863, [*according to The New-York Tribune*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/07/realestate/segregated-school-landmark-manhattan.html). Teachers barricaded doors, and the rioters eventually gave up.

Sarah J.S. Tompkins Garnet, the school’s principal, was instrumental in fighting back against that mob. She was one of the first Black female principals in the New York City public school system.

The school had several notable graduates, including Susan Elizabeth Frazier, who became the first Black teacher working in an integrated public school, and Walter F. Craig, a classical violinist.

“At a time when states are trying to erase Black history, we’re celebrating it,” Councilman Erik Bottcher, whose Manhattan district includes Chelsea, said, adding that saving the building had been one of the neighborhood’s “top priorities.”

Another former “colored” school, No. 3 in Brooklyn, became a landmark [*in the late 1990s*](http://s-media.nyc.gov/agencies/lpc/lp/1977.pdf).

PHOTOS: A view of 128 West 17th Street in Manhattan circa 1940. (PHOTOGRAPH BY MUNICIPAL ARCHIVES, CITY OF NEW YORK); New York designated $6 million to rehabilitate the building, but has yet to decide on its future use. (PHOTOGRAPH BY CLARK HODGIN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A20.

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[***The Literary World, Scrutinized and Skewered***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6898-48V1-JBG3-63RJ-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section C; Column 0; The Arts/Cultural Desk; Pg. 2; NONFICTION

**Length:** 988 words

**Byline:** By Dwight Garner

**Body**

''NB by J.C.'' collects the variegated musings of James Campbell in the Times Literary Supplement.

NB BY J.C.: A Walk Through the Times Literary Supplement, by James Campbell

If you are a subscriber to the Times Literary Supplement, or TLS, that august literary review out of London, you know that its good, gray issues roll in every week, more quickly than it is possible to keep up.

Determined not to become a hoarder, Lydia Davis arrived at a solution to this abundance. In her 2014 book of stories, ''Can't and Won't,'' there is a cheerful piece called ''How I Read as Quickly as Possible Through My Back Issues of the TLS.'' Davis goes by topic:

Interested in:the social value of altruismthe building of the Pont Neufthe history of daguerreotypes

and

Not interested in:a cultural history of the accordion in America.

Davis didn't mention it, but one part of the TLS no one skips, in my experience, is the NB column, which runs inside the back cover. (NB = nota bene, Latin for ''note well.'') The column is a miscellany: three or four items, irreverent and journalistic in tone. It's a small treat for readers who make it to the end.

From 1997 to 2020, its golden age, the column was signed J.C. This correspondent has officially been outed as James Campbell, a biographer of James Baldwin and a longtime editor at the magazine. He was a good steward of the column, and his best material has been collected now in ''NB by J.C.: A Walk Through the Times Literary Supplement.''

His NB was not a gossip column, Campbell explains. He hoped never to see the words ''Martin'' and ''Amis'' in proximity, and he mostly lived up to that vow. Instead, his droll NB skewered pomposity in its many forms.

He liked to bestow mock awards. He disliked academic gibberish, so he regularly handed out an Incomprehensibility Prize. He also invented and dispensed the Jean-Paul Sartre Prize for Prize Refusal (Sartre turned down the Nobel in 1964). New recipients seemed to surface every few months.

Late-period Maya Angelou was a target, especially when she partnered with Hallmark, the greeting card company. One NB column began: ''The Preposterousness of Maya Angelou: An inexhaustible series.'' Colum McCann, Benjamin Kunkel, Prince Charles and Jean-Michel Basquiat were also hazed for moments of preposterousness.

Campbell wrote about translations, and book titles, and clichés, and publicity campaigns, and the timidity of reviewers. When Cormac McCarthy's manual typewriter sold at auction in 2009, the awe-struck book dealer Glenn Horowitz remarked that it was ''as if Mount Rushmore was carved with a Swiss Army knife.'' Campbell responded: ''Who could fail to be similarly moved? It is as if the complete works of Shakespeare were written with a quill pen.''

He distrusted identity politics. ''The subject of race in modern Britain is so delicate, so hedged about by hypocrisy and euphemism, so confused, that it has become impossible to talk about it in plain language,'' he wrote. He tried to do so anyway.

He distrusted, as well, the culture of cancellation. He listed the foibles of many, many, many writers but arrived at the realization that ''if you insist on judging writers by their personal behavior, you'll be better off not reading at all.''

Editors were once lionized for issuing banned books (''Lady Chatterley's Lover,'' ''Ulysses,'' ''Lolita''). In these times, he wrote, ''an editor is in danger of being sacked for publishing something that doesn't fit someone else's definition of 'appropriate.'''

He defended what's become known as cultural appropriation, in every direction. (''If the art is good, it justifies its own creation. If bad, it predicts its own oblivion.'')

He was no special fan of Margaret Thatcher, but he was weary of hearing her tenure as prime minister damned in hyperbolic terms. When Joyce Carol Oates, reviewing a memoir by Jeanette Winterson in The New York Review of Books, described Winterson as ''a fierce and eloquent supporter of the literary arts, having lived through Thatcher's England as a university student at Oxford,'' Campbell was moved to reply:

Is that Thatcher's England in which tanks rolled on to campuses, soldiers rounded up the intelligentsia and bonfires were made out of books beloved by Jeanette Winterson? Or Thatcher's England where a ***working-class*** girl from Accrington could go to Oxford and receive not just a free education but a generous maintenance as well?

He printed Elmore Leonard's now-famous 10 rules for writing fiction (''Never open a book with the weather,'' ''Try to leave out the part that readers tend to skip'') and tore them apart. He noted that, in nearly every case, each could be replaced with its opposite. ''Our rule for the cultivation of good writing is much simpler,'' he wrote. ''Stay in, read and don't limit yourself to American crime fiction.''

Campbell wrote about writers who pretend not to read their reviews, and biographers who hate their subjects. He wrote about pop lyrics derived from classic literature. He took note of mentions of the TLS in literature. (He missed one of my favorites, from a biography of Angela Carter. She described the vibe in the critic Lorna Sage's house as ''tea bags, Tampax and the TLS.'') There are animadversions against literary back-scratching. Campbell sought to distinguish the sham from the genuine.

He was interested in everything. When he needed material for a column, he would sometimes walk to a bookstore, buy something unusual and write about its contents. He made it work.

NB is the sort of column that people looked at and thought, ''I could do that.'' Turns out they couldn't. I still read NB every week with pleasure, but absent J.C., the column has lost a sliver of its freshness and nerve, and is still seeking to (re)find its voice.

NB BY J.C.: A Walk Through the Times Literary Supplement | By James Campbell | 374 pp. | Paul Dry Books | Paperback, $24.95

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/22/books/james-campbell-nb-by-jc.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/22/books/james-campbell-nb-by-jc.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS This article appeared in print on page C2.

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[***'Screams Without Words': Sexual Violence on Oct. 7***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B0M-PFY1-DXY4-X05F-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

December 31, 2023 Sunday

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**Length:** 3235 words

**Byline:** By Jeffrey Gettleman, Anat Schwartz, Adam Sella and Avishag Shaar-Yashuv

**Body**

At first, she was known simply as ''the woman in the black dress.''

In a grainy video, you can see her, lying on her back, dress torn, legs spread, vagina exposed. Her face is burned beyond recognition and her right hand covers her eyes.

The video was shot in the early hours of Oct. 8 by a woman searching for a missing friend at the site of the rave in southern Israel where, the day before, Hamas terrorists massacred hundreds of young Israelis.

The video went viral, with thousands of people responding, desperate to know if the woman in the black dress was their missing friend, sister or daughter.

One family knew exactly who she was -- Gal Abdush, mother of two from a ***working-class*** town in central Israel, who disappeared from the rave that night with her husband.

As the terrorists closed in on her, trapped on a highway in a line of cars of people trying to flee the party, she sent one final WhatsApp message to her family: ''You don't understand.''

Based largely on the video evidence -- which was verified by The New York Times -- Israeli police officials said they believed that Ms. Abdush was raped, and she has become a symbol of the horrors visited upon Israeli women and girls during the Oct. 7 attacks.

Israeli officials say that everywhere Hamas terrorists struck -- the rave, the military bases along the Gaza border and the kibbutzim -- they brutalized women.

A two-month investigation by The Times uncovered painful new details, establishing that the attacks against women were not isolated events but part of a broader pattern of gender-based violence on Oct. 7.

Relying on video footage, photographs, GPS data from mobile phones and interviews with more than 150 people, including witnesses, medical personnel, soldiers and rape counselors, The Times identified at least seven locations where Israeli women and girls appear to have been sexually assaulted or mutilated.

Four witnesses described in graphic detail seeing women raped and killed at two different places along Route 232, the same highway where Ms. Abdush's half-naked body was found sprawled on the road at a third location.

And The Times interviewed several soldiers and volunteer medics who together described finding more than 30 bodies of women and girls in and around the rave site and in two kibbutzim in a similar state as Ms. Abdush's -- legs spread, clothes torn off, signs of abuse in their genital areas.

Many of the accounts are difficult to bear, and the visual evidence is disturbing to see.

The Times viewed photographs of one woman's corpse that emergency responders discovered in the rubble of a besieged kibbutz with dozens of nails driven into her thighs and groin.

The Times also viewed a video, provided by the Israeli military, showing two dead Israeli soldiers at a base near Gaza who appeared to have been shot directly in their vaginas.

Hamas has denied Israel's accusations of sexual violence. Israeli activists have been outraged that the United Nations Secretary General, António Guterres, and the agency U.N. Women did not acknowledge the many accusations until weeks after the attacks.

Investigators with Israel's top national police unit, Lahav 433, have been steadily gathering evidence but they have not put a number on how many women were raped, saying that most are dead -- and buried -- and that they will never know. No survivors have spoken publicly.

The Israeli police have acknowledged that, during the shock and confusion of Oct. 7, the deadliest day in Israeli history, they were not focused on collecting semen samples from women's bodies, requesting autopsies or closely examining crime scenes. At that moment, the authorities said, they were intent on repelling Hamas and identifying the dead.

A combination of chaos, enormous grief and Jewish religious duties meant that many bodies were buried as quickly as possible. Most were never examined, and in some cases, like at the rave scene, where more than 360 people were slaughtered in a few hours, the bodies were hauled away by the truckload.

That has left the Israeli authorities at a loss to fully explain to families what happened to their loved ones in their final moments. Ms. Abdush's relatives, for instance, never received a death certificate. They are still searching for answers.

In cases of widespread sexual violence during a war, it is not unusual to have limited forensic evidence, experts said.

''Armed conflict is so chaotic,'' said Adil Haque, a Rutgers law professor and war crimes expert. ''People are more focused on their safety than on building a criminal case down the road.''

Very often, he said, sex crime cases will be prosecuted years later on the basis of testimony from victims and witnesses.

''The eyewitness might not even know the name of the victim,'' he added. ''But if they can testify as, 'I saw a woman being raped by this armed group,' that can be enough.''

'Screams without words'

Sapir, a 26-year-old accountant, has become one of the Israeli police's key witnesses. She does not want to be fully identified, saying she would be hounded for the rest of her life if her last name were revealed.

She attended the rave with several friends and provided investigators with graphic testimony. She also spoke to The Times. In a two-hour interview outside a cafe in southern Israel, she recounted seeing groups of heavily armed gunmen rape and kill at least five women.

She said that at 8 a.m. on Oct. 7, she was hiding under the low branches of a bushy tamarisk tree, just off Route 232, about four miles southwest of the party. She had been shot in the back. She felt faint. She covered herself in dry grass and lay as still as she could.

About 15 meters from her hiding place, she said, she saw motorcycles, cars and trucks pulling up. She said that she saw ''about 100 men,'' most of them dressed in military fatigues and combat boots, a few in dark sweatsuits, getting in and out of the vehicles. She said the men congregated along the road and passed between them assault rifles, grenades, small missiles -- and badly wounded women.

''It was like an assembly point,'' she said.

The first victim she said she saw was a young woman with copper-color hair, blood running down her back, pants pushed down to her knees. One man pulled her by the hair and made her bend over. Another penetrated her, Sapir said, and every time she flinched, he plunged a knife into her back.

She said she then watched another woman ''shredded into pieces.'' While one terrorist raped her, she said, another pulled out a box cutter and sliced off her breast.

''One continues to rape her, and the other throws her breast to someone else, and they play with it, throw it, and it falls on the road,'' Sapir said.

She said the men sliced her face and then the woman fell out of view. Around the same time, she said, she saw three other women raped and terrorists carrying the severed heads of three more women.

Sapir provided photographs of her hiding place and her wounds, and police officials have stood by her testimony and released a video of her, with her face blurred, recounting some of what she saw.

Yura Karol, a 22-year-old security consultant, said he was hiding in the same spot, and he can be seen in one of Sapir's photos. He and Sapir were part of a group of friends who had met up at the party. In an interview, Mr. Karol said he barely lifted his head to look at the road but he also described seeing a woman raped and killed.

Since that day, Sapir said, she has struggled with a painful rash that spread across her torso, and she can barely sleep, waking up at night, heart pounding, covered in sweat.

''That day, I became an animal,'' she said. ''I was emotionally detached, sharp, just the adrenaline of survival. I looked at all this as if I was photographing them with my eyes, not forgetting any detail. I told myself: I should remember everything.''

That same morning, along Route 232 but in a different location about a mile southwest of the party area, Raz Cohen -- a young Israeli who had also attended the rave and had worked recently in the Democratic Republic of Congo training Congolese soldiers -- said that he was hiding in a dried-up streambed. It provided some cover from the assailants combing the area and shooting anyone they found, he said in an hour-and-a-half interview in a Tel Aviv restaurant.

Maybe 40 yards in front of him, he recalled, a white van pulled up and its doors flew open.

He said he then saw five men, wearing civilian clothes, all carrying knives and one carrying a hammer, dragging a woman across the ground. She was young, naked and screaming.

''They all gather around her,'' Mr. Cohen said. ''She's standing up. They start raping her. I saw the men standing in a half circle around her. One penetrates her. She screams. I still remember her voice, screams without words.''

''Then one of them raises a knife,'' he said, ''and they just slaughtered her.''

Shoam Gueta, one of Mr. Cohen's friends and a fashion designer, said the two were hiding together in the streambed. He said he saw at least four men step out of the van and attack the woman, who ended up ''between their legs.'' He said that they were ''talking, giggling and shouting,'' and that one of them stabbed her with a knife repeatedly, ''literally butchering her.''

Hours later, the first wave of volunteer emergency medical technicians arrived at the rave site. In interviews, four of them said that they discovered bodies of dead women with their legs spread and underwear missing -- some with their hands tied by rope and zipties -- in the party area, along the road, in the parking area and in the open fields around the rave site.

Jamal Waraki, a volunteer medic with the nonprofit ZAKA emergency response team, said he could not get out of his head a young woman in a rawhide vest found between the main stage and the bar.

''Her hands were tied behind her back,'' he said. ''She was bent over, half naked, her underwear rolled down below her knees.''

Yinon Rivlin, a member of the rave's production team who lost two brothers in the attacks, said that after hiding from the killers, he emerged from a ditch and made his way to the parking area, east of the party, along Route 232, looking for survivors.

Near the highway, he said, he found the body of a young woman, on her stomach, no pants or underwear, legs spread apart. He said her vagina area appeared to have been sliced open, ''as if someone tore her apart.''

Similar discoveries were made in two kibbutzim, Be'eri and Kfar Aza. Eight volunteer medics and two Israeli soldiers told The Times that in at least six different houses, they had come across a total of at least 24 bodies of women and girls naked or half naked, some mutilated, others tied up, and often alone.

A paramedic in an Israeli commando unit said that he had found the bodies of two teenage girls in a room in Be'eri.

One was lying on her side, he said, boxer shorts ripped, bruises by her groin. The other was sprawled on the floor face down, he said, pajama pants pulled to her knees, bottom exposed, semen smeared on her back.

Because his job was to look for survivors, he said, he kept moving and did not document the scene. Neighbors of the two girls killed -- who were sisters, 13 and 16 -- said their bodies had been found alone, separated from the rest of their family.

The Israeli military allowed the paramedic to speak with reporters on the condition that he not be identified because he serves in an elite unit.

Many of the dead were brought to the Shura military base, in central Israel, for identification. Here, too, witnesses said they saw signs of sexual violence.

Shari Mendes, an architect called up as a reserve soldier to help prepare the bodies of female soldiers for burial, said she had seen four with signs of sexual violence, including some with ''a lot of blood in their pelvic areas.''

A dentist, Captain Maayan, who worked at the same identification center, said that she had seen at least 10 bodies of female soldiers from Gaza observation posts with signs of sexual violence.

Captain Maayan asked to be identified only by her rank and surname because of the sensitivity of the subject. She said she had seen several bodies with cuts in their vaginas and underwear soaked in blood and one whose fingernails had been pulled out.

The investigation

The Israeli authorities have no shortage of video evidence from the Oct. 7 attacks. They have gathered hours of footage from Hamas body cameras, dashcams, security cameras and mobile phones showing Hamas terrorists killing civilians and many images of mutilated bodies.

But Moshe Fintzy, a deputy superintendent and senior spokesman of Israel's national police, said, ''We have zero autopsies, zero,'' making an O with his right hand.

In the aftermath of the attack, police officials said, forensic examiners were dispatched to the Shura military base to help identify the hundreds of bodies -- Israeli officials say around 1,200 people were killed that day.

The examiners worked quickly to give the agonized families of the missing a sense of closure and to determine, by a process of elimination, who was dead and who was being held hostage in Gaza.

According to Jewish tradition, funerals are held promptly. The result was that many bodies with signs of sexual abuse were put to rest without medical examinations, meaning that potential evidence now lies buried in the ground. International forensic experts said that it would be possible to recover some evidence from the corpses, but that it would be difficult.

Mr. Fintzy said Israeli security forces were still finding imagery that shows women were brutalized. Sitting at his desk at an imposing police building in Jerusalem, he swiped open his phone, tapped and produced the video of the two soldiers shot in the vagina, which he said was recorded by Hamas gunmen and recently recovered by Israeli soldiers.

A colleague sitting next to him, Mirit Ben Mayor, a police chief superintendent, said she believed that the brutality against women was a combination of two ferocious forces, ''the hatred for Jews and the hatred for women.''

Some emergency medical workers now wish they had documented more of what they saw. In interviews, they said they had moved bodies, cut off zip ties and cleaned up scenes of carnage. Trying to be respectful to the dead, they inadvertently destroyed evidence.

Many volunteers working for ZAKA, the emergency response team, are religious Jews and operate under strict rules that command deep respect for the dead.

''I did not take pictures because we are not allowed to take pictures,'' said Yossi Landau, a ZAKA volunteer. ''In retrospect, I regret it.''

There are at least three women and one man who were sexually assaulted and survived, according to Gil Horev, a spokesman for Israel's Ministry of Welfare and Social Affairs. ''None of them has been willing to come physically for treatment,'' he said. Two therapists said they were working with a woman who was gang raped at the rave and was in no condition to talk to investigators or reporters.

The trauma from sexual assault can be so heavy that sometimes survivors do not speak about it for years, several rape counselors said.

''Many people are looking for the golden evidence, of a woman who will testify about what happened to her. But don't look for that, don't put this pressure on this woman,'' said Orit Sulitzeanu, executive director of the Association of Rape Crisis Centers in Israel. ''The corpses tell the story.''

The woman in the black dress

One of the last images of Ms. Abdush alive -- captured by a security camera mounted on her front door -- shows her leaving home with her husband, Nagi, at 2:30 a.m. on Oct. 7 for the rave.

He was wearing jeans and a black T-shirt. She was dressed in a short black dress, a black shawl tied around her waist and combat boots. As she struts out, she takes a swig from a glass (her brother-in-law remembers it was Red Bull and vodka) and laughs.

You've got to live life like it's your last moments. That was her motto, her sisters said.

At daybreak, hundreds of terrorists closed in on the party from several directions, blocking the highways leading out. The couple jumped into their Audi, dashing off a string of messages as they moved.

''We're on the border,'' Ms. Abdush wrote to her family. ''We're leaving.''

''Explosions.''

Her husband made his own calls to his family, leaving a final audio message for his brother, Nissim, at 7:44 a.m. ''Take care of the kids,'' he said. ''I love you.''

Gunshots rang out, and the message stopped.

That night, Eden Wessely, a car mechanic, drove to the rave site with three friends and found Ms. Abdush sprawled half naked on the road next to her burned car, about nine miles north of the site. She did not see the body of Mr. Abdush.

She saw other burned cars and other bodies, and shot videos of several -- hoping that they would help people to identify missing relatives. When she posted the video of the woman in the black dress on her Instagram story, she was deluged with messages.

''Hi, based on your description of the woman in the black dress, did she have blonde hair?'' one message read.

''Eden, the woman you described with the black dress, do you remember the color of her eyes?'' another said.

Some members of the Abdush family saw that video and another version of it filmed by one of Ms. Wessely's friends. They immediately suspected that the body was Ms. Abdush, and based on the way her body was found, they feared that she might have been raped.

But they kept alive a flicker of hope that somehow, it wasn't true.

The videos caught the eye of Israeli officials as well -- very quickly after Oct. 7 they began gathering evidence of atrocities. They included footage of Ms. Abdush's body in a presentation made to foreign governments and media organizations, using Ms. Abdush as a representation of violence committed against women that day.

A week after her body was found, three government social workers appeared at the gate of the family's home in Kiryat Ekron, a small town in central Israel. They broke the news that Ms. Abdush, 34, had been found dead.

But the only document the family received was a one-page form letter from Israel's president, Isaac Herzog, expressing his condolences and sending a hug. The body of Mr. Abdush, 35, was identified two days after his wife's. It was badly burned and investigators determined who he was based on a DNA sample and his wedding ring.

The couple had been together since they were teenagers. To the family, it seems only yesterday that Mr. Abdush was heading off to work to fix water heaters, a bag of tools slung over his shoulder, and Ms. Abdush was cooking up mashed potatoes and schnitzel for their two sons, Eliav, 10, and Refael, 7.

The boys are now orphans. They were sleeping over at an aunt's the night their parents were killed. Ms. Abdush's mother and father have applied for permanent custody, and everyone is chipping in to help.

Night after night, Ms. Abdush's mother, Eti Bracha, lies in bed with the boys until they drift off. A few weeks ago, she said she tried to quietly leave their bedroom when the younger boy stopped her.

''Grandma,'' he said, ''I want to ask you a question.''

''Honey,'' she said, ''you can ask anything.''

''Grandma, how did mom die?''

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: The family of Gal Abdush, an Israeli whose burned, partly naked body was found after Oct. 7. Her husband, Nagi, was also killed. (A1)

Eti Bracha, left, and her husband, Eli, at their house in Kiryat Ekron, Israel. Their daughter Gal Abdush and her husband, Nagi, were murdered, their bodies burned beyond recognition, on Oct. 7.

Shari Mendes, a reservist working in body identification, on Dec. 10 in a container where bodies were stored before being taken to an Army morgue. (A10)

Yossi Landau, left, an emergency-response volunteer, said he regretted not having documented attackers' atrocities. Raz Cohen, right, a survivor who hid from the invaders, described their rape and murder of a woman. Mr. Bracha, below, held a gold necklace with a picture of the Abdushes. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY AVISHAG SHAAR-YASHUV FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

An aerial view on Oct. 11 of the site of the rave overrun by terrorists. Emergency workers who rushed to the site said they found bodies of dead women with their legs spread and underwear missing. (PHOTOGRAPH BY SERGEY PONOMAREV FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A11) This article appeared in print on page A1, A10, A11.

**Load-Date:** January 27, 2024

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[***U.A.W. Will Hold Off Backing Biden***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6856-NMR1-DXY4-X3TS-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** By Shane Goldmacher and Coral Davenport

**Body**

A memo by the union's president underscores how some of President Biden's moves to fight climate change could weaken some of his political support.

The United Auto Workers, a politically potent labor union, is planning to withhold its endorsement of President Biden in the early stages of the 2024 race, according to an internal memo from its president to members on Tuesday.

The memo, written by Shawn Fain, the Detroit-based union's president, said the leadership of the United Auto Workers had traveled to Washington last week to meet with Biden administration officials and had expressed ''our concerns with the electric vehicle transition'' that the president has pursued.

The memo underscores how some of Mr. Biden's boldest moves to fight climate change, which animate his liberal base, could at the same time weaken his political support among another crucial constituency. The U.A.W. has shrunk in size in recent decades, but it still counts about 400,000 active members, with a robust presence in Michigan, a critical battleground state for Democrats.

In April, the Biden administration proposed the nation's most ambitious climate regulations yet, which would ensure that two-thirds of new passenger cars are all-electric by 2032 -- up from just 5.8 percent today. The rules, if enacted, could sharply lower planet-warming pollution from vehicle tailpipes, the nation's largest source of greenhouse emissions. But they come with costs for autoworkers, because it takes fewer than half the laborers to assemble an all-electric vehicle as it does to build a gasoline-powered car.

In the memo, Mr. Fain provided ''talking points'' for members about why the union was not immediately lining up behind Mr. Biden, writing that if companies received federal subsidies, then workers ''must be compensated with top wages and benefits.''

''The EV transition is at serious risk of becoming a race to the bottom,'' the memo reads, referring to electric vehicles. ''We want to see national leadership have our back on this before we make any commitments.''

Mr. Fain won the U.A.W. presidency as an insurgent candidate this year, toppling the incumbent, Ray Curry. Mr. Fain promised a more confrontational path ahead of contract talks. In the memo, he notes that 150,000 autoworkers are fighting for a new contract with the so-called Big Three auto companies in September, writing, ''We'll stand with whoever stands with our members in that fight.''

Labor support is a key part of Mr. Biden's political coalition and his portrayal of himself as a fighter for the middle class.

Within hours of Mr. Biden's formal entry into the 2024 race, a number of top labor unions backed Mr. Biden, including the Amalgamated Transit Union, the Service Employees International Union and the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers.

''Several national unions were quick to endorse,'' Mr. Fain wrote in his memo. ''The United Auto Workers is not yet making an endorsement.''

Mr. Biden's campaign trumpeted his support from other labor unions in a news release. Notably, Mr. Biden's first public appearance after announcing his re-election campaign last week was addressing a labor conference in the nation's capital.

''I've said many times: Wall Street didn't build America,'' he told the cheering union crowd last week. ''The middle class built America, and unions built the middle class!''

The United Auto Workers, which has historically endorsed Democrats and supported Mr. Biden in 2020, makes clear in the memo that it has no intent of backing the Republican front-runner, former President Donald J. Trump. Withholding a formal endorsement for now instead appears to be a bid for leverage or concessions from the administration.

''Another Donald Trump presidency would be a disaster,'' reads Mr. Fain's memo, which was first reported by The Detroit News. ''But our members need to see an alternative that delivers real results. We need to get our members organized behind a pro-worker, pro-climate, and pro-democracy political program that can deliver for the ***working class***.''

Mr. Biden has sought to accelerate the transition to all-electric vehicles as a centerpiece of his effort to tackle climate change. A 2021 report by the International Energy Agency found that nations would have to stop sales of new gasoline-powered cars by 2035 to avert the deadliest effects of a warming planet.

To help reach that goal, Mr. Biden has pushed a fleet of policies designed to promote electric vehicles.

The Biden administration's proposed climate regulations announced in April are designed to add legal teeth to consumer incentives, compelling automakers to manufacture and sell more electric vehicles. The Environmental Protection Agency rules, however, are not yet final: They are open for public comment, and could still be weakened or otherwise changed before being completed next year.

As the Biden administration prepared to unveil the new clean car rules last month, officials planned for Michael S. Regan, the head of the E.P.A., to announce the policies in Detroit, surrounded by American-made all-electric vehicles.

But as auto executives and the United Auto Workers learned the details of the proposed regulations, some grew uneasy about publicly supporting it, according to two people familiar with their thinking. No one from the United Auto Workers attended the unveiling, according to the organization's spokesman, although representatives from Ford, General Motors and Mercedes-Benz were there.

And the setting was moved from Detroit to the E.P.A. headquarters in Washington.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/03/us/politics/biden-auto-workers-endorsement.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/03/us/politics/biden-auto-workers-endorsement.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: Shawn Fain, the United Auto Workers president, sent members a memo on the stance. (PHOTOGRAPH BY CARLOS OSORIO/ASSOCIATED PRESS) This article appeared in print on page A14.

**Load-Date:** May 4, 2023

**End of Document**



[***Turnout in Tuscany, a region linked to the left, seems not to favor Meloni.***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:66G4-V8B1-JBG3-614P-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

September 25, 2022 Sunday 13:28 EST

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**Section:** WORLD; europe

**Length:** 407 words

**Byline:** Gaia Pianigiani

**Highlight:** In Tuscany, voters seemed to turn out to try to prevent a big gain for the center-right coalition.

**Body**

FLORENCE, Italy — As Italians headed to the polls on Sunday in one of the historical bastions of the left, the region of Tuscany, voters appeared to be turning out mainly to thwart a large victory for the hard-right coalition led by Giorgia Meloni’s party, Brothers of Italy.

“I took a train from Milan to vote for the Democratic Party,” said Guido Tommaso, 29, a Florentine doctor who lives in Milan, nearly 200 miles north of Florence. “Considering the situation and the risk of a landslide victory for the right, I didn’t hesitate at all.”

Mr. Tommaso is one of the Florentines who cast their ballots only steps away from the city’s famous baptistery and cathedral, in a region that for decades has traditionally voted for the left.

“I don’t feel there is a party that really represents me, but I am a leftist and voted for the left coalition,” said Viola Filippini, 28, a goldsmith. “A victory for the right would be terrible.”

A few miles from the city center, in a ***working-class*** neighborhood tucked between the Arno River and the city’s airport, where support for Italy’s Communist Party — and then the Democratic Party — in previous years would reach up to 75 percent, voters on Sunday seemed more inclined to vote for smaller, more extreme parties in the leftist coalition, or even outside of it.

“I always voted for the reds,” Tiziana Guidi Rontani, 64, an office cleaner, said, referring to the Communist Party and the Democrats.

Noisy jets flew above the primary school that housed the polling place, while Ms. Guidi Rontani retrieved her dogs’ leashes from her daughter Francesca Lombardo, who had accompanied her but had not entered the polling station. Ms. Lombardo said she hadn’t cast a vote for two decades.

Ms. Guidi Rontani said that she still believed in the electoral process and that she’d voted for the Left and Greens, hoping to see some real leftist policies for working people like her.

Despite expressing deep-seated disillusionment with politics, younger voters in Florence said their family histories meant they couldn’t even conceive of voting for the right.

Margherita Arriti, 28, a university student, joked that she didn’t know how to tell her grandfather that she’d voted for a small leftist party that had not joined the left coalition.

“In his culture,” she said, “that’s a wasted vote.”

PHOTO: Florence, Italy, on Sunday near the city’s 11th-century baptistery. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Gaia Pianigiani FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** September 25, 2022

**End of Document**



[***Encountering Another Jamaica***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67R8-VD21-JBG3-60T0-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

March 9, 2023 Thursday 17:49 EST

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**Section:** TRAVEL

**Length:** 2599 words

**Byline:** Charlie Brinkhurst-Cuff

**Highlight:** A writer explores the island beyond its popular all-inclusive resorts, seeking out guesthouses owned by locals, and experiences beyond the beaches. She finds mountain views, cascading waterfalls and a sense of place.

**Body**

A writer explores the island beyond its popular all-inclusive resorts, seeking out guesthouses owned by locals, and experiences beyond the beaches. She finds mountain views, cascading waterfalls and a sense of place.

“So,” said the tour guide, midway through our trip to Jamaica. “What are you really looking for?”

It was a good question. In most of the places we went, our group of four women had been welcomed, warned and flirted with. But, we were rarely asked many questions about the nature of our trip. We’d flown in from England and the United States in mid-November, just before high season, intending to see the country over the course of a month, while staying in and visiting as many locally owned businesses and guesthouses as we could.

Traveling from the east of the lush island to the west, and mostly avoiding the tourist hot spots of Ocho Rios, Montego Bay and Negril, we sought out places that were the opposite of what Jamaica, and many Caribbean islands, have become known for: resort-style luxury that doesn’t always offer locals a significant slice of the tourism pie. As a granddaughter of Jamaican immigrants, the search had special resonance for me.

“When people come to the Caribbean, they’re being funneled into this journey of the airport to the resort, and that’s all they see of the country,” said Riaz Philips, the author of the award-winning cookbook “[*West Winds: Recipes, History and Tales from Jamaica*](https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/705611/west-winds-by-riaz-phillips/).” “Usually, if you follow the money trail of that passage, it doesn’t lead to any tangible benefits for the people who live and work in those countries.”

Nicole Dennis-Benn, who wrote about the dark side of Jamaican tourism in her debut novel, “[*Here Comes the Sun*](https://www.nytimes.com/2016/06/30/books/review-here-comes-the-sun-by-nicole-dennis-benn.html),” explained that it can be hard for Jamaicans to start successful businesses. “It’s really impossible if you don’t come from wealth already. You’re not going to find much ownership among the Jamaican ***working class***,” she said.

Even many of the white-sand beaches that foreign visitors enjoy are off-limits to residents, and are instead controlled by hotels and resorts, which limit access to their guests. Of the island’s approximately 493 miles of coastline, less than three miles are designated as public beaches, and about half of those are used in association with hotels, according to a recent government policy paper. The public beaches that do exist are often run-down and not fit for use. That exclusion is emblematic of what some locals feel is the continuing legacy of colonialism and the history of slavery on the island.

Committed to discovering the country that few visitors see, we set out to discover if it was possible to be good tourists and travel to Jamaica beyond the resorts.

To the Blue Mountains

Our trip began with a long journey from Montego Bay’s Sangster International Airport to Kingston on the [*Knutsford Express*](https://www.knutsfordexpress.com/) (a Greyhound-equivalent bus) and then a taxi up and across the Blue Mountains, high above the capital, to stay at [*the BlueMountView guesthouse*](https://www.bluemountview.com/the-hotel).

We arrived at night after a treacherous drive. But we woke the next morning to the chirping of insects and a stunning sight: The guest rooms, made with an abundance of polished natural wood, are surrounded by trees, and built into the edge of a great crevasse, looking out over a plunging swathe of greenery.

It was at BlueMountView that we met Noel Lindo and his wife, Michelle. The self-described “King of the Mountain,” Mr. Lindo was born in the area. After living in London for most of his adult life, he and Michelle decided to return to Jamaica to live in 2011 — building their own house, and then the guesthouses. They are explicitly L.G.B.T.Q.-friendly in a country that is not always hospitable to gay visitors, treat guests like family — and hand-roast their own coffee on-site.

Mr. Lindo is fatherly, frank and incredibly chatty. He likes to layer stories upon stories, taking us from the streets of 1970s London to colonial Jamaica and back again.

“There’s so much to do in this mountain. It’s unbelievable,” he said enthusiastically, pointing out hiking trails in the [*Blue and John Crow Mountains National Park*](https://www.blueandjohncrowmountains.org/), hidden waterfalls and coffee plantations, many of them owned by locals. Although it’s isolated, we discovered that BlueMountView is within hiking distance of [*Strawberry Hill*](https://www.strawberryhillhotel.com/), the famous hotel started by the Island Records founder, Chris Blackwell. We stopped at [*Eits Cafe*](https://www.facebook.com/17MilePost), where we gorged on tender saltfish fritters, warming pumpkin ginger soup and sticky, delicious, caramelized-plantain crepes while looking out across the misty mountains, surrounded by the buzz of swallowtail hummingbirds.

It was through Mr. Lindo that we wound up taking a day trip to visit the parish of Portland, on the island’s northeast coast. Although perhaps predominantly known for its beaches and as the location of the [*Blue Lagoon*](https://things-to-do-in-jamaica.com/blue-lagoon-in-port-antonio-jamaica/#:~:text=in%20Portland%2C%20Jamaica-,Blue%20Lagoon%20in%20Portland%2C%20Jamaica,is%20a%20vision%20of%20beauty.), made famous in the 1980 movie, we had a more rural experience. Our first stop was [*the Living Daylights*](https://www.instagram.com/thelivingdaylightsja/?hl=en), an eco-farm, restaurant and bar in the jungle of Bonnie View Hill, Port Antonio, that has been open since 2018, aiming to offer guests “a piece of paradise,” with a focus on sustainability.

Jesse Crosby’s family has farmed the land for more than 50 years, but he always had ambitions to do something more with it, and when he met Brandon Powell (who has both Jamaican and U.S. citizenship), they were able to make that a reality.

Arriving at midday, we were treated to a sweaty, fun farm hike led by Mr. Crosby. He picked cinnamon leaves from the trees for us to sniff, jostled down coconuts for us to drink from and showed us hidden plantain trees. This was followed by a delicious farm-to-table meal cooked by Simi Brenner, the owner of the Moussa Pot, a vegan restaurant, that included a chickpea curry with moringa leaf, ripe plantain and coco yam leaf‌ and a salad made from June plum, cucumber and sorrel leaf. The Moussa Pot has since moved to a new location in Portland, but the Living Daylights will continue to offer farm-to-table meals in future.

Our second stop in Portland was the self-governing Maroon community of [*Charles Town*](https://www.maroons-jamaica.com/home/) in Buff Bay Valley, whose residents are descendants of proud Africans who escaped enslavement by fleeing to mountainous regions. It was one of the few times in Jamaica where we were viscerally reminded of the island’s dark history and its continuing legacy.

A tour of the small museum charted the history of the Maroons and how they have protected their freedom and culture over centuries, creating their own communities and belief systems while fighting against British slave owners and colonialists [*in a series of wars*](https://www.bl.uk/picturing-places/articles/slavery-freedom-and-the-jamaican-landscape). Marcia Douglas, the current leader of the community (and the first woman to hold the position), held up a heavy shackle that would have once been clasped around an enslaved person’s neck. Later, other members of the community brought out drums and sang. We were taught dances that bind the present and the past.

“What we’re offering in the tourism sector is our heritage, our ancestral inheritance,” Ms. Douglas told me after the tour.

Treasure Beach and community tourism

Another long, bumpy drive took us from the Blue Mountains down to Treasure Beach, a village in the southwest parish of St. Elizabeth. It’s probably the area in Jamaica best known for community tourism — low-impact travel that works in relative sync with the locals. Once a fishing village, over the past 30 years, Treasure Beach has become a beacon for tourists looking to travel off the beaten track.

The town is small, hot and with dusty roads lined by cactuses and flowers. Its treasures were somewhat hidden; shacks that looked inconsequential at first glance came alive at different times of the day. The stunning beaches were a more obvious draw, along with a variety of well-priced, locally owned guest rooms and villas on Airbnb, such as the [*Azteca Villas*](https://www.airbnb.co.uk/rooms/50644516?source_impression_id=p3_1672074084_CqCDo%2BFfi0YultX8): a collection of newly built guesthouses, with a small shared pool, only a few minutes away from the beach and the main, albeit tiny, strip of shops and places to eat.

We spent the bulk of our time in Treasure Beach, sampling locally owned highlights like [*Smurfs Café*](https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100065669645174) for the best Jamaican breakfast in town; [*Eggy’s Beach Bar*](https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=273505779375562&amp;paipv=0&amp;eav=AfZwLKh75nNIPUIreUt1gZKZ5p7pKsInIMVGr-jZiwRoPNfPcJD1QU9JgbVMmwzoKFw&amp;_rdr) for the coldest Red Stripes right on the sand; and [*Gee Wiz*](https://www.facebook.com/Geewizvegierest/) for tasty, reasonably priced vegan food in an eclectic setting — the restaurant is painted in fading, cotton candy colors and flanked with statues of long-beaked fish, while the huge, pillared dining room boasts colorful murals.

[*Floyd’s Pelican Bar,*](https://restaurantsnapshot.com/PelicanBar/) built from driftwood and palm fronds on a sandbank in the middle of the ocean, has to be the area’s best-known spot. Constructed in 2001 by Floyde Forbes, it’s a slick operation these days, requiring a boat journey that costs $40 per person at a minimum from Treasure Beach. But the vibes, a mile away from shore, are sun-drenched and otherworldly. The freshly caught fried escovitch fish and bammy (a type of cassava flatbread) were the best I had on the island.

Treasure Beach is still an anomaly in Jamaica’s tourism sector.

“There’s no question that over 90 percent of Jamaica’s traditional room stock is all-inclusive,” said Jason Henzell, the chairman and co-owner of [*Jakes Hotel*](https://jakeshotel.com/), the largest business in the area, who also runs a [*nonprofit to support locals*](https://www.instagram.com/bredstreasurebeach/?hl=en). “I sat on the board of the Jamaican Ministry of Tourism for eight years, and I know they had been quite hesitant about community tourism. Not necessarily in Treasure Beach, but overall, because they were worried about crime. That’s the cold, hard truth.”

The Ministry of Tourism did not respond to requests for comment.

But then, he said, Airbnb changed everything. “It happened in spite of the ministry not wanting it. It’s almost as though Airbnb was made for Jamaica, right? Because, you know, every Jamaican is a character.”

The other reality of Treasure Beach, though, is that much of the beachfront land has been bought up by non-Jamaicans. Mr. Henzell, who has helped landowners sell property in the area, tells me that land these days goes for over $1 million an acre, putting it out of reach of most locals.

“We know that tourism is our number one revenue. And a lot of the time when people are living in a prime area, especially ***working class*** Jamaicans, they tend to displace them,” said Ms. Dennis-Benn, whose upcoming novel will explore land ownership.

But, Mr. Henzell pointed out, the majority of large guesthouses in Treasure Beach, four out of five, are owned by locals. And, he added, “you have some foreigners who are extremely respectful of our community, respectful of our traditions, respectful of our heritage and culture.”

Last stop, Mel’s

Our last stop, two hours from Treasure Beach, was [*Mel’s Botanical Retreat*](https://mels-botanical-retreat.business.site/), situated on Cave Mountain, in Westmoreland, the westernmost parish of Jamaica. The retreat, featuring three handbuilt wooden cabins and a communal kitchen, is high above the shimmering Caribbean Sea and nestled in the lush jungle. At present, it’s being run by a teenage girl named Kiara Clayton. She is motherless and grieving, but trying to do something very special: keeping a dream of Black-woman-owned community tourism alive.

Kiara’s mother, Melessia Rodney, founded the retreat, built on the site of her family’s longtime goat pasture. In the summer of 2021, she was pregnant with her second child and had recently married the love of her life. But then, in August, she died: At age 36, Covid took her and her unborn baby.

Five months later, 15-year-old Kiara decided to take over the business; balancing it alongside schoolwork and her ambitions to[*study to become a lawyer or an entrepreneur in America*](https://www.gofundme.com/f/secure-kiaras-college-education). Despite her age, she understands the power of legacy. With the help of her family and her mother’s many friends from all over the world, she is continuing to host guests at the retreat.

One night, Kiara joined me in the communal kitchen to talk about the business and why she decided to carry it on. “She wanted it to be this Black Jamaican woman-owned business. She just loved being strong and independent,” she said.

What makes the property special among the thousands of Airbnbs across Jamaica is its commitment to these ideals. “It’s really rare, in Jamaica, to have a woman born in poverty, and become as successful as Mel became with her goat pasture,” said Stacey Davis, a family friend who helped Mel in the early days of the retreat. “Every flower in that retreat, everything you see, she did by hand.”

Although Kiara has faced some financial struggles with maintaining the property since her mother died, it remains a haven for guests seeking that ephemeral and elusive trait: authenticity. Mel, and now Kiara, encourage guests to engage with the local community on the south side of the island.

At [*Benta River Falls*](https://www.bentariverfallsjamaica.com/), an hour or so’s drive away from Mel’s, we were treated to a joyous day at a series of cascading waterfalls and deep pools, led by two energetic guides. The property’s owner, Stacy Wilson, played dominoes with a bunch of men in the small bar next to the falls, while we ate a delicious plate of crispy fries, and giggled with the pink-haired bartender. Mr. Wilson’s American cousin, Jahcobee Faith, explained that the family has owned the area since the 1970s, but only set up business in 2017, charging, at the time we visited, $20 for tourists and a nominal 500 Jamaican dollars, or about $3.25, for locals.

Closer to Mel’s, [*Bluefields beach*](https://www.visitjamaica.com/listing/bluefields/469/) provided all the white sand and azure, temperate water you could wish for, along with the knowledge that it is one of the few beaches on the island that explicitly remains open for locals. It’s looked after by the Bluefields People’s Community Association, which promotes sustainable social and economic development. With towels spread out under a tree, we sipped strong rum cocktails and played with local children in the water. We were guests, but we were accepted.

The reality is that Jamaica beyond the resorts is beautiful but impoverished, and still visibly recovering from the pandemic. It can get expensive if you don’t drive and need to rely on taxis to get around, though [*route taxis*](https://www.roadaffair.com/getting-around-jamaica-in-route-taxis/), as used by locals, can offset some costs. The country has a Level 3 warning from the State Department, with some regions listed as Level 4, Do Not Travel, but these were not on our itinerary. Traveling around the country felt completely safe in a group; just keep your wits about you, and remain polite.

Stepping out of your comfort zone is a must: Taking the easy options will not lead you to the communities that will really benefit from the money that tourism can bring. It’s on us, as tourists, to seek them out, move within them with an awareness of our relative privileges, and remember the human stories behind their businesses. There are deep sacrifices that some ***working-class*** Jamaicans have made to try and bring a new type of tourism to the surface.

As Kiara said to me, measuring her words, at the end of our conversation: “It was Mel’s dream and now it’s my dream, but it probably doesn’t have to work out the way it was going to work for her, for me. Maybe something else is destined for me.”

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PHOTOS: Top, fishermen on Treasure Beach. Center left, the Azteca Villas guesthouses at Treasure Beach. Center right, Delroy Brown at his restaurant, Gee Wiz. Above, Eggy’s Beach Bar at Treasure Beach. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY TONY CENICOLA/THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page C7.

**Load-Date:** March 24, 2023

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[***Should Menendez Quit?***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:698C-2TM1-JBG3-6006-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** BRIEFING

**Length:** 1801 words

**Byline:** David Leonhardt

**Highlight:** The senator for New Jersey’s indictment on corruption charges raised a sometimes tricky question: When should a politician resign?

**Body**

The senator for New Jersey’s indictment on corruption charges raised a sometimes tricky question: When should a politician resign?

Under what circumstances should an elected politician resign?

The indictment of Senator Robert Menendez on corruption charges last week has raised that question again, and it can be a tricky one. It also led to passionate debate after allegations against Bill Clinton, Donald Trump and Ralph Northam (none of whom resigned) as well as Al Franken, Andrew Cuomo and Richard Nixon (all of whom did).

Yesterday, a flood of other senators called on Menendez to step down, [*as my colleague Annie Karni explains*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/26/us/politics/democrats-menendez-senate.html). Some of the first calls for resignation came from Democratic senators running for re-election next year in swing states, and Senator Cory Booker — Menendez’s fellow New Jersey Democrat — joined the group, too. Booker said that the indictment contained “shocking allegations of corruption and specific, disturbing details of wrongdoing.”

Menendez has rejected those calls and asked people “to allow all the facts to be presented.”

In today’s newsletter, I’ll try to make the best case on each side of the debate.

He should quit

At the crux of the argument that Menendez should resign is the idea that the standards for a U.S. senator should be higher than merely not having a criminal conviction. Serving as a senator is a privilege, not a right, and Menendez has offered no good explanation for his actions — even if they are not criminal.

The federal indictment tells a jarring story. During a search of Menendez’s home and safe deposit box, investigators found more than $650,000 in cash and gold bars, some of it hidden in clothing or closets. On envelopes containing money were the fingerprints of Fred Daibes, a real-estate developer and Menendez fund-raiser.

Prosecutors say that Daibes was a go-between who gave money to Menendez and his wife, Nadine, in exchange for Menendez’s intervention to protect the monopoly of a New Jersey company that certified meat. Investigators say Menendez also pressured a future federal prosecutor not to pursue charges against another of his fund-raisers.

The closest to a rationale that Menendez has offered is that his parents grew up in Cuba, where, he said, their money was confiscated (although he didn’t explain the precise connection to his own piles of cash). He has also said that the prosecutors are trying to criminalize ordinary politics. He has not said whether he considers cash gifts in exchange for senatorial influence to be ordinary politics.

Many other politicians believe that he has damaged the credibility of the Senate and of the Democratic Party. By remaining in office without offering a reasonable explanation of his behavior, he has contributed to cynicism about politics, his critics say, and he is unable to do his job effectively. (“His refusal to resign is a problem for Democrats both substantively and politically,” [*writes Michelle Goldberg of Times Opinion*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/26/opinion/columnists/menendez-democrats-schumer.html).)

The one Democrat who benefits from Menendez’s remaining in the Senate, the critics say, is Menendez.

He should fight

Six years ago, another member of the U.S. senate faced calls to resign from office. That senator was Franken, the Minnesota Democrat and former comedian whom several women had accused of touching them in inappropriate ways. After weeks of criticism, Franken did resign.

He has since said he regrets having done so. Some other Democrats also regret the rush to judge him. In hindsight, they believe that Franken at least deserved a chance to contest the accusations in an ethics hearing. (Jane Mayer of The New Yorker has written [*a helpful article about the case*](https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2019/07/29/the-case-of-al-franken).)

The Franken case offers a reminder that the American political system does have ways to adjudicate accusations against elected politicians. Most important, members of Congress do not have lifetime tenure. Ultimately, voters can decide whether a politician’s behavior is disqualifying.

As it happens, Menendez’s current Senate term — his third — expires in about 15 months. Another New Jersey Democrat, Representative Andy Kim, has already announced a primary challenge, and more may follow. Voters can make a judgment soon.

This is not the first time that Menendez has been indicted in a corruption case. Federal prosecutors also charged him in 2015, but the jury deadlocked and prosecutors declined to retry him. Later that year, New Jersey’s voters re-elected him. Menendez understandably mentioned that history during his fiery public remarks this week.

In effect, he seemed to be saying: What’s the rush? Don’t I deserve another opportunity to persuade people the prosecutors have overreached?

What’s next

When politicians resign under pressure, it is often because they understand that they could otherwise be impeached and removed from office. That was true of Cuomo, Nixon and Eliot Spitzer.

When politicians are unlikely to be removed, they rarely quit, and Menendez faces little risk of removal. Only the Senate can expel one of its members. It has not done so since the Civil War.

Yes, there are exceptions — politicians who quit voluntarily. Franken was one. Spiro Agnew, Nixon’s first vice president, was another; he resigned in 1973 as part of a plea deal with prosecutors. But Agnew highlights the larger principle: Politicians don’t tend to quit unless they think that doing so benefits them.

Maybe Menendez’s situation will become so uncomfortable that he changes his mind and steps down. Or maybe New Jersey’s voters will again decide his political fate.

For more

* Menendez is scheduled to [*be arraigned today*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/27/nyregion/menendez-arraignments-bribery-charges.html) in a Manhattan court, along with his wife, Nadine.

1. Prosecutors have spent much of Menendez’s 18-year Senate career looking into murky relationships between [*his office and special interests*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/27/nyregion/bob-menendez-career-nj.html).

THE LATEST NEWS

Trump Ruling

* Donald Trump [*fraudulently inflated the value of his properties*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/26/nyregion/trump-james-fraud-trial.html) by as much as $2.2 billion, a judge ruled.

1. Trump could lose control of several properties, including Trump Tower. [*Read key takeaways*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/27/nyregion/trump-fraud-trial-ny-ruling.html) from the decision.
2. The ruling [*challenges Trump’s narrative*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/27/us/politics/trump-fraud-ruling.html) about the business career that made him a national figure.

Politics

* The Senate passed a bipartisan bill that would [*keep the government open*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/26/us/politics/senate-bill-government-shutdown.html) into November and aid Ukraine. House Republicans haven’t yet passed their own bill.

1. Trump will skip the Republican debate tonight. His poll lead has grown even though he [*skipped the first debate*](https://www.nytimes.com/video/us/politics/100000009103599/donald-trump-republican-debate.html).
2. Hunter Biden [*sued Rudy Giuliani*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/26/us/politics/hunter-biden-giuliani-lawsuit.html), accusing him of illegally spreading personal data from a laptop left at a repair shop.
3. President Biden’s dog Commander [*bit another Secret Service agent*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/26/us/politics/biden-commander-biting-secret-service.html). The officer is doing well.

U.A.W. Visits

* Biden [*joined striking autoworkers*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/26/us/politics/biden-uaw-strike-picket-michigan.html) on a picket line in Michigan. “Stick with it,” he said through a bullhorn, before fist-bumping and shaking hands with marchers.

1. He appears to be the first sitting U.S. president to join striking workers, historians said.
2. “We know the president will do right by the ***working class***,” Shawn Fain, the union’s leader, said.
3. Biden said workers should be able to bargain for the 40 percent raise they’ve demanded. [*Here’s what else the union wants*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2023/09/26/us/biden-uaw-strike-detroit/the-union-is-seeking-a-pay-increase-that-mirrors-what-executives-have-received?smid=url-share).
4. Trump [*will also speak to autoworkers*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/27/us/politics/trump-united-auto-workers-strike.html) in Detroit. As a businessman, he both circumvented and appeased unions.

More on Strikes

* Hollywood writers can return to work. Their union’s leaders [*decided to end their strike*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/26/business/hollywood-writers-return.html) as members prepare to vote on a new contract.

1. Las Vegas hospitality workers voted to [*authorize a strike*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/27/business/economy/las-vegas-strip-strike-authorization.html) against major resorts on the Strip.

Monopoly Lawsuits

* The U.S. [*sued Amazon*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/26/technology/ftc-amazon.html), accusing it of abusing its monopoly to keep prices high.

1. The suit has been years in the making: Lina Khan, the head of the F.T.C., first set out arguments against Amazon [*when she was a law student*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/27/technology/lina-khan-jeff-bezos-ftc-amazon.html).
2. Google is pushing to [*limit transparency*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/26/technology/google-antitrust-trial-secrecy.html) at its separate monopoly trial. Last week, much of the testimony was given behind closed doors.

Social Media

* Under a new E.U. law, social media companies [*could be fined*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/27/technology/disinformation-law-european-union.html) for failing to fight disinformation on their platforms.
* Reddit will [*pay users*](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/technology-66925550) for popular posts, the BBC reports.

International

* Nagorno-Karabakh, an Armenian enclave in Azerbaijan, survived decades of war, but its [*collapse into Azerbaijani control*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/27/world/europe/nagorno-karabakh-armenia-azerbaijan.html) last week was sudden.

1. At least 100 people died in northern Iraq after a fire [*tore through a wedding hall*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/26/world/middleeast/iraq-wedding-fire.html).

Other Big Stories

* J.P. Morgan Chase agreed to [*pay $75 million*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/26/business/jpmorgan-jeffrey-epstein-virgin-islands.html) to settle a lawsuit accusing it of enabling Jeffrey Epstein’s sex trafficking operation.

1. Columbia University is the largest private landowner in New York City. It pays [*almost no property taxes*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/26/nyregion/columbia-university-property-tax-nyc.html).

Opinions

Barbed-wire fences cover the American West. [*Virtual fences*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/26/opinion/barbed-wire-american-west.html) could restore pristine landscapes, Michelle Nijhuis writes.

Here’s a column by Jamelle Bouie on [*Clarence Thomas*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/26/opinion/clarence-thomas-koch-ethics.html).

MORNING READS

New era: Travis Kelce was a star. Taylor Swift [*put him in another orbit*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/26/arts/taylor-swift-travis-kelce-dating.html).

Fall classic: Starbucks’ [*pumpkin spice latte*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/25/dining/drinks/pumpkin-spice-latte.html), which recently turned 20, has endured by refusing to be cool.

Sacred ground: These women are trying to [*save America’s Black cemeteries*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/27/us/black-cemeteries.html).

Lives Lived: Barbara Mullen often said she never thought of herself as beautiful. But in the 1950s, she was at the vanguard of the fashion industry’s shift toward tall, slender models. [*She died at 96*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/25/fashion/barbara-mullen-dead.html).

SPORTS

W.N.B.A.: The New York Liberty [*beat the Connecticut Sun*](https://theathletic.com/4903726/2023/09/27/new-york-liberty-zone-defense-semifinals/). Breanna Stewart is the league’s M.V.P.

N.F.L.: Colin Kaepernick, a former quarterback, [*lobbied the Jets’ general manager*](https://theathletic.com/4903169/2023/09/26/colin-kaepernick-jets-open-letter) to let him lead the team’s practice squad.

A Hall of Famer: Brooks Robinson, who played 23 seasons with the Baltimore Orioles, was best known for his unparalleled defense. [*He died at 86*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/26/sports/baseball/brooks-robinson-dead.html).

ARTS AND IDEAS

Africa’s leaders: Much of Kehinde Wiley’s art depicts regular people, but his most famous work is a picture of power — Barack Obama, seated amid a wall of flowers. Wiley’s latest exhibition, in Paris, returns to that realm with portraits of [*11 current and former African presidents*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/25/arts/design/kehinde-wiley-africa-presidential-portraits.html). Many of their poses evoke paintings of royalty and aristocrats from centuries ago, giving them a historical gravitas that was long limited to Europeans.

More on culture

* The Smithsonian acquired an [*unpublished manuscript*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/26/arts/phillis-wheatley-smithsonian.html) by Phillis Wheatley, an enslaved woman and the first American of African descent to publish a book.

THE MORNING RECOMMENDS …

Create a [*spiced tuna sauce*](https://cooking.nytimes.com/recipes/1024650-baasto-iyo-suugo-tuuna-pasta-and-spiced-tuna-sauce) for this Somali staple.

Drink coffee, but [*don’t overdo it*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/26/well/eat/coffee-benefits-caffeine-risks.html).

Add a [*flash to your camera*](https://www.nytimes.com/wirecutter/guides/how-to-buy-a-camera-flash/).

Shuffle around the house in [*slippers that will last*](https://www.nytimes.com/wirecutter/reviews/best-slippers/).

GAMES

Here is [*today’s Spelling Bee*](https://www.nytimes.com/puzzles/spelling-bee). Yesterday’s pangrams were caboodle and codable.

And here are [*today’s Mini Crossword*](https://www.nytimes.com/crosswords/game/mini), [*Wordle*](https://www.nytimes.com/games/wordle/index.html), [*Sudoku*](https://www.nytimes.com/puzzles/sudoku) and [*Connections*](https://www.nytimes.com/games/connections).

Thanks for spending part of your morning with The Times. See you tomorrow. — David

[*Sign up here to get this newsletter in your inbox*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing). Reach our team at [*themorning@nytimes.com*](mailto:themorning@nytimes.com).

PHOTO: Senator Robert Menendez vowed to fight the federal corruption charges during a news conference in Union City, N.J., on Monday. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Andrew Seng for The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** September 27, 2023

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[***How to Live When You’ve Lost Everything; Fiction***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68CV-MFJ1-DXY4-X0M9-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

June 4, 2023 Sunday 09:26 EST

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**Section:** BOOKS; review

**Length:** 957 words

**Byline:** Isaac Fitzgerald

**Highlight:** In a new novel by Andre Dubus III, a man searches for hope and dignity after a long run of misfortune.

**Body**

In a new novel by Andre Dubus III, a man searches for hope and dignity after a long run of misfortune.

SUCH KINDNESS, by Andre Dubus III

Tom Lowe is, well, low. Destitute. About as close to rock bottom as he can get. He was once a successful carpenter with his own business, a gorgeous house he designed and built himself — with the help of an (eventually disastrous) adjustable-rate mortgage — and a wife and child he adored. Now he’s divorced, estranged from his 19-year-old son and living in Section 8 housing in Amesbury, Mass. Worst of all, Tom, the narrator of Andre Dubus III’s novel “Such Kindness,” isn’t able to work.

Work, you see, is what made Tom feel useful. It’s what made him a man. Someone who could hold his head up high. Work was Tom’s way of expressing his love to his wife and to his son: Look at this beautiful life I have made for us. “Every day that I worked on building my home,” he recalls, “I felt like I was in some temporary state of grace.”

When he started falling behind on his mortgage payments, Tom knew how to solve the problem: by working more. Which eventually led to his fall — a literal fall, while Tom was doing some roofing. A brief distraction, then nothing but gravity, air and, eventually, ground. He had a debilitating injury. Surgeries. Pain medication. And then addiction. From there, Tom’s life started slipping away from him in the same inevitable-seeming motion that he felt when he fell off that roof, when his “body seemed to unmoor from its very center.”

Now living off disability checks and E.B.T. cards that he sells for cash, so that he can buy rotgut vodka to dull the burning pain caused by the screws in his hip, Tom is alone and stewing in bitterness. He’s kicked his addiction to opioids, but has allowed a new kind of addiction into his life: resentment. He blames the banker who encouraged him to take out that mortgage. The insurance company that didn’t pay him what he was owed after his injury, despite years of on-time payments (until he missed the last two, allowing the company to deny his claim). The doctors who prescribed him the painkillers and the giant pharmaceutical conglomerates that made the pills in the first place. “Big Pharma, Insurance, Banks”: an unholy trinity of elusive enemies.

Other than hostility for those who have done him wrong, the only other motivating factor currently in Tom’s life is visiting his son, Drew, in order to celebrate the boy’s 20th birthday. Problem is Drew attends college in Amherst, Mass., over 100 miles west, and Tom has no idea how he will make the trek. He has no car: It was impounded because it was unregistered and uninsured, and Tom didn’t have his license on him when he got pulled over. His precious tools, which he was hoping to sell to help get his car back, have recently been stolen. But in Tom’s mind, regaining his son’s love is his last glimmer of hope.

Much like Tom, the first half of this novel is hard. Not hard to read, mind you. Dubus — the author of the acclaimed best seller “House of Sand and Fog” and the phenomenal memoir “Townie,” among other books — is at the top of his game here, masterfully carrying the reader from the present action to Tom’s memories and dreams without confusion. The writing and the structure are clean and seamless.

Reminiscing about his mornings before his car was taken away, Tom gives us a tour of his world in the novel’s early pages: “I leave the 8 and this neighborhood of box houses like the one I grew up in, the vans and pickup trucks in their driveways, the strip plaza across the street with the liquor store and a salon called Dawn’s Hair &amp; Nails.” Later, on the highway, “I join the traffic of my fellow human beings and feel, for a few miles anyway, part of them again, a man coming home after a long day’s work, a man who had every intention of carrying his own weight.”

With its weathered characters and workaday settings, “Such Kindness” gives Dubus numerous opportunities to show how easily one’s world can fall apart — how a few mistakes when you’re financially vulnerable can lead to crippling loss. Always a keen observer of the ***working class***, Dubus knows what it means to miss a bill payment.

But in “Such Kindness” we remain squarely in Tom’s head, and Tom’s head is not an easy place to be. He’s a bit of a bummer to hang with, which he himself would almost eagerly admit. Still, every gritty, well-written disaster in the first half of this book is balanced by the transcendence of the novel’s ending.

At its core, this book is a hero’s journey, but not one where the hero ends up somewhere wildly different from where he starts. This is a story of acceptance. Hard-won, beautiful, life-changing acceptance. Tom’s account brought tears to my eyes — both from recognition of my own story in his, and of how far I have yet to go myself.

How do we accept the world for what it is, when nothing seems acceptable? Therein lies the trick of this novel, its slow magic wrought through small, accumulative moments. We sit in Tom’s consciousness and experience his own hardship softening, but never in the way we expect. This is a testament to Dubus’s talents. Every guess I had, even when — especially when — I thought I knew where the story was going, was wrong. Dubus kept surprising me, as did Tom.

So I will not ruin their secrets here. But what I can say is that when I finished this novel, I knew the lessons that Tom had learned were now my own.

Isaac Fitzgerald is the author of the best-selling memoir “Dirtbag, Massachusetts.”

SUCH KINDNESS | By Andre Dubus III | 311 pp. | W.W. Norton &amp; Company | $29.95

Isaac Fitzgerald needs a bio. tkt ktt k tk tkt tk tkt kt tk tkt kt tkt kt kt ktkt kt tk tkt kt

PHOTO: (PHOTOGRAPH BY Owen Gent FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

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[***Five Action Movies to Stream Now***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:688F-KD91-JBG3-64MP-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

May 19, 2023 Friday 11:14 EST

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**Section:** MOVIES

**Length:** 975 words

**Byline:** Robert Daniels

**Highlight:** From introspective gangsters to bumbling hit men, this month’s action picks feature a different side of criminals.

**Body**

From introspective gangsters to bumbling hit men, this month’s action picks feature a different side of criminals.

‘A Family’

[*Stream it on Netflix.*](https://www.netflix.com/watch/81424705?source=35)

Turning away from the portrayal of Yakuza as reckless renegades guided solely by blood lust, Michihito Fujii’s “A Family” paints the mobsters in a different, melancholic light. Known by many as Lil Ken, Kenji Yamamoto (Go Ayano) discovers family, brotherhood and a surrogate father when he joins the rough and tumble gang belonging to the crime lord Hiroshi Shibasaki (Hiroshi Tachi). We follow Kenji throughout the years, beginning in 1996, as he ascends from loyal enforcer to top lieutenant. Kenji ultimately lands in prison because of retribution against an assassin who targeted Shibasaki. When he is released 14 years later, Kenji must adjust to a changed world.

While “A Family” features familiar violence, it’s the tragic undertones applied to Kenji that are most gripping. The aged mobster finds his gangland family has fallen on hard times, and now, being a Yakuza is a scarlet letter that promises the bearer a lonely, impoverished life. Can Kenji reunite with a lost love by leaving this life behind or will his past hold him back? It’s a critical question with a poignant answer that sheds new light on the Yakuza image.

‘AKA’

[*Stream it on Netflix.*](https://www.netflix.com/title/81576597)

[Video: [*Watch on YouTube.*](http://youtube.com/embed/044PUmZQd1g)]

A special forces soldier turned assassin: Adam Franco (Alban Lenoir) isn’t the kind of man you want on your tail. That much is apparent in the opening scene, when Adam infiltrates a terrorist cell in Libya by allowing himself to be taken hostage. Once in the cell’s hide-out, he breaks free and rampages through rifle fire to get to his real target, a whistle-blowing journalist the French government wants dead. Upon his return to France, he’s hired by the government to locate Moktar (Kevin Layne) — a man accused of a recent terrorist attack at a Parisian hospital — by becoming a bodyguard for a powerful drug dealer who purportedly has ties to Moktar.

In Morgan S. Dalibert’s ruminative film, Lenoir — best known for the [*“Lost Bullet” series*](https://www.netflix.com/title/81108579) — is more than a bruising wrecking ball. His stoic face and hulking muscles give way to reveal his desire to protect the vulnerable: That ethos culminates when he descends into a cocaine den against a legion of dealers to retrieve a kidnapped kid. It finds further life when Adam rebels against the corrupt institutions that employ him.

‘How I Became a Gangster’

[*Stream it on Netflix.*](https://www.netflix.com/watch/81286570?source=35)

A mobster epic in the vein of “Goodfellas,” the Polish director Maciej Kawulski’s “How I Became a Gangster” follows a kingpin affectionately known as Chief (Marcin Kowalczyk) through three decades, from an adolescent bully to leading his own crime syndicate. Chief builds a life of splendor upon drugs, robbery and intimidation. He hides that life from his ***working-class*** parents — they think he works at an auto shop — and his quiet wife. Everything would be perfect if not for his best friend Walden (Tomasz Wlosok), a loose cannon with a raging coke habit, who brings unnecessary attention to the surprisingly quiet business.

Kawulski records Chief’s rise and fall with an intoxicating sheen: The cinematographer Bartek Cierlica offers slick lighting, the film’s editors give the high jinks — such as a carjacking slowed down to the speed of molasses — a kinetic rhythm. The poppy soundtrack (featuring needle drops like The Ronettes’s “Be My Baby” and Alphaville’s “Forever Young”) also imbues his big life with a lively spirit. While you know there’s only one way this can end, it’s still an invigorating ride to witness.

‘On the Edge’

[*Rent or Buy on most major platforms.*](https://www.justwatch.com/us/movie/entre-la-vie-et-la-mort)

[Video: [*Watch on YouTube.*](http://youtube.com/embed/-axxW3TSikA)]

The pleasure of a heist film often arises from watching the thieves’ precise planning culminate in a successful job. In Giordano Gederlini’s taut thriller “On the Edge,” however, the heist has already happened, and everyone is dead. One of the deceased bandits is the son of the train operator Leo Castañeda (Antonio de la Torre). While trying to piece together his kid’s demise, Leo learns that the gangster who hired his son for the heist wants the stolen loot; the investigator, Virginie (Marine Vacth), whose boyfriend was undercover in the gang, is looking for an explanation for her missing man as well.

As is common in the genre, Leo is more than his humble appearance implies. A former cop, he immigrated to France from Belgium to start a new life with his son. Interestingly, Gederlini doesn’t immerse us in Leo’s tussles with possible witnesses. The director opts for lens flares and a distant approach that intimates Leo’s unmoored emotions. In the visuals of “On the Edge,” you get more than a revenge tale, you feel how a father’s unbridled grief translates to an unquenchable rage.

‘One Day As a Lion’

[*Rent or Buy on most major platforms.*](https://www.justwatch.com/us/movie/one-day-as-a-lion)

[Video: [*Watch on YouTube.*](http://youtube.com/embed/29L6A8IBZfU)]

The second you see Jackie Powers (Scott Caan) sitting nervously in his car outside of a diner, you sense he’s not accustomed to this work. Jackie has been enlisted by the local hoodlum Pauly Russo (Frank Grillo) to murder Walter Boggs (J.K. Simmons) for an unpaid debt. When Walter arrives on his horse, however, Jackie is clearly intimidated: He storms the diner and accidentally kills the cook, but not a fleeing Walter. Rather than leave empty-handed, Jackie takes the caustic waitress Lola (Marianne Rendón) with him.

In John Swab’s movie, Jackie must evade a wrathful Pauly and persuade Lola to ask her rich mother for money so he might hire a defense attorney to spring his young son from juvenile detention. Caan and Rendón are a smart double act as they fall in love and trade dreams of absconding to Costa Rica. Amid the threat of death, the pair find belonging in a film brimming with thousand-yard stares and witty banter.

PHOTO: Go Ayano, right, in “A Family.” (PHOTOGRAPH BY Netflix FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** May 19, 2023

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[***Rebooting Ron; Michelle Cottle***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68SG-MRK1-DXY4-X30P-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

July 24, 2023 Monday 12:13 EST

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 1351 words

**Byline:** Michelle Cottle

**Highlight:** The presidential campaigns of John McCain, Hillary Clinton, Jeb Bush and others hold lessons for Ron DeSantis as he tries to turn things around.

**Body**

Admitting you’ve made mistakes is tough for anyone. For a hard-charging, hyperscrutinized political candidate who presents himself as infallible, it can be as excruciating as a root canal without anesthetic.

But Ron DeSantis clearly has hit the point where his presidential quest is crying out for a [*serious course correction*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/07/23/us/politics/desantis-campaign-reboot.html). I know it. You know it. Anxious [*Republican strategists and donors*](https://www.desmoinesregister.com/story/news/elections/presidential/caucus/2023/07/20/ron-desantis-super-pac-set-to-expand-in-iowa-as-he-faces-doubts-nationally/70420685007/) know it. And [*Team DeSantis*](https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/2024-election/ron-desantis-planning-campaign-reboot-struggles-close-gap-trump-rcna95400) knows it, [*no matter*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/07/18/us/politics/ron-desantis-cnn-south-carolina.html) what kind of [*happy talk*](https://www.cnn.com/2023/07/18/politics/ron-desantis-jake-tapper-interview-cnntv/index.html) the candidate was spewing in his interview with CNN last week. (Tip: If you find yourself babbling about being one of the few folks who knows how to define “woke,” you are not nailing your message.)

If things were going well for Mr. DeSantis — if he were catching fire as the less erratic, unindicted alternative to Donald Trump — there’s not a snowball’s chance he would have set foot in CNN. But as things stand, consorting with nonconservative media outlets, which he until recently avoided like a pack of rabid raccoons, is part of a bigger overhaul.

Team Trump intends to have some fun with this. “Some reboots were never going to be successful, like ‘Dynasty,’ ‘Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles’ or even ‘MacGyver,’” the campaign mocked in a statement last week. “And now we can add Ron DeSantis’s 2024 campaign to the list of failures.”

But campaign reboots are nothing to be ashamed of. Honest! They are a common, even healthy, part of the process. Handled properly, they give candidates the chance to show off their decisiveness, tenacity, adaptability, unflappability — you name it.

Not all overhauls are created equal, of course. [*Ronald Reagan*](https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/1980/06/01/reagan-iowa-loss-allowed-him-to-campaign-his-way/8175e913-1252-4c19-98ad-e6ff64ed1750/)’s in the 1980 presidential race? Golden. [*Jeb Bush’s in 2016*](https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-election-bush/jeb-bush-campaign-in-reboot-mode-as-salaries-staff-cut-idUKKCN0SH1VZ20151023)? Oof. And plenty have fallen somewhere in between: [*John Kerry 2004*](https://www.nytimes.com/2003/11/11/us/kerry-dismisses-campaign-chief.html), [*John McCain*](https://www.cbsnews.com/news/john-mccains-remarkable-turnaround/) 2008, Hillary Clinton [*2008*](https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2008/02/inside-the-clinton-shake-up/306684/). As the DeSantis campaign starts down this path, it has an abundance of recent cases to consult for potential tips, tricks and red flags.

While every floundering candidacy is floundering in its own way, there are a few foundational moves common to presidential campaign reboots:

1. Slash spending, which typically involves cutting campaign staff and salaries.

2. Shake up the leadership team.

3. Shift the focus toward more grass roots stumping in the early voting states.

Spending issues are almost a political rite of passage. So many campaigns get carried away early on with high-priced advisers or an overabundance of staff members, especially with front-runners eager to project an aura of inevitability.

The DeSantis campaign is still doing solidly with fund-raising, but there have been [*warning signs*](https://www.politico.com/news/2023/07/15/desantis-fundraising-report-00106482) (especially in the small-donor department) that have it [*cutting staff*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/07/16/us/politics/desantis-staff-campaign-shakeup.html) and rethinking priorities. ([*Even more Iowa*](https://www.desmoinesregister.com/story/news/elections/presidential/caucus/2023/07/20/ron-desantis-super-pac-set-to-expand-in-iowa-as-he-faces-doubts-nationally/70420685007/)!) This is obviously no fun and may presage even less fun to come. But it is better to start making these adjustments before things get really ugly. During the summer of 2007, the struggling McCain campaign found itself [*nearly broke*](https://www.nytimes.com/2007/07/03/us/politics/03mccain.html), [*prompting*](https://www.nytimes.com/2007/07/11/us/politics/11mccain.html) massive layoffs and pay cuts and causing general upheaval as the high-level finger-pointing spiraled.

Money matters aside, a campaign’s top leadership not infrequently requires [*tweaking*](https://www.nytimes.com/2003/11/11/us/kerry-dismisses-campaign-chief.html) — or tossing. The candidate needs to lock down savvy people he trusts and will listen to, even as he jettisons the troublemakers. When making such assessments, there is little room for sentimentality. Sometimes even (maybe especially) longtime friends and advisers need to be … repurposed … particularly if the chain of command has become confused and internal bickering is taking its toll. This can lead to even more tumult. When Mr. McCain [*cut loose*](http://www.cnn.com/2007/POLITICS/07/13/mccain.campaign/index.html?iref=nextin) a couple of his top advisers in 2007, several senior staff members followed them out the door.

But a failure to deal with such a situation can leave the whole enterprise feeling increasingly dysfunctional, as was often the case with Mrs. Clinton’s 2008 campaign. So much infighting and backbiting. So many competing power centers. This is when a candidate really needs to step up and impose order.

In many cases, a reboot may call for pushing out a new narrative. Postdownsizing, Team McCain sought to reassure donors and supporters with a plan to get lean and mean and start “[*living off the land*](https://www.politico.com/blogs/jonathanmartin/0707/McCains_comeback_plan.html).” The candidate doubled down on wooing [*New Hampshire*](https://www.nytimes.com/2007/12/18/us/politics/18mccain.html) (Iowa’s social conservatives were never a natural fit for him), playing up his bus tours and broadly aiming to recapture the underdog, maverick spirit of his 2000 presidential run. John Kerry, [*way down in the polls*](https://www.nytimes.com/2003/12/28/us/kerry-paints-stark-contrast-between-dean-and-himself.html) behind Howard Dean in 2003, wanted to create a comeback-kid narrative by notching back-to-back victories in Iowa and New Hampshire; he [*lent money to his campaign*](https://www.nytimes.com/2003/12/24/us/2004-campaign-campaign-financing-kerry-takes-mortgage-6-million-his-house.html) and basically lived in Iowa for weeks to help execute [*his one-two punch*](https://www.nytimes.com/2004/01/28/politics/campaign/kerry-defeats-dean-in-new-hampshire.html).

It’s hard to say how a DeSantis variation of something like this would work. He plans to start talking less about his record leading the state “where woke goes to die” and [*double down*](https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/2024-election/ron-desantis-planning-campaign-reboot-struggles-close-gap-trump-rcna95400) on an “us against the world” theme, according to NBC News. This latter bit sounds very Trumpian, maybe a tad too much so, considering Mr. Trump himself is still running with a version of that line. Mr. DeSantis’s heavy investment in Iowa, along with [*his chummy relationship with the state’s governor*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/07/08/us/politics/trump-desantis-iowa-governor.html), could bring Kerry-like benefits. Then again, multiple candidates are campaigning hard there and could wind up splitting the non-Trump vote.

The harsh reality of reboots is that some presidential hopefuls are just too out of step with the political moment to rescue. Mr. Bush strode into the 2016 race as the man to beat. But Republicans were in no mood for his policy-heavy, mellow style of politics. (Mr. Trump’s “low energy” insult was brutally resonant.) By the [*fall of 2015,*](https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-election-bush/jeb-bush-campaign-in-reboot-mode-as-salaries-staff-cut-idUKKCN0SH1VZ20151023) Team Jeb was slashing staff and hoping for the debates to help him win free media. No one cared.

To be sure, Mr. DeSantis has proved himself willing to get much nastier and more reactionary than did Mr. Bush in appealing to his base’s basest instincts. (That [*Trump-trashing anti-L.G.B.T.Q. video*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ECGtwu7h6qw) his campaign shared on social media — at once homophobic and homoerotic — was certainly something special.) No way anyone is going to catch [*Governor Pudding Fingers*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bL33RwDJWcY) being squishy on a culture-war hot topic like trans rights or immigration.

Yet the governor does carry a whiff of out-of-touch wonkiness. He can’t help but get all right-wing [*jargony*](https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2023/05/25/desantis-diversity-woke-campaign/) at times — “accreditation cartels”? Really? — and his [*bungled Twitter-based campaign announcement*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/24/us/politics/ron-desantis-campaign-announcement-twitter.html) was clearly designed more to impress the online bros than the ***working-class*** voters he needs to woo away from Mr. Trump. Someone really should be working with him to fix this.

In the end, of course, it may be that Mr. DeSantis is on track to crash into that highest and hardest of reboot hurdles: likability.

This was, fundamentally, what kept the presidency just out of Mrs. Clinton’s reach. Even beyond the Republican haters, too many voters found her off-putting. She was not a natural retail politician. She struck people as standoffish and inauthentic. Time and again, her advisers [*tried to address this*](https://www.nytimes.com/2015/09/08/us/politics/hillary-clinton-to-show-more-humor-and-heart-aides-say.html?_r=0), but to no avail. Presidential contests have a lot to do with vibes, and she never quite managed to radiate the ones needed to go all the way.

Mr. DeSantis seems to be in a dangerously similar spot. He is famously awkward on the campaign trail — and with people in general. He stinks at the whole backslapping, glad-handing thing. He has trouble making eye contact. He presents as brusque, impatient, uninterested. He’s got the obnoxious parts of Trumpism down, without the carnival barker fun.

This doesn’t mean his presidential dreams are doomed. But it does suggest that a key element of his reboot should be figuring out how not to come across as a stilted, smug jerk who doesn’t care about voters.

Hey, no one said this would be easy.

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PHOTO (PHOTOGRAPH BY DAMON WINTER/THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page SR7.

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**End of Document**



[***Before Sons Drove Greens, Mothers Drove Everywhere***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68SG-9MJ1-JBG3-60MF-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

July 24, 2023 Monday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section D; Column 0; Sports Desk; Pg. 5; ON GOLF

**Length:** 1145 words

**Byline:** By Michael Bamberger

**Body**

Golf has long had a tradition of fathers and sons, but when the British Open was last held at Royal Liverpool in 2014, Rory McIlroy put golf's moms on equal footing.

In the beginning, there was Old Tom Morris and his son, Tommy, both of St. Andrews. The father won the British Open -- the only championship then -- four times and his namesake son won it four times, too. Yes, wet wool, 19th-century golf, in all its paternalistic glory. The men marched off the first tee and into a heavy sea wind and nobody knew when, or if, they would come back.

And ever since, fathers have been raising sons in the game, both generations dreaming of hoisted trophies. O.B. Keeler spilled barrels of ink writing about Bobby Jones and his little-boy-blue start in golf at the behest of his golf-loving father, Robert Purmedus Jones (also known as 'The Colonel') who was a prosperous Atlanta lawyer.

If Arnold Palmer said it once, he said it a thousand times: his father, Deacon, the course superintendent and head pro at Latrobe Country Club in western Pennsylvania, taught young Arnold how to grip a club once and only once. Palmer never changed it.

Jack Nicklaus's pharmacist father, Charlie, a three-sport athlete at Ohio State, started his son, Jackie, in golf as an oversized 10-year-old in Columbus, Ohio, in the summer of 1950, at their club, Scioto Country Club. Mid-country, midcentury -- middle class, at its most northern tier. Donald Hall's ''Fathers Playing Catch with Sons'' is largely about baseball but Charlie and Jackie on the course in the 1950s could have fit right in.

Twelve years later, Jack Nicklaus defeated Arnold Palmer in an 18-hole playoff at Oakmont Country Club and claimed the first of his record 18 major titles, the 1962 U.S. Open. It was Father's Day. Since then (after a date change) most U.S. Opens have concluded on Father's Day and most years the father-son relationship is an elemental part of the winner's life story.

This next phrase is known throughout golf: Tiger and Earl. The green-side hug between father and son after Woods won the 1997 Masters Tournament is one of the iconic moments in golf history. It was Tiger's first major as a pro and he won by 12 shots. Nine years later, Woods fell into his caddie's arms, after winning the British Open at Royal Liverpool, 10 weeks after Earl Woods died at age 74.

But in 2014 Royal Liverpool became the scene of an evolving narrative when Rory McIlroy, 25-years-old and the lone child of ***working-class*** parents from outside Belfast, won the British Open. It was his third major title and in a lovely, old-fashioned gesture at the awards presentation, with thousands of fans ringing the 18th green, McIlroy dedicated the win to his mother.

''This is the first major I've won when my mum has been here,'' he said. ''Mum, this one's for you.''

Rosie McDonald McIlroy, who helped pay for her son's overseas junior-golf travel by way of her shift work at a 3M plant, was beaming. Later, she tentatively put several fingers on the winner's claret jug as her son grasped it tightly.

Five years later, Woods won the 2019 Masters. It was kind of a shocker: he hadn't won a major in 11 years. In victory, his mother, Kultida, born and raised in Thailand, was standing in a grassy knob about 10 yards off the 18th green. She couldn't see her son's winning putt, but she could hear the thunderous response to it. Her face was painted in pride. In victory, Woods spoke in a soft voice about how his mother would rise at 5:30 in the morning to drive Tiger in a Plymouth Duster to nine-hole Pee-wee tournaments, 90 minutes there, 90 minutes back.

Last year, when Woods was inducted into the World Golf Hall of Fame, 'Tida,' known within Woods's tight circle for being tough and direct, was in the first row, beaming just as Rosie McIlroy was in 2014.

Woods talked, without notes, about the many times his mother brought him to a par-3 course near Tiger's boyhood home in Southern California, giving him 50 cents for a hot dog and 25 cents for the end-of-day call home. Woods staked his early and successful putting contests with those quarters his mother gave him. Tiger, telling personal stories about his mother, and Tida, laughing with cameras on her, was a rare personal moment for both.

This year at the Los Angeles Country Club the final round of the U.S. Open fell, as usual, on Father's Day, but the day belonged to a mother and her son.

The winner Wyndham Clark had heard Woods talk about his own mother at Augusta National during the Masters and at the Hall of Fame induction. It stuck with him.

Breast cancer had ended his mother Lise Clark's life 10 years ago, when Wyndham was still a teenager. He nearly quit golf after she died. He said his mother had a nickname for him -- 'Winner' -- and had a two-word mantra for him: ''Play big.''

The technical aspects of the game were not her forte. They weren't for Rose McIlroy or Tida Woods, either.

When Clark was in high school, his mother came to one of his matches. She watched him make an eight-foot putt and clapped enthusiastically for her son.

''Mom,'' Clark told mother as he came off the green. ''I just made triple bogey.''

Mom didn't know and mom didn't care. Her son had holed a putt.

Minutes after winning the U.S. Open, Clark said, ''I just felt like my mom was watching over me today.'' Mother's Day, in a manner of speaking. A wistful one.

And now the British Open was once again at Royal Liverpool. After two rounds the English golfer Tommy Fleetwood was alone in second place, five shots behind the leader, Brian Harman. Everywhere Fleetwood goes on the course he is greeted as ''Tommy-lad.'' Even McIlroy went out his way to find Fleetwood, after an opening-round 66, to give him a ''Tommy-lad!'' of his own.

Fleetwood, one of the most likable players in the game today, grew up in modest circumstances about 30 miles north, in Southport, where his mother was a hairdresser. Fleetwood has a distinct look, an upturned nose that is often sunburned, blue eyes that look almost plugged in, and long, flowing hair. Sue Fleetwood longed to cut her son's hair but Tommy-lad wouldn't have it. Sue Fleetwood died last year at 60, two years after a cancer diagnosis.

''She took me everywhere,'' Fleetwood said Friday night, on the one-year anniversary of her death. Rain was starting to fall and the air was cooling.

''She was always the driver. She would always take me to the range. To the golf course. To wherever I wanted to go. She was always a very supporting influence. She was a very tough woman but she never said no to taking me anywhere. She was great to me.''

There was nothing maudlin about his tone. Fleetwood was talking about golf and his mother and he was smiling. Another mother's day, in a manner of speaking, was coming. Win, lose or otherwise, another mother's day was coming for another golfing son.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/07/22/sports/golf/british-open-mcilroy-fleetwood-woods.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/07/22/sports/golf/british-open-mcilroy-fleetwood-woods.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Rory McIlroy, top, with his mother, Rosie, after winning the 2014 British Open. Tiger Woods, above, embraced his son, Charlie, after winning the 2019 Masters as his mother, Kultida, beamed. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY PETER MORRISON/ASSOCIATED PRESS

MIKE SEGAR/REUTERS MIRRORPIX/GETTY IMAGES) This article appeared in print on page D5.

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[***Galleries***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68KC-17M1-JBG3-610X-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

June 30, 2023 Friday

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**Section:** Section C; Column 0; Movies, Performing Arts/Weekend Desk; Pg. 13

**Length:** 1216 words

**Body**

Julian Kent

Through July 14. Kerry Schuss Gallery, 73 Leonard Street, Manhattan, 212-219-9918, kerryschussgallery.com.

With his ''Everyday Life'' paintings the 21-year-old artist Julian Kent is already past the ''looks promising'' stage of his career. As seen in New York at the Independent Art Fair and especially in his current gallery debut, his paintings exude a youthful perfection. They operate as both narratives and objects with utmost efficiency; nothing is wasted or left over.

Kent's small, stylized canvases depict specific moments in the lives of one or two Black people, seen in close-up, often tightly cropped. The setting is usually domestic; the action is primarily psychological and emotional, conveyed in subtle glances and gestures. Kent outlines his shapes in black and uses a palette of inspired plainness; his robust textures are particularly engaging. His small repeating brush strokes can evoke Robert Ryman, Philip Guston and Robert Thompson, only neater; their changes in direction or rhythm, create a sense of sturdiness and care that is implicitly optimistic.

The paintings at the Independent were fraught with apprehension -- the racial stress that are far too constant to Black American life. The paintings at Schuss replace tension with moments of quiet enjoyment and togetherness cherished by all people. In ''Late Afternoon,'' a young woman and man sit in their living room; he touches her arm. In the background, a television shows a hand reminiscent of the hand of God bringing Adam to life in Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel ceiling. Did this cue the man's light touch, or does it underscore the transformative power of touch, and love?

''Grey Gardens,'' takes its title from the Maysles brothers' 1975 documentary about the eccentric mother-daughter pair of high-society dropouts, Big Edie (Edith Bouvier Beale) and Little Edie, who lived in a squalid mansion in East Hampton with several dozen cats. But he substitutes a visibly less eccentric couple: a Black father and son with their cat. Their eyes convey different emotions: happiness, worry and watchfulness. WASP propriety is embraced and mocked by one of the painting's largest shapes: the son's tattersall shirt. ROBERTA SMITH

Nachume Miller

Through July 10. David Benrimon Fine Art, 41 East 57th Street, second floor, Manhattan; 212-628-6100, davidbenrimon.com.

The churning color of Nachume Miller's last paintings suggest phosphene, the impression of seeing light without any of it being there -- a phenomenon familiar to anyone who has pressed on their eyeball with eyes closed. They also resemble something molecular: pulsating neurons or synapses firing under stress, a revolt of the body.

The retinal effects of ''Suns & Illusions,'' completed from 1996 to 1998, while Miller was undergoing treatment for and until he succumbed to brain cancer, are a Transcendentalist's embrace of the unknown, a transmutation of the natural world into the spiritual one. They are orgiastically physical. Blooms of fungal forms metastasize in fractal, hallucinatory patterns -- somewhere between algae and apparition -- bisected by shafts of light that appear as if clawed into the paint by bare hands. (The more probable technique is hinted at in a short film showing Miller attempting what looks like automatic drawing, including gripping multiple pencils at once.)

The darkness of Miller's earlier preoccupations -- etchings of cadaverous bodies and haunted visions that evince inherited trauma (his parents were the only members of their families to escape the Holocaust) -- lifts here, lighter in palette though no less intense. The smeary, diffuse color fields, reminiscent of Gerhard Richter's squeegeed abstracts, eventually crowd with the gesture Miller used nearly his entire career, a fluid, whorling mark, akin to da Vinci's apocalyptic ''deluge'' drawings, that threatens to consume itself. They become more densely packed as Miller nears death, a radiant horror vacui -- an artist filling in the empty space for as long as possible. MAX LAKIN

Jaime Muñoz

Through July 8. François Ghebaly, 391 Grand Street, Manhattan; 646-559-9400, ghebaly.com.

Staring you down from the back wall is the passionless alloy skull of a Terminator, specifically the T-800 model portrayed (with skin) by Arnold Schwarzenegger. The California-based artist Jaime Muñoz combines motifs from Central American textiles, Catholic shrines and auto body shops in beatific, biting homages to the SoCal ***working class***. ''Machina'' turns to the dark side of mechanized labor. The three large paintings on view depict more or less benign metallic products -- Hollywood's killer cyborg, a mechanical knight and a can of Boing! soda -- in minty, glittering pastels, embellished with printer's marks and Love's truck stop logos, in looping designs that seem indebted to Lari Pittman.

The canvases look hands-free, technical and clean. Muñoz renders a richer line among machines, imitation and replacement in a pair of ink on paper drawings. In Mexico, Pato Pascual, a cartoon duck bearing an infringing similarity to Disney's star fowl, Donald, advertises Boing! soda; ''Diagram Drawing #8'' has Pascual and a spidery prosthetic hand accompanying a picture of a worker on the bottling line.

In a similar composition, Muñoz inks the emblems for Love's and Utility trailers above a diagram of an industrial robot arm and a portrait of A08, the eerie robot ''dog'' by Boston Dynamics, a war machine with a sinister resemblance to man's best friend. Both drawings portray the alienating beauty of industry, which -- if not quite the rise of the machines -- speaks to the uncertain value of human life in an increasingly automated world. TRAVIS DIEHL

Sylvia Palacios Whitman

Through July 22. Americas Society, 680 Park Avenue, Manhattan; 212-249-8950, as-coa.org.

Simple, literal and often quite funny, many of the drawings and performances in Sylvia Palacios Whitman's exhibition ''To Draw a Line With the Body'' at Americas Society have been under the radar for decades. At a recent performance and discussion at Americas Society, Palacios admitted that she'd stopped making art for nearly 40 years. She is back now, though, in full force.

Palacios moved to New York from her native Chile in the early 1960s and danced with Trisha Brown. Her early performances -- the first ones were staged in Brown's downtown studio -- included absurd, deadpan movements, like picking up a group of performers with a crane in ''Green Bag'' (1975), moving them across the space and lowering them into a huge green bag made of fabric. In others, she inserted herself into a giant ''Slingshot'' (1975) or donned big green sculptural hands. Upon her return to making art, Palacios has been drawing, often illustrating episodes from her childhood, and doing performances explaining the drawings, which are almost like comedy routines.

One thread running through her work is the everyday nature of art. Common materials like kraft paper and cardboard are shaped into sculptures and exhibited on the floor. Anyone, in her estimation, can make art. At the Americas Society event, Palacios even encouraged an audience member who said they weren't an artist to go home and make some art. ''You never know!'' Palacios exhorted. MARTHA SCHWENDENER

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/28/arts/design/art-gallery-shows-to-see-right-now.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/28/arts/design/art-gallery-shows-to-see-right-now.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Nachume Miller's ''Untitled'' (1997), an oil-on-canvas piece from his ''Suns & Illusions'' series, was created while the artist was being treated for brain cancer. (PHOTOGRAPH VIA DAVID BENRIMON FINE ART)

Julian Kent's painting ''Grey Gardens'' (2023), at Kerry Schuss. (PHOTOGRAPH BY JULIAN KENT

VIA KERRY SCHUSS GALLERY)

Sylvia Palacios Whitman's ''Slingshot,'' an image from a 1975 performance. (PHOTOGRAPH BY NATHANIEL TILESTON) This article appeared in print on page C13.

**Load-Date:** June 30, 2023

**End of Document**



[***‘Screams Without Words’: How Hamas Weaponized Sexual Violence on Oct. 7***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B01-B8Y1-DXY4-X2S7-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

December 28, 2023 Thursday 13:28 EST

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**Section:** WORLD; middleeast

**Length:** 3436 words

**Byline:** Jeffrey Gettleman, Anat Schwartz, Adam Sella and Avishag Shaar-Yashuv Jeffrey Gettleman is an international correspondent and a winner of the Pulitzer Prize. He is the author of &amp;#8220;Love, Africa,&amp;#8221; a memoir.

**Highlight:** A Times investigation uncovered new details showing a pattern of rape, mutilation and extreme brutality against women in the attacks on Israel.

**Body**

At first, she was known simply as “the woman in the black dress.”

In a grainy video, you can see her, lying on her back, dress torn, legs spread, vagina exposed. Her face is burned beyond recognition and her right hand covers her eyes.

The video was shot in the early hours of Oct. 8 by a woman searching for a missing friend at the site of the rave in southern Israel where, the day before, Hamas terrorists [*massacred hundreds of young Israelis*](https://www.jeffreygettleman.com).

The video went viral, with thousands of people responding, desperate to know if the woman in the black dress was their missing friend, sister or daughter.

One family knew exactly who she was — Gal Abdush, mother of two from a ***working-class*** town in central Israel, who disappeared from the rave that night with her husband.

As the terrorists closed in on her, trapped on a highway in a line of cars of people trying to flee the party, she sent one final WhatsApp message to her family: “You don’t understand.”

Based largely on the video evidence — which was verified by The New York Times — Israeli police officials said they believed that Ms. Abdush was raped, and she has become a symbol of the horrors visited upon Israeli women and girls during the Oct. 7 attacks.

Israeli officials say that everywhere Hamas terrorists struck — the rave, the military bases along the Gaza border and the kibbutzim — they brutalized women.

A two-month investigation by The Times uncovered painful new details, establishing that the attacks against women were not isolated events but part of a broader pattern of gender-based violence on Oct. 7.

Relying on video footage, photographs, GPS data from mobile phones and interviews with more than 150 people, including witnesses, medical personnel, soldiers and rape counselors, The Times identified at least seven locations where Israeli women and girls appear to have been sexually assaulted or mutilated.

Four witnesses described in graphic detail seeing women raped and killed at two different places along Route 232, the same highway where Ms. Abdush’s half-naked body was found sprawled on the road at a third location.

And The Times interviewed several soldiers and volunteer medics who together described finding more than 30 bodies of women and girls in and around the rave site and in two kibbutzim in a similar state as Ms. Abdush’s — legs spread, clothes torn off, signs of abuse in their genital areas.

Many of the accounts are difficult to bear, and the visual evidence is disturbing to see.

The Times viewed photographs of one woman’s corpse that emergency responders discovered in the rubble of a besieged kibbutz with dozens of nails driven into her thighs and groin.

The Times also viewed a video, provided by the Israeli military, showing two dead Israeli soldiers at a base near Gaza who appeared to have been shot directly in their vaginas.

Hamas has denied [*Israel’s accusations of sexual violence*](https://www.jeffreygettleman.com). Israeli activists have been outraged that the United Nations Secretary General, António Guterres, and the agency U.N. Women did not [*acknowledge the many accusations*](https://www.jeffreygettleman.com) until weeks after the attacks.

Investigators with Israel’s top national police unit, Lahav 433, have been steadily gathering evidence but they have not put a number on how many women were raped, saying that most are dead — and buried — and that they will never know. No survivors have spoken publicly.

The Israeli police have acknowledged that, during the shock and confusion of Oct. 7, the deadliest day in Israeli history, they were not focused on collecting semen samples from women’s bodies, requesting autopsies or closely examining crime scenes. At that moment, the authorities said, they were intent on repelling Hamas and identifying the dead.

A combination of chaos, enormous grief and Jewish religious duties meant that many bodies were buried as quickly as possible. Most were never examined, and in some cases, like at the rave scene, where more than 360 people were slaughtered in a few hours, the bodies were hauled away by the truckload.

That has left the Israeli authorities at a loss to fully explain to families what happened to their loved ones in their final moments. Ms. Abdush’s relatives, for instance, never received a death certificate. They are still searching for answers.

In cases of widespread sexual violence during a war, it is not unusual to have limited forensic evidence, experts said.

“Armed conflict is so chaotic,” said Adil Haque, a Rutgers law professor and war crimes expert. “People are more focused on their safety than on building a criminal case down the road.”

Very often, he said, sex crime cases will be prosecuted years later on the basis of testimony from victims and witnesses.

“The eyewitness might not even know the name of the victim,” he added. “But if they can testify as, ‘I saw a woman being raped by this armed group,’ that can be enough.”

‘Screams without words’

Sapir, a 26-year-old accountant, has become one of the Israeli police’s key witnesses. She does not want to be fully identified, saying she would be hounded for the rest of her life if her last name were revealed.

She attended the rave with several friends and provided investigators with graphic testimony. She also spoke to The Times. In a two-hour interview outside a cafe in southern Israel, she recounted seeing groups of heavily armed gunmen rape and kill at least five women.

She said that at 8 a.m. on Oct. 7, she was hiding under the low branches of a bushy tamarisk tree, just off Route 232, about four miles southwest of the party. She had been shot in the back. She felt faint. She covered herself in dry grass and lay as still as she could.

About 15 meters from her hiding place, she said, she saw motorcycles, cars and trucks pulling up. She said that she saw “about 100 men,” most of them dressed in military fatigues and combat boots, a few in dark sweatsuits, getting in and out of the vehicles. She said the men congregated along the road and passed between them assault rifles, grenades, small missiles — and badly wounded women.

“It was like an assembly point,” she said.

The first victim she said she saw was a young woman with copper-color hair, blood running down her back, pants pushed down to her knees. One man pulled her by the hair and made her bend over. Another penetrated her, Sapir said, and every time she flinched, he plunged a knife into her back.

She said she then watched another woman “shredded into pieces.” While one terrorist raped her, she said, another pulled out a box cutter and sliced off her breast.

“One continues to rape her, and the other throws her breast to someone else, and they play with it, throw it, and it falls on the road,” Sapir said.

She said the men sliced her face and then the woman fell out of view. Around the same time, she said, she saw three other women raped and terrorists carrying the severed heads of three more women.

Sapir provided photographs of her hiding place and her wounds, and police officials have stood by her testimony and released a video of her, with her face blurred, recounting some of what she saw.

Yura Karol, a 22-year-old security consultant, said he was hiding in the same spot, and he can be seen in one of Sapir’s photos. He and Sapir were part of a group of friends who had met up at the party. In an interview, Mr. Karol said he barely lifted his head to look at the road but he also described seeing a woman raped and killed.

Since that day, Sapir said, she has struggled with a painful rash that spread across her torso, and she can barely sleep, waking up at night, heart pounding, covered in sweat.

“That day, I became an animal,” she said. “I was emotionally detached, sharp, just the adrenaline of survival. I looked at all this as if I was photographing them with my eyes, not forgetting any detail. I told myself: I should remember everything.”

That same morning, along Route 232 but in a different location about a mile southwest of the party area, Raz Cohen — a young Israeli who had also attended the rave and had worked recently in the Democratic Republic of Congo training Congolese soldiers — said that he was hiding in a dried-up streambed. It provided some cover from the assailants combing the area and shooting anyone they found, he said in an hour-and-a-half interview in a Tel Aviv restaurant.

Maybe 40 yards in front of him, he recalled, a white van pulled up and its doors flew open.

He said he then saw five men, wearing civilian clothes, all carrying knives and one carrying a hammer, dragging a woman across the ground. She was young, naked and screaming.

“They all gather around her,” Mr. Cohen said. “She’s standing up. They start raping her. I saw the men standing in a half circle around her. One penetrates her. She screams. I still remember her voice, screams without words.”

“Then one of them raises a knife,” he said, “and they just slaughtered her.”

Shoam Gueta, one of Mr. Cohen’s friends and a fashion designer, said the two were hiding together in the streambed. He said he saw at least four men step out of the van and attack the woman, who ended up “between their legs.” He said that they were “talking, giggling and shouting,” and that one of them stabbed her with a knife repeatedly, “literally butchering her.”

Hours later, the first wave of volunteer emergency medical technicians arrived at the rave site. In interviews, four of them said that they discovered bodies of dead women with their legs spread and underwear missing — some with their hands tied by rope and zipties — in the party area, along the road, in the parking area and in the open fields around the rave site.

Jamal Waraki, a volunteer medic with the nonprofit [*ZAKA emergency response team*](https://www.jeffreygettleman.com), said he could not get out of his head a young woman in a rawhide vest found between the main stage and the bar.

“Her hands were tied behind her back,” he said. “She was bent over, half naked, her underwear rolled down below her knees.”

Yinon Rivlin, a member of the rave’s production team who lost two brothers in the attacks, said that after hiding from the killers, he emerged from a ditch and made his way to the parking area, east of the party, along Route 232, looking for survivors.

Near the highway, he said, he found the body of a young woman, on her stomach, no pants or underwear, legs spread apart. He said her vagina area appeared to have been sliced open, “as if someone tore her apart.”

Similar discoveries were made in [*two kibbutzim, Be’eri and Kfar Aza*](https://www.jeffreygettleman.com). Eight volunteer medics and two Israeli soldiers told The Times that in at least six different houses, they had come across a total of at least 24 bodies of women and girls naked or half naked, some mutilated, others tied up, and often alone.

A paramedic in an Israeli commando unit said that he had found the bodies of two teenage girls in a room in Be’eri.

One was lying on her side, he said, boxer shorts ripped, bruises by her groin. The other was sprawled on the floor face down, he said, pajama pants pulled to her knees, bottom exposed, semen smeared on her back.

Because his job was to look for survivors, he said, he kept moving and did not document the scene. Neighbors of the two girls killed — who were sisters, 13 and 16 — said their bodies had been found alone, separated from the rest of their family.

The Israeli military allowed the paramedic to speak with reporters on the condition that he not be identified because he serves in an elite unit. [Update: March 25, 2024: [*Newly released video*](https://www.jeffreygettleman.com) viewed by The Times showed the bodies of two teenage girls in Kibbutz Be’eri fully clothed, undercutting this account from an Israeli military paramedic who recovered bodies in multiple locations after the Oct. 7 attack. It was unclear if the paramedic was describing bodies he discovered elsewhere.]

Many of the dead were brought to the Shura military base, in central Israel, for identification. Here, too, witnesses said they saw signs of sexual violence.

Shari Mendes, an architect called up as a reserve soldier to help prepare the bodies of female soldiers for burial, said she had seen four with signs of sexual violence, including some with “a lot of blood in their pelvic areas.”

A dentist, Captain Maayan, who worked at the same identification center, said that she had seen at least 10 bodies of female soldiers from Gaza observation posts with signs of sexual violence.

Captain Maayan asked to be identified only by her rank and surname because of the sensitivity of the subject. She said she had seen several bodies with cuts in their vaginas and underwear soaked in blood and one whose fingernails had been pulled out.

The investigation

The Israeli authorities have no shortage of video evidence from the Oct. 7 attacks. They have gathered hours of footage from Hamas body cameras, dashcams, security cameras and mobile phones showing Hamas terrorists killing civilians and many images of mutilated bodies.

But Moshe Fintzy, a deputy superintendent and senior spokesman of Israel’s national police, said, “We have zero autopsies, zero,” making an O with his right hand.

In the aftermath of the attack, police officials said, forensic examiners were dispatched to the Shura military base to help identify the hundreds of bodies — Israeli officials say around 1,200 people were killed that day.

The examiners worked quickly to give the agonized families of the missing a sense of closure and to determine, by a process of elimination, who was dead and who was being held hostage in Gaza.

According to Jewish tradition, funerals are held promptly. The result was that many bodies with signs of sexual abuse were put to rest without medical examinations, meaning that potential evidence now lies buried in the ground. International forensic experts said that it would be possible to recover some evidence from the corpses, but that it would be difficult.

Mr. Fintzy said Israeli security forces were still finding imagery that shows women were brutalized. Sitting at his desk at an imposing police building in Jerusalem, he swiped open his phone, tapped and produced the video of the two soldiers shot in the vagina, which he said was recorded by Hamas gunmen and recently recovered by Israeli soldiers.

A colleague sitting next to him, Mirit Ben Mayor, a police chief superintendent, said she believed that the brutality against women was a combination of two ferocious forces, “the hatred for Jews and the hatred for women.”

Some emergency medical workers now wish they had documented more of what they saw. In interviews, they said they had moved bodies, cut off zip ties and cleaned up scenes of carnage. Trying to be respectful to the dead, they inadvertently destroyed evidence.

Many volunteers working for ZAKA, the emergency response team, are religious Jews and operate under strict rules that command deep respect for the dead.

“I did not take pictures because we are not allowed to take pictures,” said Yossi Landau, a ZAKA volunteer. “In retrospect, I regret it.”

There are at least three women and one man who were sexually assaulted and survived, according to Gil Horev, a spokesman for Israel’s Ministry of Welfare and Social Affairs. “None of them has been willing to come physically for treatment,” he said. Two therapists said they were working with a woman who was gang raped at the rave and was in no condition to talk to investigators or reporters.

The trauma from sexual assault can be so heavy that sometimes survivors do not speak about it for years, several rape counselors said.

“Many people are looking for the golden evidence, of a woman who will testify about what happened to her. But don’t look for that, don’t put this pressure on this woman,” said Orit Sulitzeanu, executive director of the Association of Rape Crisis Centers in Israel. “The corpses tell the story.”

The woman in the black dress

One of the last images of Ms. Abdush alive — captured by a security camera mounted on her front door — shows her leaving home with her husband, Nagi, at 2:30 a.m. on Oct. 7 for the rave.

He was wearing jeans and a black T-shirt. She was dressed in a short black dress, a black shawl tied around her waist and combat boots. As she struts out, she takes a swig from a glass (her brother-in-law remembers it was Red Bull and vodka) and laughs.

You’ve got to live life like it’s your last moments. That was her motto, her sisters said.

At daybreak, hundreds of terrorists closed in on the party from several directions, blocking the highways leading out. The couple jumped into their Audi, dashing off a string of messages as they moved.

“We’re on the border,” Ms. Abdush wrote to her family. “We’re leaving.”

“Explosions.”

Her husband made his own calls to his family, leaving a final audio message for his brother, Nissim, at 7:44 a.m. “Take care of the kids,” he said. “I love you.”

Gunshots rang out, and the message stopped.

That night, Eden Wessely, a car mechanic, drove to the rave site with three friends and found Ms. Abdush sprawled half naked on the road next to her burned car, about nine miles north of the site. She did not see the body of Mr. Abdush.

She saw other burned cars and other bodies, and shot videos of several — hoping that they would help people to identify missing relatives. When she posted the video of the woman in the black dress on her Instagram story, she was deluged with messages.

“Hi, based on your description of the woman in the black dress, did she have blonde hair?” one message read.

“Eden, the woman you described with the black dress, do you remember the color of her eyes?” another said.

Some members of the Abdush family saw that video and another version of it filmed by one of Ms. Wessely’s friends. They immediately suspected that the body was Ms. Abdush, and based on the way her body was found, they feared that she might have been raped.

But they kept alive a flicker of hope that somehow, it wasn’t true.

The videos caught the eye of Israeli officials as well — very quickly after Oct. 7 they began gathering evidence of atrocities. They included footage of Ms. Abdush’s body in a presentation made to foreign governments and media organizations, using Ms. Abdush as a representation of violence committed against women that day.

A week after her body was found, three government social workers appeared at the gate of the family’s home in Kiryat Ekron, a small town in central Israel. They broke the news that Ms. Abdush, 34, had been found dead.

But the only document the family received was a one-page form letter from Israel’s president, Isaac Herzog, expressing his condolences and sending a hug. The body of Mr. Abdush, 35, was identified two days after his wife’s. It was badly burned and investigators determined who he was based on a DNA sample and his wedding ring.

The couple had been together since they were teenagers. To the family, it seems only yesterday that Mr. Abdush was heading off to work to fix water heaters, a bag of tools slung over his shoulder, and Ms. Abdush was cooking up mashed potatoes and schnitzel for their two sons, Eliav, 10, and Refael, 7.

The boys are now orphans. They were sleeping over at an aunt’s the night their parents were killed. Ms. Abdush’s mother and father have applied for permanent custody, and everyone is chipping in to help.

Night after night, Ms. Abdush’s mother, Eti Bracha, lies in bed with the boys until they drift off. A few weeks ago, she said she tried to quietly leave their bedroom when the younger boy stopped her.

“Grandma,” he said, “I want to ask you a question.”

“Honey,” she said, “you can ask anything.”

“Grandma, how did mom die?”

PHOTOS: The family of Gal Abdush, an Israeli whose burned, partly naked body was found after Oct. 7. Her husband, Nagi, was also killed. (A1); Eti Bracha, left, and her husband, Eli, at their house in Kiryat Ekron, Israel. Their daughter Gal Abdush and her husband, Nagi, were murdered, their bodies burned beyond recognition, on Oct. 7.; Shari Mendes, a reservist working in body identification, on Dec. 10 in a container where bodies were stored before being taken to an Army morgue. (A10); Yossi Landau, left, an emergency-response volunteer, said he regretted not having documented attackers’ atrocities. Raz Cohen, right, a survivor who hid from the invaders, described their rape and murder of a woman. Mr. Bracha, below, held a gold necklace with a picture of the Abdushes. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY AVISHAG SHAAR-YASHUV FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES); An aerial view on Oct. 11 of the site of the rave overrun by terrorists. Emergency workers who rushed to the site said they found bodies of dead women with their legs spread and underwear missing. (PHOTOGRAPH BY SERGEY PONOMAREV FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A11) This article appeared in print on page A1, A10, A11.

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[***Top Social Media Trends of 2023: Roman Empire, Grimace Shake, Keith Lee and More***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69X8-GX51-DXY4-X3YX-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Highlight:** You may have forgotten — or wanted to forget — what happened on the internet in 2023. We’re here to refresh your memory.

**Body**

You may have forgotten — or wanted to forget — what happened on the internet in 2023. We’re here to refresh your memory.

Algorithms are getting good, alarmingly so, at feeding you content targeted to your weird and wonderful and even secret interests. Still, a lot of interesting stories end up falling outside our digital castle walls. This list is an attempt to rectify that, revisiting the people, trends, feuds and frenzies that took off on social media platforms in 2023 but might not have broken into your personal World Wide Web.

Did you see the olive oil executive trying to start beef with another olive oil executive on LinkedIn? How about the woman who gets paid thousands of dollars by pretending to be a video game character? Or the young Texan who is facing prison time after his lavish wedding blew up on TikTok? We’ve got you covered.

The Inexplicable

Hail, Caesar?

Find a man, any man, and ask him how often he thinks about the Roman Empire. According to TikTok, the answer is [*at least once a day*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/15/style/roman-empire-men-tiktok-instagram.html). Viral videos on the platform inspired a [*“Saturday Night Live” sketch*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/19/arts/television/saturday-night-live-jason-momoa.html) in November. “The Roman Empire, Ancient Rome,” rapped the episode’s guest host, Jason Momoa. “Five times a day, it pops into my dome.”

Don’t Call It a Snack

Girl Dinner was a big summertime [*TikTok trend*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/07/08/style/girl-dinner.html). A number of people — mostly young women, as the name implies — showed off nicely arranged plates comprising a bit of this (cheese), a bit of that (bread, maybe) and a few other things (pickle spear, nuts, salami slice). Proponents said the trend freed them from the tyranny of traditional dinner. Detractors claimed it glorified eating disorders.

A Yassified Barney

After Barney the purple dinosaur [*got a makeover*](https://www.nbcnews.com/pop-culture/pop-culture-news/barney-makeover-viral-reaction-rcna70606) in February, baffled fans filled the internet with talk of the character’s new teeth, brighter purple skin, larger eyes and perhaps even a bit of rhinoplasty. (Make that dinoplasty. I’ll be here all article.)

The Return of Joe Cool

The “Peanuts” dog created by Charles M. Schulz found a new generation of fans this year. In April, the American Red Cross was inundated with young people looking to donate blood in [*exchange for a limited-edition Snoopy T-shirt*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/04/07/style/snoopy-red-cross-t-shirt.html). In October, The Atlantic labeled the cartoon beagle “[*The Hero Gen Z Needs*](https://www.theatlantic.com/culture/archive/2023/10/snoopy-gen-z-peanuts-tiktok/675772/).”

A Broadway-Style Rap. What Could Go Wrong?

Ariana DeBose’s opening number at the British Academy Film Awards in February quickly [*became a meme*](https://www.vulture.com/2023/02/ariana-debose-angela-bassett-bafta-rap.html). Was it bizarre? Yes. Could you look away? Absolutely not. Ms. DeBose, a member of the original “Hamilton” cast, brought the earnest enthusiasm of a Broadway star to a rap that included the lines “Angela Bassett did the thing / Viola Davis, my Woman King.” Social media loved it. And hated it.

An Underground Star

Sabrina Bahsoon, a law school graduate in her early twenties, racked up millions of online views this year by filming herself lip-syncing [*in the London Underground*](https://www.washingtonpost.com/technology/2023/09/19/tube-girl-sabrina-bahsoon/) amid unsuspecting commuters. Tube Girl, as she was known, inspired numerous copycats.

The Edible

Gimme Five Margaritas!

On the campus of Louisiana State University in May, Cindy Smock, a 65-year-old evangelical preacher, tried to sell students on the benefits of abstinence by listing the sexual acts that women will supposedly perform after drinking certain numbers of margaritas. Shortly after [*a video*](https://twitter.com/Komaniecki_R/status/1659644113946288137?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw%7Ctwcamp%5Etweetembed%7Ctwterm%5E1659644113946288137%7Ctwgr%5E5d06f06eee8da6b2401949da7f7b29061a30d5da%7Ctwcon%5Es1_&amp;ref_url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.audacy.com%2Fwwl%2Fnews%2Flsu%2Fsister-cindy-goes-viral-for-her-lsu-margarita-sermon) of Sister Cindy’s sermon hit social media, her words inspired a [*banger of a tune*](https://www.tiktok.com/@casadimusic/video/7237187420012252458) (known as “Gimme One Margarita”) that became TikTok’s [*song of the summer*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/09/style/margarita-song-tiktok.html).

Mm, Mm, Good?

The writer and comedian Annie Rauwerda stirred up a big reaction on the internet — and in her Brooklyn neighborhood — when she [*cooked a pot of vegan stew*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/07/20/nyregion/bushwick-brooklyn-perpetual-stew.html) for over a month this summer. Her concoction was based on the “perpetual stews” of culinary lore, and Ms. Rauwerda brought it to a playground each week for anyone who wanted a taste. As it bubbled and steamed in the pot, she encouraged people to toss in their own ingredients, so that it never tasted the same way twice.

The Milkshake of Death

In June, McDonald’s added something to its menu: [*the Grimace Shake*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/29/style/grimace-milkshake.html), named in honor of the purple bloblike creature who has long been a foil to the chain’s signature clown. The beverage soon gave rise to a TikTok trend: In video after video, creators started out by pretending to give a positive review of the shake — only to end up dead in a pool of purple goo. Did McDonald’s mind? Nope. “This is free advertising,” said Jonah Berger, a marketing professor at the University of Pennsylvania.

Atlanta Gets Keith Lee’d

Keith Lee, a food obsessive with more than 15 million TikTok followers, has posted influential reviews of restaurants in Chicago, Detroit and Los Angeles. But he might have had his biggest effect during [*a visit to Atlanta*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/01/dining/keith-lee-atlanta-restaurant-rules.html) in the fall, when he gave voice to the gripes of local restaurant-goers by dragging establishments that charged extra for butter, syrup and hot sauce. The Atlanta Journal-Constitution noted Mr. Lee’s power over the city’s dining scene in [*a story*](https://www.ajc.com/life/move-over-michelin-atlanta-just-got-keith-leed/PD72B7DNKNBZVDQ5B7JEQ7WNC4/) headlined “Move over, Michelin, Atlanta just got Keith Lee’d.”

The Technically Edible

A Viral Campus Concoction

Social media helped spread the popularity of a campus drink, BORG, an acronym for “[*blackout rage gallon*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/09/style/borg-drinking-tiktok.html).” In viral TikTok videos, student mixologists filled plastic gallon jugs with water, alcohol, sweet flavorings and a hangover remedy, like [*Pedialyte*](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/01/26/magazine/letter-of-recommendation-pedialyte.html). “You don’t taste any of the liquor, which is the great part,” one college student said. Officials were less pleased by the trend. In March, the Amherst Fire Department in Amherst, Mass., reported 28 requests for ambulance transports during a BORG-fueled party at the University of Massachusetts Amherst.

The Pesto Prompt

Susi Vidal, a TikTok creator in Arizona, posted a video in September about how to make homemade pesto. “[*Call me crazy*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/24/us/pesto-susi-vidal-tiktok.html) if you want,” she says at the start, “but I’ve never liked store-bought pesto.” With that, Ms. Vidal inspired a wave of TikTok users to repost the opening of her video as the intro to much crazier confessional stories of their own about [*ghosts*](https://www.tiktok.com/@ybphotos/video/7291871933468085550?_r=1&amp;_t=8gkk9KjuiVT), [*bad dates*](https://www.tiktok.com/@sierraontiktok/video/7288757825084411178?_r=1&amp;_t=8ge4tr9iP1j) and [*stalkers*](https://www.tiktok.com/@lohojpg/video/7290756232674037022?_r=1&amp;_t=8gl2MumK2kI).

Krispy Meme

It was [*an image*](https://people.com/justin-bieber-supports-hailey-bieber-at-krispy-kreme-for-strawberry-glaze-lip-launch-7962982) that launched a thousand Halloween costumes: Justin Bieber and his wife, Hailey, at a Krispy Kreme counter. In the photo, the celebrity couple appears to be dressed for wildly different functions, with perhaps neither appropriately attired for ordering and eating fresh doughnuts. Ms. Bieber is wearing a strapless red minidress and red heels; Mr. Bieber is outfitted in gray shorts, yellow Crocs and a pink baseball cap perched atop a gray hood. The picture was meant to promote Ms. Bieber’s cosmetics line — and it had the desired effect on the social media hive mind.

Ice Cream So Good

The TikTok creator PinkyDoll became a social media [*celebrity*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/07/17/style/pinkydoll-social-media-livestream.html) in July because of the livestreams and videos in which she played blank-eyed video game characters, the kind who says inane things like “Mmm, ice cream so good,” which became a catchphrase. Though she was the subject of some online mockery, PinkyDoll made thousands of dollars from her online work.

The Audible

Big on Social

“Hello, Christ? I’m ’bout to sin again.” That’s a line from “You Wish,” a song by the Los Angeles rap duo Flyana Boss that was huge on social media this summer. In the fall, a snippet of the song “Water,” by the South African singer Tyla, swept the internet, thanks, in part, to the [*TikTok dance challenge*](https://time.com/6321439/tylas-water-dance-challenge-tiktok/) that went with it. (In case you had finally gotten that one out of your head, its refrain goes: “Make me sweat/ Make me hotter/ Make me lose my breath / Make me water.”) “Water” was followed by another [*TikTok earworm*](https://time.com/6333935/aliyah-bah-tiktok-it-girl-song/), “It Girl,” by Aliyah Bah, whose multilayered fashion sense, [*known as Aliyahcore,*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/18/style/aliyahcore-y2k-aliyah-bah.html) trended online earlier in the year.

Cute and Cuter

Social media also fueled the rise of a number of novelty songs. A ditty created by pet owners to soothe anxious dog in elevators became [*an anthem*](https://knowyourmeme.com/memes/shes-so-brave-shes-well-behaved-she-is-not-afraid-dog-elevator-song) for anxious humans everywhere. Sing it with me: “She’s so brave / She’s well behaved / She is not afraid!” A fiendishly catchy song from the children’s puppet show “Nanalan’” introduced millions of people to Mona and the program’s other super-cute characters. “Who’s that wonderful girl?” the “Nanalan’” song goes. “Could she be any cuter?”

Spoofs Become Hits

“Planet of the Bass,” a parody of a ’90s Eurodance track, had a [*moment*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/04/style/tiktok-planet-of-the-bass-90s-eurodance.html) in August. Some internet users were amused, and others were horrified, by its kooky music video and baffling lyrics (“Women are my favorite guy”). Shout out DJ Crazy Times, also known as Kyle Gordon, a comedian in Brooklyn. In a similar vein, DJ Mandy, a 19-year-old student in California, made ripples this year as the Internet’s most inept disc jockey. Social media users couldn’t resist sharing videos that showed her making [*awkward mash-ups and beat drops*](https://www.insider.com/dj-mandy-tiktok-music-mixing-awkward-polarizing-mashups-2023-8), complete with a nonsensical transition from Flo Rida to Taylor Swift.

The Quiet Game

“Look around, everybody on mute,” Beyoncé sang each night of her “Renaissance” tour. That line, from the song “[*Energy,*](https://people.com/beyonce-mute-challenge-renaissance-world-tour-everything-to-know-7967317#:~:text=The%20mute%20challenge%20occurs%20during,framing%22%20and%20being%20completely%20still.)” gave rise to a social media challenge wherein audiences competed to see which crowd could be the most hushed. If you couldn’t get tickets, the best seat in the house was a TikTok livestream.

The Nuptial

Emily Getting Married

Emily Mariko burst onto the viral scene in 2021 thanks to her [*simple recipe*](https://www.today.com/food/we-tried-emily-mariko-s-salmon-rice-bowl-tiktok-t233310) for salmon leftovers. In June, her California wedding became the talk of TikTok. People couldn’t get enough of the details, from the brown bridesmaids dresses to Ms. Mariko’s many outfit changes. It is unclear if salmon was served.

Sofia, Also Getting Married

This “quiet luxury” ceremony was anything but quiet. Social media users could not stop talking about the wedding of Sofia Richie Grainge, the daughter of Lionel Richie, to Elliot Grainge, a music executive. The soft, subtle makeup! The looks! The slicked-back bun! The South of France backdrop! Months after the April event, TikTok creators were still borrowing from Ms. Richie Grainge’s wedding-day style.

TikTok’s Wedding Fail

Lunden Stallings and Olivia Bennett built a huge following on TikTok, partly because of their country-club fashion sense. And so their October ceremony was highly anticipated by fans, who dubbed it TikTok’s royal wedding. The excitement, however, was short-lived. Days after the event, old tweets resurfaced in which one of the brides had repeatedly used a racial slur. [*The couple issued an apology*](https://www.thecut.com/2023/10/lunden-and-olivia-stallings-wedding-racist-tweets.html) and added an “anti-racist resources” page to their website, but the damage was done.

There Goes the Groom

Jacob LaGrone and Madelaine Brockway, a wealthy young couple from Texas, caused an online stir thanks to their lavish wedding, a five-day affair that included stops at the Versailles, the Paris Opera house and a reception headlined by Adam Levine of Maroon 5. Ms. Brockway posted several wedding videos on TikTok, all of which went viral and caused commenters to ask, Who are these people? The videos were deleted a few days after the ceremony, when surprising facts emerged about the groom. Namely, that he had fired a gun at police officers from Westworth Village and Westover Hills, Texas, who were trying to serve him with an indictment in March. Mr. LaGrone is now [*facing a potential life sentence*](https://www.washingtonpost.com/nation/2023/12/01/jacob-lagrone-viral-wedding-century-indicted-prison-tiktok/).

The Theatrical

An Oily Fight

A [*niche drama*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/04/28/style/olive-oil-feud.html) in the world of olive oil startups went online in April. The chief executive and co-founder of Graza logged on to LinkedIn — a site not known as a forum for beefs — to accuse another olive oil company of stealing his idea. The idea being a squeeze bottle.

Mascara Fraud?

Mikayla Nogueira, a beauty influencer known for her Boston accent, caused [*a bit of an online ruckus*](https://time.com/6250881/mikayla-nogueira-mascara-fake-eyelashes/) in January after posting an ad for L’Oreal Telescopic Life mascara. In the video, Ms. Nogueira appears to be wearing false eyelashes, rather than the product she was promoting. (Someone fibbed on the internet? For money? Say it ain’t so!)

To Catch a Tabi Thief

Alex Dougé, a social media coordinator in New York, met a man named Josh on Tinder and brought him back to her apartment. The next morning she discovered that her Tabi Mary-Janes, [*a pricey shoe from the brand Margiela*](https://www.maisonmargiela.com/en-us/tabi-mary-janes-8054326077651.html?utm_source=google&amp;utm_medium=cpc&amp;utm_campaign=STO_[PMC_ALL_US]_Performance_Max&amp;utm_content=&amp;gclid=CjwKCAjwjOunBhB4EiwA94JWsHrJbY6nO5hlK51rfGBueMg90vyfLrinHQAGFo7M9GJJUA8B0EiHeBoCy30QAvD_BwE), were missing. After Ms. Dougé recapped the saga on TikTok, [*internet sleuths quickly located the man*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/06/style/tiktok-missing-tabi-shoes.html). It turned out that he had indeed stolen the prize shoes — and given them to his girlfriend! Oh, the drama! Ms. Dougé eventually got her Tabis back, and social media welcomed a new addition to the roster of awful internet men.

Riverboat Brawl

A brawl on the Alabama riverfront made national news after a video of the incident went viral in August. [*The fight*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/26/style/folding-chair-alabama-riverfront-brawl.html) came about after five white boaters attacked a Black riverboat captain, who had instructed them to dock their pontoon elsewhere. A Black bystander joined the melee on the captain’s behalf, wielding a folding chair as a weapon. In the brawl’s aftermath, the humble folding chair became a symbol of resistance.

Viral Trial

Gwyneth Paltrow on trial for an accident on the slopes of the Deer Valley Resort in Utah was the internet gift that kept on giving. Social media platforms were [*blanketed with memes*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/30/us/gwyneth-paltrow-trial-reactions.html) about the proceedings in March as jurors heard testimony on who was to blame for the collision — the Oscar-winning actress or the retired optometrist who had sued her for more than $300,000. Online highlights included Ms. Paltrow’s answer to the question of the “losses” she had suffered because of the incident. “Well,” she said, “we lost half a day of skiing.” The jury found her Gwynocent.

Apartment Madness

Emma Ganzarain, a resource management employee in Oslo, just wanted to share photos of her redecorated apartment with her TikTok followers. Before she moved in, she explained, her boyfriend had lived there by himself, and she believed that she had brought some order to the place. Outraged commenters did not agree, accusing Ms. Ganzarain of turning a homey apartment into a [*sad beige nightmare*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/14/style/tiktok-beige-apartment.html).

The Sartorial

These Boots Were Not Made For Walking

Fashion or marketing ploy? [*Cartoonish red boots*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/02/09/style/mschf-big-red-boots.html) were the talk of TikTok for a moment in February. The bloated footwear was designed by MSCHF, a New York collective with a knack for designing clothes and household goods that send the internet into a frenzy.

Law Roach (Kinda) Retires

[*Law Roach*](https://www.thecut.com/article/law-roach-retirement-interview.html), an award-winning stylist for celebrities including Anne Hathaway and Celine Dion, created some confusion among the more fashion-conscious quarters of social media in March, when he abruptly announced that he was retiring, only to walk days later alongside Naomi Campbell in a runway show. He later clarified that he was retiring only from styling.

The Bed Bugs of Paris

What’s French for schadenfreude? Amid the glam of Paris fashion week, a story crawled into the headlines. [*Bedbugs*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/02/style/bedbugs-paris-fashion-week.html)! Everywhere! Videos on social media raised the alarm by showing the little creatures scampering through the Paris Métro.

Platform as Runway

Kristina Avakyan, a New York resident, gained popularity on TikTok for videos in which she modeled eccentric outfits on subway platforms. She faced criticism after an interview with [*The Cut*](https://www.thecut.com/2023/08/subwaysessions-tik-tik-clothing.html), in which she said that people in Harlem and Queens don’t understand her fashion sense.

Endless A.I. Portraits

Throughout the year, A.I. generators spat out an images of people looking like modified, slightly shinier versions of themselves (with, occasionally, an extra finger or two). The [*A.I. yearbook photo generator*](https://www.dexerto.com/entertainment/how-to-do-viral-ai-yearbook-photo-trend-2320718/) was particularly popular on Instagram. But viewers beware! Pope Francis was not papped walking around in a puffy white Balenciaga coat. That was just some fairly convincing [*A.I. art*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/04/08/technology/ai-photos-pope-francis.html).

The Mostly Delightful

A Hairbrush Microphone Masterpiece

The Mattison twins, a pair of TikTok creators, performed a funny [*lip-sync cover*](https://www.tiktok.com/@mattisontwins/video/7194630724786326789) of Lady A’s “Need You Now,” singing into a hair brush suspended from the ceiling. (This hairbrush mic is one of the comedy duo’s go-to props.) The low-quality video, posted in February, recalled the simpler comedy of the [*Vine era*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/22/style/byte-vine-short-video-apps.html) (2013-2017, R.I.P.).

Dances With Knives

An Instagram [*video*](https://www.instagram.com/p/Cxo9Zqcr_IS/?hl=en) of Britney Spears dancing in her home wielding two large knives grabbed the attention of viewers in September. Some concerned fans reported the video to the police, to Ms. Spears’s chagrin. “So unacceptable for cops to listen to random fans and come in to my home unwarranted,” she [*wrote on Instagram.*](https://www.instagram.com/p/Cx1d3UQAhOc/?utm_source=ig_embed&amp;ig_rid=9b64a119-1355-4cea-b3bc-5fc434851bc1) “I’ve been bullied in my home for so long now … ITS ENOUGH!” She later added that the knives were props.

So Unfair

In perhaps the most perfect nepo baby behavior of all time, Romy Mars, the teenage daughter of the director Sofia Coppola and the singer Thomas Mars, was [*grounded*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/23/style/sofia-coppola-daughter-tiktok-romy-mars.html) for (wait for it) trying to charter a helicopter from New York to Maryland using her father’s credit card. “I wanted to have dinner with my camp friend.” Ms. Mars said in a TikTok. She added that her parents had rules against her using social media.

The Streamable

A Woman of the People

In a scene from “Beckham,” the Netflix documentary series about David Beckham, his wife, Victoria Beckham, is seen telling the camera that she grew up “very ***working class***.” At that moment, her husband pokes his head into the room to ask what kind of car her father drove her to school in. The former Spice Girl tries to duck the question before finally answering, “In the ’80s, my dad had a Rolls-Royce.” After the clip went viral, Ms. Beckham embraced it, posting it on her own [*TikTok account*](https://www.tiktok.com/@victoriabeckham/video/7302407458683735329?lang=en).

Feud? What Feud?

The “Sex and the City” cast member Kim Cattrall [*made a brief cameo*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/24/arts/television/kim-cattrall-and-just-like-that-finale.html) in season two of the show’s reboot, “And Just Like That …” She was not in the same frame as any of the other members of the famous foursome, and if you blinked you’d have missed her. But, still, there she was. Our Samantha. Her minutes-long appearance inspired so many memes, tweets and TikToks you might have thought she was there all along.

The Debatable

Ozempic Mania

Weight loss drugs made their way to the online set this year, with some influencers casting stigma aside and unabashedly [*proclaiming their Ozempic use*](https://www.tiktok.com/@girlwithnojob/video/7273209778464165162).

Djerf Dupe Drama

[*Matilda Djerf*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/18/style/matilda-djerf-gen-z.html), a popular Swedish influencer and a founder of the fashion brand Djerf Avenue, irked fans when her team started [*reporting TikTok videos*](https://www.nbcnews.com/news/matilda-djerf-avenue-dupes-copyright-strikes-controversy-rcna121901) that mentioned places to purchase dupes — inexpensive copies — of her pricey designs.

Rocky Hockey Romance

[*Drama*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/09/sports/hockey/hockey-romance-booktok-explainer.html) rippled through a niche literary community — fans of hockey romance novels — when Felicia Wennberg, the wife of the N.H.L. player Alex Wennberg, said that certain book lovers had become “predatory and exploiting” in their comments about her husband.

Bud Light Backlash

In April, the transgender influencer Dylan Mulvaney partnered with Bud Light for [*a video*](https://www.instagram.com/p/CqgTftujqZc/) promoting the brand. The online ad featuring Ms. Mulvaney angered many conservatives, who called for a boycott. As [*sales of the beer plunged*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/29/business/bud-light-sales.html), the musician Kid Rock posted a video that showed him shooting a stack of Bud Light cases. Months later, TMZ posted [*a video*](https://www.tmz.com/2023/08/18/kid-rock-drinks-bud-light-beer-dylan-mulvaney-shoot-cases/) of him drinking the very same beer at a concert.

Taylor Made Travis Famous. Right?

The football star Travis Kelce was already a household name before he was romantically linked to one of the most famous women on the planet. This fall, as a prank, many women [*filmed*](https://www.today.com/popculture/taylor-swift-put-travis-kelce-map-tiktok-trend-explained-rcna117442) themselves telling men — usually husbands or boyfriends — that Ms. Swift was going to put Mr. Kelce on the map. Based on the videos, it seems like every guy took the bait.

Arielle Chapin, Nancy Coleman, Anna Foley, Jessica Grose, Becky Hughes, Natasha Janardan, Joumana Khatib, Ran Lee, Phoebe Lett, Lauren McCarthy, Jordyn Holman, Callie Holtermann, Tanya Sichynsky, Dodai Stewart, Remy Tumin and Lindsey Wiebe contributed reporting.

PHOTOS: PHOTOS (PHOTOGRAPHS BY GIORGIO COSULICH/GETTY IMAGES; ALANA LAVERTY; MATTEL; CRISTINA PEREZ; SABRINA BAHSOON; STUART WILSON/BAFTA, VIA GETTY IMAGES; CHRISTOPHER TESTANI FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES; AMIR HAMJA/ THE NEW YORK TIMES; MCDONALD’S; JORDAN STRAUSS/INVISION, VIA ASSOCIATED PRESS) (D4); PHOTOS (PHOTOGRAPHS BY KEVIN WINTER/GETTY IMAGES; JULIE BENNETT/ GETTY IMAGES; RICK BOWMER/EPA, VIA SHUTTERSTOCK; EMMA GANZARAIN; SIMBARASHE CHA FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES; DMITRY KOSTYUKOV FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES; KRISTINA AVAKYAN; A.I. GENERATED; DEREK WHITE/GETTY IMAGES; THE MATTISON TWINS; VALERIE MACON/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE — GETTY IMAGES; GILBERT CARRASQUILLO/GC IMAGES; GARETH CATTERMOLE/GETTY IMAGES; CRAIG BLANKENHORN/MAX; LEE SMITH/REUTERS; LOULOU D’AKI FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES; STEPH CHAMBERS/GETTY IMAGES; NICK WASS/ASSOCIATED PRESS; SARAH STIER/GETTY IMAGE) (D5) This article appeared in print on page D4, D5.

**Load-Date:** January 7, 2024

**End of Document**



[***At the British Open, a Mom’s Influence Looms Large for Many Golfers; On Golf***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68S4-6TV1-JBG3-6492-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

July 22, 2023 Saturday 23:31 EST

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**Section:** SPORTS; golf

**Length:** 1189 words

**Byline:** Michael Bamberger

**Highlight:** Golf has long had a tradition of fathers and sons, but when the British Open was last held at Royal Liverpool in 2014, Rory McIlroy put golf’s moms on equal footing.

**Body**

Golf has long had a tradition of fathers and sons, but when the British Open was last held at Royal Liverpool in 2014, Rory McIlroy put golf’s moms on equal footing.

In the beginning, there was Old Tom Morris and his son, Tommy, both of St. Andrews. The father won the British Open — the only championship then — four times and his namesake son won it four times, too. Yes, wet wool, 19th-century golf, in all its paternalistic glory. The men marched off the first tee and into a heavy sea wind and nobody knew when, or if, they would come back.

And ever since, fathers have been raising sons in the game, both generations dreaming of hoisted trophies. O.B. Keeler spilled barrels of ink writing about Bobby Jones and his little-boy-blue start in golf at the behest of his golf-loving father, Robert Purmedus Jones (also known as ‘The Colonel&#39;) who was a prosperous Atlanta lawyer.

If Arnold Palmer said it once, he said it a thousand times: his father, Deacon, the course superintendent and head pro at Latrobe Country Club in western Pennsylvania, taught young Arnold how to grip a club once and only once. Palmer never changed it.

Jack Nicklaus’s pharmacist father, Charlie, a three-sport athlete at Ohio State, started his son, Jackie, in golf as an oversized 10-year-old in Columbus, Ohio, in the summer of 1950, at their club, Scioto Country Club. Mid-country, midcentury — middle class, at its most northern tier. Donald Hall’s “Fathers Playing Catch with Sons” is largely about baseball but Charlie and Jackie on the course in the 1950s could have fit right in.

Twelve years later, Jack Nicklaus defeated Arnold Palmer in an 18-hole playoff at Oakmont Country Club and claimed the first of his record 18 major titles, the 1962 U.S. Open. It was Father’s Day. Since then (after a date change) most U.S. Opens have concluded on Father’s Day and most years the father-son relationship is an elemental part of the winner’s life story.

This next phrase is known throughout golf: Tiger and Earl. The green-side hug between father and son after [*Woods won the 1997 Masters Tournament*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/04/04/sports/golf/tiger-woods-1997-masters.html) is one of the iconic moments in golf history. It was Tiger’s first major as a pro and he won by 12 shots. Nine years later, Woods fell into his caddie’s arms, after winning the British Open at Royal Liverpool, 10 weeks after Earl Woods died at age 74.

But in 2014 Royal Liverpool became the scene of an evolving narrative when Rory McIlroy, 25-years-old and the lone child of ***working-class*** parents from outside Belfast, [*won the British Open*](https://www.nytimes.com/2014/07/21/sports/golf/british-open-2014-rory-mcilroy-wins-third-major-championship.html). It was his third major title and in a lovely, old-fashioned gesture at the awards presentation, with thousands of fans ringing the 18th green, McIlroy dedicated the win to his mother.

“This is the first major I’ve won when my mum has been here,” he said. “Mum, this one’s for you.”

Rosie McDonald McIlroy, who helped pay for her son’s overseas junior-golf travel by way of her shift work at a 3M plant, was beaming. Later, she tentatively put several fingers on the winner’s claret jug as her son grasped it tightly.

Five years later, [*Woods won the 2019 Masters*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/04/14/sports/tiger-woods-wins-masters.html). It was kind of a shocker: he hadn’t won a major in 11 years. In victory, his mother, Kultida, born and raised in Thailand, was standing in a grassy knob about 10 yards off the 18th green. She couldn’t see her son’s winning putt, but she could hear the thunderous response to it. Her face was painted in pride. In victory, Woods spoke in a soft voice about how his mother would rise at 5:30 in the morning to drive Tiger in a Plymouth Duster to nine-hole Pee-wee tournaments, 90 minutes there, 90 minutes back.

Last year, when Woods was inducted into the World Golf Hall of Fame, ‘Tida,’ known within Woods’s tight circle for being tough and direct, was in the first row, beaming just as Rosie McIlroy was in 2014.

Woods talked, without notes, about the many times his mother brought him to a par-3 course near Tiger’s boyhood home in Southern California, giving him 50 cents for a hot dog and 25 cents for the end-of-day call home. Woods staked his early and successful putting contests with those quarters his mother gave him. Tiger, telling personal stories about his mother, and Tida, laughing with cameras on her, was a rare personal moment for both.

This year at the Los Angeles Country Club the final round of the U.S. Open fell, as usual, on Father’s Day, but the day belonged to a mother and her son.

The [*winner Wyndham Clark*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/18/sports/golf/us-open-wyndham-clark-rory-mcilroy.html) had heard Woods talk about his own mother at Augusta National during the Masters and at the Hall of Fame induction. It stuck with him.

Breast cancer had ended his mother Lise Clark’s life 10 years ago, when Wyndham was still a teenager. [*He nearly quit golf after she died*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/16/sports/golf/us-open-wyndham-clark.html). He said his mother had a nickname for him — ‘Winner’ — and had a two-word mantra for him: “Play big.”

The technical aspects of the game were not her forte. They weren’t for Rose McIlroy or Tida Woods, either.

When Clark was in high school, his mother came to one of his matches. She watched him make an eight-foot putt and clapped enthusiastically for her son.

“Mom,” Clark told mother as he came off the green. “I just made triple bogey.”

Mom didn’t know and mom didn’t care. Her son had holed a putt.

Minutes after winning the U.S. Open, Clark said, “I just felt like my mom was watching over me today.” Mother’s Day, in a manner of speaking. A wistful one.

And now the British Open was once again at Royal Liverpool. After two rounds the English golfer [*Tommy Fleetwood*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/03/10/sports/golf/tommy-fleetwood-players-championship.html) was alone in second place, five shots behind the leader, Brian Harman. Everywhere Fleetwood goes on the course he is greeted as “Tommy-lad.” Even McIlroy went out his way to find Fleetwood, after an opening-round 66, to give him a “Tommy-lad!” of his own.

Fleetwood, one of the most likable players in the game today, grew up in modest circumstances about 30 miles north, in Southport, where his mother was a hairdresser. Fleetwood has a distinct look, an upturned nose that is often sunburned, blue eyes that look almost plugged in, and long, flowing hair. Sue Fleetwood longed to cut her son’s hair but Tommy-lad wouldn’t have it. Sue Fleetwood died last year at 60, two years after a cancer diagnosis.

“She took me everywhere,” Fleetwood said Friday night, on the one-year anniversary of her death. Rain was starting to fall and the air was cooling.

“She was always the driver. She would always take me to the range. To the golf course. To wherever I wanted to go. She was always a very supporting influence. She was a very tough woman but she never said no to taking me anywhere. She was great to me.”

There was nothing maudlin about his tone. Fleetwood was talking about golf and his mother and he was smiling. Another mother’s day, in a manner of speaking, was coming. Win, lose or otherwise, another mother’s day was coming for another golfing son.

PHOTOS: Rory McIlroy, top, with his mother, Rosie, after winning the 2014 British Open. Tiger Woods, above, embraced his son, Charlie, after winning the 2019 Masters as his mother, Kultida, beamed. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY PETER MORRISON/ASSOCIATED PRESS; MIKE SEGAR/REUTERS MIRRORPIX/GETTY IMAGES) This article appeared in print on page D5.

**Load-Date:** July 23, 2023

**End of Document**



[***Honor Society***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:661P-TBC1-DXY4-X3YX-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

July 29, 2022 Friday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section C; Column 0; Movies, Performing Arts/Weekend Desk; Pg. 6

**Length:** 355 words

**Byline:** By Glenn Kenny

**Body**

Angourie Rice plays an initially unappealing character, as a Harvard striver with sneaky moves.

There's a species of Young Adult novels -- and their attendant film adaptations -- that wears sophistication on its sleeve. Mostly for the purpose of demonstrating that sophistication won't save the anguished teenage soul -- see ''The Perks of Being a Wallflower.'' In the teen rom-com, sophistication usually manifests itself in a near-endless stream of pop culture references.

''Honor Society,'' directed by Oran Zegman from a script by David A. Goodman, comes out of the gate flashing a formal and thematic sophistication so dazzling it might take you a while to realize it's actually a Young Adult movie. The relentlessly driven title character, Honor (Angourie Rice, whom you may remember from ''The Nice Guys,'' terrifically appealing throughout), snidely dismissive of her ***working-class*** parents, has crafted a persona ruthlessly focused on getting out of her one-horse town and into Harvard. A place where ''mediocre people get outsized opportunities,'' she tells the camera.

[Video: Watch on YouTube.]

Notes of ''Election'' and ''Rushmore'' here are strong. Some fully grown-up viewers will feel old seeing Christopher Mintz-Plasse, of ''McLovin'' fame in ''Superbad'' (2007) playing the (ultimately sleazoid) guidance counselor who feeds Honor the unpleasant surprise that she's actually one of four students vying for his Harvard recommendation.

This news motivates Honor to weave a manipulative web that grows spectacularly tangled. One of her foils, Michael, is played by Gaten Matarazzo, that winsome kid from ''Stranger Things''; Michael responds with sweet-natured goofiness to Honor's temptress moves. So of course he is the one to crack her cynical shell.

A twist whipsaws the movie into a darker place, one in the vicinity of Patricia Highsmith. But no murder takes place, and the movie's resolution confirms what one may have suspected all along: Its dominant room tone is kinda-sorta that of ''To All the Boys I've Loved Before.''

Honor SocietyNot rated. Running time: 1 hour 37 minutes. Watch on Paramount+.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2022/07/28/movies/honor-society-review.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/07/28/movies/honor-society-review.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: Gaten Matarazzo, left, and Angourie Rice in ''Honor Society,'' directed by Oran Zegman. (PHOTOGRAPH BY MICHAEL COURTNEY/PARAMOUNT+)

**Load-Date:** July 29, 2022

**End of Document**



[***Paradise Highway***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:661P-TBC1-DXY4-X40K-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

July 29, 2022 Friday

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**Section:** Section C; Column 0; Movies, Performing Arts/Weekend Desk; Pg. 5

**Length:** 316 words

**Byline:** By Concepción de León

**Body**

A truck driver's brother asks her to deliver a girl to sex traffickers in order to save his life in prison.

Growing up in a violent home, Sally (Juliette Binoche) only had one person to rely on: her brother, Dennis (Frank Grillo).

Years later, Dennis is in prison, and now depends on Sally, who is a truck driver. When Dennis tells Sally that she must carry illicit cargo or he'll be harmed, she is determined to come through, even after she finds out that the ''package'' she's meant to deliver is a girl named Leila (Hala Finley).

[Video: Watch on YouTube.]

''Paradise Highway,'' written and directed by Anna Gutto (''A Light Above''), follows Sally and Leila as they run from both the benevolent F.B.I. agents, played by Morgan Freeman and Cameron Monaghan, and the sex traffickers looking to recover Leila. They are kept company only by a shotgun and the radio that connects Sally to a network of other women truck drivers. Their camaraderie and Finley's performance as the troubled Leila are highlights in a film that otherwise does not quite hit its stride.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, Binoche is not believable as a ***working-class*** American truck driver, and her lingering French accent seems out of place in that world. In addition, the vague danger to her brother is difficult to accept as enough motivation for her to participate in such a heinous crime.

Though it is refreshing to see members of law enforcement focused on recovering and supporting a victim rather than pursuing her abusers, it does not allow for much narrative tension. If only the film had taken a broader view, filling in more details about the lives and motivations of the truck drivers as well as the sex traffickers.

Paradise HighwayRated R for language and some violence. Running time: 1 hour 55 minutes. In theaters and available to rent or buy on Apple TV, Vudu and other streaming platforms and pay TV operators.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2022/07/28/movies/paradise-highway-review.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/07/28/movies/paradise-highway-review.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: Morgan Freeman plays an F.B.I. agent, and Juliette Binoche plays a truck driver, in ''Paradise Highway.'' (PHOTOGRAPH BY NICK BURCHELL/LIONSGATE)

**Load-Date:** July 29, 2022

**End of Document**



[***Trudeau's Separation Complicates His Plan To Seek Another Term***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68X3-TKX1-DXY4-X2GV-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

August 10, 2023 Thursday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; Foreign Desk; Pg. 7

**Length:** 1411 words

**Byline:** By Norimitsu Onishi

**Body**

Justin Trudeau has portrayed himself as a modern husband, father and political figure in his rise to prime minister. How does he redefine himself after the breakup of his 18-year marriage?

In 2005, Justin Trudeau, the son of a legendary Canadian prime minister, and Sophie Grégoire, a well-known television journalist, married inside a stone church in Montreal's wealthy, French-speaking enclave of Outremont.

''I'm the luckiest woman in the world,'' the bride said to a crowd of onlookers as she entered the church. Under a sunny sky, the couple drove away in a Mercedes roadster that had belonged to Mr. Trudeau's father, Pierre Trudeau, producing an iconic wedding photo.

''The wedding was talked about a lot, maybe not as much as Céline Dion's, but it was talked about,'' Geneviève Tellier, a political science professor at the University of Ottawa, said, referring to the singer who is from Quebec. ''It was a media event.''

Over the next decade, Mr. Trudeau, with his wife and their three children, shrewdly crafted an image that became integral to his rapid ascent -- that of a modern husband, father and political figure, who would go on to win votes with a mix of idealism and glamour.

Nearly eight years ago, Mr. Trudeau was swept into Canada's highest office on a wave of ''Trudeaumania,'' a fresh-faced leader who championed the idea that a more progressive, diverse and open Canada would make the country stronger and elevate its global standing.

Mr. Trudeau also succeeded in casting himself as an energetic, youthful prime minister and father beyond the country's borders, and with his family often by his side at world events he became an international star.

But Mr. Trudeau, 51, is entering one of the most turbulent chapters of his career after separating from his wife of 18 years, forced to publicly weather the family's situation, while facing an increasingly skeptical electorate.

Mr. Trudeau, who has clung to power in a minority government following his re-election in 2021, has vowed to run for a fourth term, though many experts say voter fatigue will likely force him to step aside for someone new.

In announcing their separation last week, the Trudeaus said they would raise their children in a ''collaborative environment,'' including vacationing together, even as they themselves will maintain different homes.

Mr. Trudeau was scheduled to take a family vacation this week, together with Ms. Grégoire Trudeau and their children, just as he has done countless times in his nearly eight years in office.

But this time, when the family returns to Ottawa, the capital, things will be much different. Mr. Trudeau and the children will be going back to their official residence, but Ms. Grégoire Trudeau will be going to her own home.

''Canadians,'' the couple said last week, ''can expect to often see the family together,'' just as they have throughout Mr. Trudeau's political career.

With his communication and social media skills, Mr. Trudeau revolutionized Canada's political culture where, traditionally, a sitting prime minister's spouse could stroll through downtown Montreal or Toronto and go mostly unrecognized.

But the fracturing of a marriage that had been central to the prime minister's image will test even Mr. Trudeau's political dexterity, experts say.

''The question now is how will they change the message, the packaging, now that it won't be about Justin Trudeau in a relationship with his partner and their family,'' Ms. Tellier said.

The couple have three children: Xavier, 15, Ella-Grace, 14, and Hadrien, 9.

Ms. Tellier and other experts say that the separation is unlikely to damage Mr. Trudeau politically and could actually elicit some sympathy among voters as the prime minister goes through an experience shared by many Canadians.

But striking the right chord will not be easy, experts say. How would Mr. Trudeau acknowledge any pain from his separation while holding onto the image of a family that still vacations and spends time together, as the couple announced?

''The problem with Justin Trudeau is that whether things are good or bad, there's always the impression that things are good,'' said Jean-Marc Léger, a leading pollster in Canada. ''He keeps smiling, life is good. To many people, he lacks authenticity.''

In recent months, Mr. Trudeau's government has been buffeted by revelations about China's interference in Canadian politics, and the prime minister has been criticized for not doing enough to combat the problem. Polls show that Mr. Trudeau's Liberal Party has fallen behind the main opposition Conservative Party.

The right-wing populist leader of the Conservatives, Pierre Poilievre, has tried to smooth his rough edges by showcasing his wife, Anaida, who immigrated from Venezuela as a child and lived in a ***working-class*** neighborhood in Montreal while her father worked gathering fruits and vegetables at a farm.

A week before announcing his separation, Mr. Trudeau, battling voter fatigue and possibly getting ready for a fourth election, carried out a major reshuffling of his cabinet to bring what he called ''fresh energy'' to Parliament Hill. As newly appointed ministers brought their spouses for a group photo of the new cabinet, Mr. Trudeau stood conspicuously alone, Ms. Tellier noted.

While Ms. Grégoire Trudeau had been part of cabinet reshuffle announcements in the past, her public appearances had noticeably declined in the past couple of years.

''She wasn't very present in the election campaign of 2021, while she had been very present in the previous elections, of 2015 and 2019, when she was very often at his side,'' Mr. Léger said. ''That's when the rumors about their marriage started spreading.''

The rumors circulated on and off but were mostly confined to Canada's political and media circles.

On their wedding anniversary last year, though, Ms. Grégoire Trudeau wrote on Instagram that ''long-term relationships are challenging in so many ways'' and that the couple had experienced ''sunny days, heavy storms, and everything in between and it ain't over.''

In joint statements last week, released on their Instagram accounts, the couple said they had decided to separate ''after many meaningful and difficult conversations'' and pleaded for privacy.

Their plea has, for the most part, been heeded.

''Canadians are normally less interested in intruding on the private lives of public figures than the Americans or certainly the Brits are, where the tabloid culture in Britain has made it open season on public figures,'' said Jeffrey Dvorkin, former director of the journalism program at the University of Toronto.

''Canadian culture defers a lot more than American culture does to the elites in society,'' added Mr. Dvorkin, who also served as vice president of news and ombudsman for National Public Radio in Washington.

The largely muted reaction to the couple's separation -- opposition politicians have not even mentioned it -- stands in sharp contrast to the attention that the marriage received and that the Trudeaus clearly invited.

When Mr. Trudeau was elected prime minister in 2015, Ms. Grégoire Trudeau helped burnish his image with a photo shoot in Vogue that a Canadian magazine labeled ''steamy'' and public appearances that encouraged comparisons to another famous political dynasty, the Kennedys.

Mr. Trudeau's captivating wife, young children and his own youthful good looks helped fuel a new generation of ''Trudeaumania'' -- the term used to describe the popular excitement generated in 1968 when his father, Pierre, was first elected prime minister.

In 1971, Pierre Trudeau married Margaret Sinclair, who was nearly three decades younger. Their first son, Justin, was born that year on Christmas Day. The birth of two other boys gave Pierre Trudeau a youthful profile even though he was already in his 50s when he became a father.

Pierre and Margaret Trudeau separated in 1977, while Mr. Trudeau was still in office. The breakup did not set off much of a political fallout for Mr. Trudeau, who went on to serve as prime minister until 1984, even staging a comeback after nearly year out of office.

When his marriage unraveled, Pierre Trudeau's image changed from husband and father to a single father who dated widely.

''After his separation, Pierre Trudeau became the most eligible bachelor in the country,'' Mr. Léger said. ''Now Justin Trudeau might just become the most eligible bachelor in the country.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/09/world/canada/trudeau-wife-separation-image.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/09/world/canada/trudeau-wife-separation-image.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Justin Trudeau, the son of a Canadian prime minister, and Sophie Grégoire Trudeau after their wedding in Montreal in 2005. (PHOTOGRAPH BY CHRISTINNE MUSCHI/REUTERS)

The Trudeau family, including, from left, Hadrien, Xavier and Ella-Grace, watching election coverage in September 2021. (PHOTOGRAPH BY CARLOS OSORIO/REUTERS) This article appeared in print on page A7.

**Load-Date:** August 10, 2023

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[***In an Ohio Town, Biden's Clean Energy and Union Agendas Clash***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:697R-CXK1-DXY4-X0VF-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

September 24, 2023 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; National Desk; Pg. 20

**Length:** 1656 words

**Byline:** By Jonathan Weisman

**Body**

Contract talks at an electric vehicle battery plant in Lordstown could have even more of an impact than the autoworkers' strike on the labor standards of the emerging electric-vehicle industry.

In the shadow of a shuttered General Motors plant in Lordstown, Ohio, far from the United Automobile Workers' picket lines, the U.A.W. and the management of an electric vehicle battery plant are locked in a wholly different conflict.

It may not have the cachet of the national contract talks that have prompted the strikes that expanded on Friday to around 40 plants and distribution centers, affecting more than 18,000 workers, but the negotiations unfolding in northeast Ohio could more directly answer one of the most burning questions facing President Biden as he heads into his re-election campaign: Will the transition to a clean energy economy yield a bright future for American workers, or will it consign a large cohort of them to low-wage, minimal-benefit jobs that leave voters in some of the most critical swing states pining for an ecologically unsound but better-paid past?

U.A.W. officials take pains to say the talks in Lordstown between the autoworkers union and Ultium Cells, a joint venture between G.M. and LG Energy Solution in South Korea that is building the fuel cells to power G.M.'s electric vehicles, are not directly linked to the strikes. But because batteries will replace much of the mechanics that consume the labor of conventional auto work, the Ultium talks could prove critical to the electric vehicle transition -- and have captured the attention of Republicans and Democrats alike.

Former President Donald J. Trump, the Republican front-runner, will be in Michigan on Wednesday -- the day of the second primary debate -- to argue that union leaders should undercut Mr. Biden's clean-energy agenda. One of his protégés, Senator J.D. Vance, Republican of Ohio, specifically pointed to the struggles of Ultium workers laboring near the old G.M. plant.

''Up the road from the once-iconic Lordstown Assembly Complex, where 15,000 union workers once assembled millions of cars, now stands a battery plant that employs a fraction of the workers at a fraction of the wages,'' he wrote in the newspaper of Toledo, Ohio, where U.A.W. workers have walked off the job at a sprawling Jeep complex. ''Autoworkers at the Toledo Assembly Complex and Toledo Transmission can look to Lordstown for a cautionary tale of what Joe Biden has in store for them.''

Democrats and their union allies say the notion that an electric-vehicle transition driven by the auto industry can simply be stopped is absurd.

''I love the internal combustion engine. There's nothing like the sound of a small-block V-8 just rumbling down the street,'' said Ethan Surganevic, a sheet-metal worker who maintains Ultium's heating and air-conditioning systems. ''But as we progress into the future, we need some sort of renewable energy source. We need to stop relying on fossil fuels.''

But Democrats, too, have their worries.

''These workers feel betrayed because presidents of both parties, from Bush to Clinton, then Bush 2, then Obama, then Trump, have sold them out,'' said Senator Sherrod Brown, a pro-union Democrat who faces a tough re-election bid next year in Ohio. ''We keep pushing the White House to do more.'' Mr. Brown said Friday morning that he had encouraged Mr. Biden to join the U.A.W. picket lines. On Friday afternoon, the president announced he would, in Michigan on Tuesday.

As the only battery plant organized by a union in the country, Lordstown Ultium is expected to produce a first-ever wage, benefit and worker safety contract, which in turn will influence labor demands in battery plants springing up all over the country.

Yet workers here feel the Biden administration has paid far too little attention to the contract negotiations. Once at full capacity, Ultium could reap tax benefits totaling $1.2 billion a year through legislation signed by the president to speed up the transition to electric vehicles. That is leverage that workers say Mr. Biden is not using.

''If this is truly something they support, they could probably back in a little more,'' Eric Manaro, 34, a crew leader in the Ultium packaging department. ''I mean, they've never been down to the area. You know, proof to the pudding.''

George Goranitis, 33, an Ultium team leader and U.A.W. bargaining representative, went further. ''Biden and his team, I honestly truly believe they failed,'' he said, adding, ''there should have been certain terms and regulations when they gave this money out.''

White House officials on Friday said they were doing all they can to support U.A.W. workers. Energy Secretary Jennifer Granholm called the G.M. chief executive, Mary Barra, twice to ensure a fair union election last December and pointedly did not give final approval to Ultium loan guarantees until after the vote.

''The president has made clear from the start his full commitment to fighting for electric vehicle jobs -- including battery jobs -- that are good paying, safe U.A.W. jobs that can support a family and bolster the middle class,'' said Gene Sperling, Mr. Biden's envoy to the U.A.W. and Big Three automakers.

But some of the most pro-union provisions in Mr. Biden's economic agenda were stripped out of the final Inflation Reduction Act. Officials also conceded that they had not communicated their efforts well enough to reach workers like Mr. Manaro and Mr. Goranitis.

Like many workers in Lordstown, both Mr. Manaro and Mr. Goranitis are familiar with presidential politics. There may be no factory town in the United States that has been more of a political football in the past 15 years. In 2009, after he bailed out Detroit, President Obama drove a Chevy Cruze on the factory floor as a victory lap. Mr. Manaro and Mr. Goranitis were there as assembly line workers. In 2018, G.M. shut down the factory anyway, provoking a tirade by President Trump, who then engineered the sale of the plant to a start-up company making electric pickup trucks.

As the plant teetered, he told workers the jobs were ''all coming back.''

''Don't move, don't sell your house,'' he counseled.

The start-up, Lordstown Motors, went belly-up, filing for bankruptcy in June.

U.A.W. union members in a Democratic region that swung solidly behind Mr. Trump are deeply split on the electric revolution in which they are key participants.

Mr. Surganevic said he was ''no fan'' of Mr. Trump's. Mr. Manaro and Mr. Goranitis are. Mr. Manaro even credited the former president's browbeating of Ms. Barra for her decision to site Ultium in Lordstown, although construction was completed well after he left office and the company denied its location had anything to do with Mr. Trump.

Mr. Biden, it seems, cannot get a break.

For all the downturns and false starts in Lordstown, it is no wonder that many in the Trumbull and Mahoning counties, first hit by the steep decline of steel and then manufacturing, are viewing any new hope for the Mahoning Valley with skepticism -- and that Republicans like Mr. Trump are appealing to voters by evoking a return to some halcyon days, just as he did with coal and steel.

But, said A.J. Sumell, an economist at the Center for ***Working Class*** Studies of Youngstown State University, the electric vehicle transition is happening, whether Mr. Trump wants it or not.

When the G.M. plant finally closed for good, it was down to a single shift, with 1,600 workers. Ultium, whose plant sprawls across 2.8 million square feet and which started the year with 1,100 workers, is now at 1,400, with 1,700 expected to be working there within another year.

''Ultium Cells' work force is the foundation of a dynamic new industry that is transforming American transportation and leading the way to an all-E.V. future,'' Katie Burdette, an Ultium spokeswoman, said.

About 600 more are working at the old G.M. facility, but for the Taiwanese contract manufacturer Foxconn, which just started producing boutique electric tractors.

For now, though, that old G.M. plant is a shadow of its former self, with a scattering of cars in its vast parking lot, which is sprouting weeds, and only a fraction of the shop floor in use.

But if pay, benefits and workplace safety concerns can be put to rest at Ultium, the president might get some credit for the clean-energy transition he helped set in motion from the workers actually doing it.

''This plant is going to be the pattern for everything that's coming in the future,'' said Tim O'Hara, who was the vice president of the Lordstown U.A.W. local when the G.M. plant shut down.

The negotiations have already produced results, even before a final contract is reached. In late August, Ultium announced an interim agreement that gave 1,100 workers an immediate 25 percent pay raise and back pay ranging from $3,000 to $7,000. Mr. Sumell said that lifted hourly wages from the minimum of $16.50 to a starting wage of $20 and a top wage of about $24, still considerably lower than the $32 that G.M. once paid its top earners but likely better than most battery makers springing up with huge subsidies signed into law by Mr. Biden.

The U.A.W. still has significant beefs with Ultium, especially with what it says are unsafe working conditions that should be covered by the safety provisions of the national contract. And the talks ''have a ways to go,'' said Josh Ayers, the bargaining chairman at U.A.W. Local 1112.

Workers would like Mr. Biden to give the process a nudge.

''If he would come out and say these battery plants need to be unionized, need to go U.A.W. or whatever, then we would throw our backs behind him,'' Mr. Surganevic said. ''But people are seeing the government threw billions of dollars in low-interest loans to the big corporation and didn't tell them how they were supposed to spend it.''

Of Mr. Biden, he added, ''I think he is playing it too safe.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/23/us/politics/biden-electric-vehicles-uaw.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/23/us/politics/biden-electric-vehicles-uaw.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Josh Ayers, the bargaining chairman at U.A.W. Local 1112, says talks with battery maker Ultium Cells ''have a ways to go.''

''Biden and his team, I honestly truly believe they failed,'' said George Goranitis, Ultium team leader and union representative.

Eric Manaro, a crew leader at Ultium, credited Donald J. Trump with G.M.'s decision to build the plant in Lordstown, Ohio.

Lordstown Ultium, the only unionized battery plant in the U.S., is expected to produce a contract that will have nationwide influence. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY JUSTIN MERRIMAN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A20.

**Load-Date:** September 24, 2023

**End of Document**



[***‘Honor Society’ Review: Ivy League Strategist’s Cynical Shell Is Cracked***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:661J-BNM1-DXY4-X3GM-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

July 28, 2022 Thursday 17:31 EST

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**Section:** MOVIES

**Length:** 371 words

**Byline:** Glenn Kenny

**Highlight:** Angourie Rice plays an initially unappealing character, as a Harvard striver with sneaky moves.

**Body**

Angourie Rice plays an initially unappealing character, as a Harvard striver with sneaky moves.

There’s a species of Young Adult novels — and their attendant film adaptations — that wears sophistication on its sleeve. Mostly for the purpose of demonstrating that sophistication won’t save the anguished teenage soul — see [*“The Perks of Being a Wallflower.”*](https://www.nytimes.com/2012/09/21/movies/the-perks-of-being-a-wallflower-directed-by-stephen-chbosky.html) In the teen rom-com, sophistication usually manifests itself in a near-endless stream of pop culture references.

“Honor Society,” directed by Oran Zegman from a script by David A. Goodman, comes out of the gate flashing a formal and thematic sophistication so dazzling it might take you a while to realize it’s actually a Young Adult movie. The relentlessly driven title character, Honor (Angourie Rice, whom you may remember from “[*The Nice Guys,*](https://www.nytimes.com/2016/05/20/movies/the-nice-guys-review-ryan-gosling-russell-crowe.html)” terrifically appealing throughout), snidely dismissive of her ***working-class*** parents, has crafted a persona ruthlessly focused on getting out of her one-horse town and into Harvard. A place where “mediocre people get outsized opportunities,” she tells the camera.

[Video: [*Watch on YouTube.*](http://youtube.com/embed/L4z67u7TNFY)]

Notes of “Election” and “Rushmore” here are strong. Some fully grown-up viewers will feel old seeing Christopher Mintz-Plasse, of “McLovin” fame in “Superbad” (2007) playing the (ultimately sleazoid) guidance counselor who feeds Honor the unpleasant surprise that she’s actually one of four students vying for his Harvard recommendation.

This news motivates Honor to weave a manipulative web that grows spectacularly tangled. One of her foils, Michael, is played by Gaten Matarazzo, that winsome kid from “Stranger Things”; Michael responds with sweet-natured goofiness to Honor’s temptress moves. So of course he is the one to crack her cynical shell.

A twist whipsaws the movie into a darker place, one in the vicinity of Patricia Highsmith. But no murder takes place, and the movie’s resolution confirms what one may have suspected all along: Its dominant room tone is kinda-sorta that of “To All the Boys I’ve Loved Before.”

Honor Society

Not rated. Running time: 1 hour 37 minutes. [*Watch on Paramount+.*](https://www.paramountplus.com/)

PHOTO: Gaten Matarazzo, left, and Angourie Rice in “Honor Society,” directed by Oran Zegman. (PHOTOGRAPH BY MICHAEL COURTNEY/PARAMOUNT+)

**Load-Date:** July 28, 2022

**End of Document**



[***In Phoenix These Scorching Days, The A.C. Guys Are Essential Workers***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68RV-D2M1-DXY4-X4WP-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

July 21, 2023 Friday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; National Desk; Pg. 11

**Length:** 1141 words

**Byline:** By Jack Healy

**Body**

While trying to cool brutally hot Phoenix, Roberto Guerrero and his sons endure sweltering attics, blazing rooftops and nonstop calls for help.

José Guerrero's phone buzzes from morning to midnight with sweaty pleas for help: The air-conditioner fan just quit. My grandma is stuck in a 90-degree house. My children are overheating. Please come, it's so hot.

As Phoenix slogs through a record 21 straight days of 110-degree or higher temperatures, Mr. Guerrero, 33, has emerged as maybe the most essential worker in a town desperate to stay cool: the A.C. repair guy.

''We live in a city where you have to have it,'' he said. ''If they need us, we go.''

Summer is always his busy season, but air-conditioner service companies around the Southwest are seeing voracious demand -- a result of record-breaking temperatures searing the country from Florida to California, compounded by a shortage of skilled technicians and equipment.

So now, Mr. Guerrero, his two brothers and their father roll out seven days a week, heading for suffocating attics and tar-shingled rooftops across the Valley of the Sun to coax ailing air-conditioners back to life. They fix leaking refrigerant lines, replace burned-out capacitors and try to lower Phoenix's temperature a few degrees.

But keeping the city cool is sweltering work. They endure the heat by guzzling water and wrapping wet cloths around their necks, and try to avoid burning their hands on scalding sheet metal or fainting inside crawl spaces where they say temperatures can soar to 150 degrees.

''We call it going to sleep,'' José Guerrero said. ''It's bad up there.''

The men use thermometers to gauge temperatures inside houses and around the machinery, which often soar well past the outdoor air. ''163 degrees in the attic,'' Edi Guerrero, 30, another brother, reported after coming home drenched in sweat one afternoon.

Most white-collar workers around Phoenix have hunkered inside their air-conditioned homes or icy offices.

But about 20 percent of Arizona's workers spend their days outside, according to an analysis by the Union of Concerned Scientists, harvesting crops and powering Arizona's growth by building new roads, semiconductor factories and condos.

The state legislature has rejected efforts to write heat protections into law, but this week, Gov. Katie Hobbs said her administration would send inspectors to check whether workers have access to adequate water, shade and rest in the extreme heat.

On Saturday, the youngest Guerrero brother, Alex, 22, spent the 116-degree afternoon checking air-conditioners at an apartment complex when he felt his breath quicken and his eyes droop. He asked his girlfriend to drive him home, and when he staggered inside, he called out for his mother. and collapsed.

''Next thing I knew, I was on the ground,'' he said.

The family called 911 and as they waited for paramedics to arrive, they knew from experience to cool him down with wet cloths and gave him sips of a sports drink. A half-hour later, he sat shirtless inside the family's mobile home, shaky but recovering: ''It was just too damn hot.''

The Guerreros never planned for air-conditioning to become the family industry.

Roberto Guerrero, 51, who immigrated from Chihuahua, Mexico, to Phoenix 30 years ago, said it was a second career after a sudden illness in 2008 left him paralyzed. During an agonizing three-year recovery, as he learned to walk and pick up spoons again, the family's savings were drained, and they were evicted.

''I needed to do something,'' Mr. Guerrero said.

He initially tried to sell air-conditioning units, but said he realized that while few people wanted to buy, everyone needed repairs.

José said he joined his father after losing his corporate job with a delivery app during the pandemic. The elder Mr. Guerrero still walks with a slight limp, so climbing to the roof, where most residential air-conditioners sit, is treacherous even with the security of a strong rope.

The parents, siblings and three of José's children live together in a drafty mobile home at the Sun 'n Sand trailer park on the edge of an interstate in northwest Phoenix. They eat homemade enchiladas and watch television crammed around a kitchen table, talking over the day's jobs and joking about who wilts fastest in the heat.

They own their mobile home, but José and Roberto say they dream about buying some land way west of Phoenix, where they can raise chickens and horses and plant fruit trees, like their relatives in Chihuahua.

They are weary of patching up the mobile home, and are still fixing a flimsy roof that peeled off in a windstorm months ago. They recently replaced their wheezing old window A.C. unit with a new wall-mounted one.

And living in the country, José said, might give him an excuse to ignore the service calls pinging his phone on weekends.

Sometimes, the Guerreros worry they are not charging enough. Repairs can run from $500 for a relatively simple fix, to $10,000 for a new unit, and most of their customers cannot afford nearly that much.

They say they end up knocking hundreds of dollars off repair bills for struggling customers, taking fruit or homemade food instead. The other day, a client whose house hit more than 100 degrees slipped $100 into Jose's hand, and asked him to do what he could. When another customer could not afford the labor costs of installing an electric part, José said he offered to walk him through it on FaceTime.

''It's the reason we're poor, but we're happy,'' the elder Mr. Guerrero said.

On a pre-dawn Tuesday morning, it was already 93 degrees when José and his father pulled up to a home in a ***working-class*** neighborhood in the Phoenix suburb of Mesa.

The customer, Nestor Flores, a roofer, had called the Guerreros when his June electric bill hit $570. His leaky rooftop air-conditioning unit had been running constantly at full speed while only burping out tepid air, making the house so swampy that his three children had started spending summer days with their grandparents. He said José had charged him thousands less than other repair companies.

''He's cutting me a break,'' Mr. Flores said.

José was already sweating through his work shirt as he clambered up a ladder, steadied by his father, and onto the roof spangled with bird poop. He pulled out a drill and undid the bolts holding the 500-pound unit in place.

He had to work fast. Other calls were coming in, and the temperature had just zoomed above 100. In an hour, the roof would be a skillet.

Later that afternoon, Phoenix officially broke its record for the longest stretch ever of 110-degree days. It was big news for weather geeks and news outlets across the region, and for the Guerreros, a reminder of even more miserable weeks ahead.

''We've been here all our lives,'' José said. ''You don't get used to it.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/07/20/us/phoenix-heat-wave-air-conditioner.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/07/20/us/phoenix-heat-wave-air-conditioner.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Paramedics treating Alex Guerrero, 22, who collapsed at home after spending a 116-degree afternoon checking air-conditioners at an apartment complex in Phoenix. Right, a nephew of Alex praying for his uncle as the paramedics work. When Alex recovered, he said, ''It was just too damn hot.''

Top, Roberto Guerrero, foreground, and his son, in white shirt, supervise as a crane lowers a replacement air-conditioner at a house in the early morning in Phoenix. Above, Roberto and José inspecting an A.C. unit. José said, in their city, people simply need working air-conditioners. ''If they need us, we go.'' (PHOTOGRAPHS BY ADRIANA ZEHBRAUSKAS FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A11.

**Load-Date:** July 21, 2023

**End of Document**



[***‘Paradise Highway’ Review: A Test of Loyalty***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:661H-HR91-JBG3-616X-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

July 28, 2022 Thursday 10:45 EST

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**Section:** MOVIES

**Length:** 338 words

**Byline:** Concepción de León

**Highlight:** A truck driver’s brother asks her to deliver a girl to sex traffickers in order to save his life in prison.

**Body**

A truck driver’s brother asks her to deliver a girl to sex traffickers in order to save his life in prison.

Growing up in a violent home, Sally (Juliette Binoche) only had one person to rely on: her brother, Dennis (Frank Grillo).

Years later, Dennis is in prison, and now depends on Sally, who is a truck driver. When Dennis tells Sally that she must carry illicit cargo or he’ll be harmed, she is determined to come through, even after she finds out that the “package” she’s meant to deliver is a girl named Leila (Hala Finley).

[Video: [*Watch on YouTube.*](http://youtube.com/embed/zjv83li96BE)]

“Paradise Highway,” written and directed by Anna Gutto (“A Light Above”), follows Sally and Leila as they run from both the benevolent F.B.I. agents, played by Morgan Freeman and Cameron Monaghan, and the sex traffickers looking to recover Leila. They are kept company only by a shotgun and the radio that connects Sally to a network of other women truck drivers. Their camaraderie and Finley’s performance as the troubled Leila are highlights in a film that otherwise does not quite hit its stride.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, Binoche is not believable as a ***working-class*** American truck driver, and her lingering French accent seems out of place in that world. In addition, the vague danger to her brother is difficult to accept as enough motivation for her to participate in such a heinous crime.

Though it is refreshing to see members of law enforcement focused on recovering and supporting a victim rather than pursuing her abusers, it does not allow for much narrative tension. If only the film had taken a broader view, filling in more details about the lives and motivations of the truck drivers as well as the sex traffickers.

Paradise Highway

Rated R for language and some violence. Running time: 1 hour 55 minutes. In theaters and available to rent or buy on [*Apple TV*](https://trailers.apple.com/trailers/lions_gate/paradise-highway/), [*Vudu*](https://www.vudu.com/content/movies/details/Paradise-Highway/2019422) and other streaming platforms and pay TV operators.

PHOTO: Morgan Freeman plays an F.B.I. agent, and Juliette Binoche plays a truck driver, in “Paradise Highway.” (PHOTOGRAPH BY NICK BURCHELL/LIONSGATE)

**Load-Date:** July 29, 2022

**End of Document**



[***Late Night Responds to Biden’s Decision to Send Tanks to Ukraine; Best of Late Night***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67D9-JWR1-JBG3-60WF-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

January 26, 2023 Thursday 10:43 EST

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**Section:** ARTS; television

**Length:** 609 words

**Byline:** Trish Bendix

**Highlight:** Stephen Colbert said that for Volodymyr Zelensky’s birthday on Wednesday, “Joe Biden got him exactly what he asked for.”

**Body**

Stephen Colbert said that for Volodymyr Zelensky’s birthday on Wednesday, “Joe Biden got him exactly what he asked for.”

Welcome to Best of Late Night, a rundown of the previous night’s highlights that lets you sleep — and lets us get paid to watch comedy. Here are the [*50 best movies on Netflix right now*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/arts/television/best-movies-on-netflix.html).

Giving Tanks

The Biden administration announced plans to [*send M1 Abrams tanks to Ukraine*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/01/24/us/politics/biden-administration-tanks-ukraine.html), after weeks of negotiations to persuade Germany to offer its own advanced battle tanks in the war against Russia.

Stephen Colbert celebrated the birthday of Volodymyr Zelensky, the Ukrainian president, on Wednesday, saying, “Joe Biden got him exactly what he asked for.”

“This wasn’t exactly a huge surprise — Zelensky kind of figured it out while it was still wrapped.” — STEPHEN COLBERT

[Video: [*Watch on YouTube.*](http://youtube.com/embed/j6EIzvWTKXw)]

“The Abrams is a game changer for this war in Ukraine. It’s a state-of-the-art battle tank that weighs 70 tons. It is capable of speeds up to 42 miles an hour. Plus, it comes with a free month of Sirius XM, so while you’re breaching enemy lines, you can listen to Stern.” — STEPHEN COLBERT

“Pentagon officials have been reluctant to send the Abrams, but then they changed their minds, after Germany agreed to send its Leopard battle tanks to Ukraine, making this the first time anyone in Europe has said, ‘Good news — the German tanks are rolling in!’” — STEPHEN COLBERT

[Video: [*Watch on YouTube.*](http://youtube.com/embed/1eWdfxZDlsE)]

“Because, you know, it’s not a great look just when it’s German tanks rolling across Europe. Kind of makes people nervous.” — WANDA SYKES

“I think it should have been Sweden. Yeah. And they send tanks to Ukraine and Russia. OK, hear me out, hear me out: And then Sweden, do that thing you do where you send the tanks in parts with a diagram for assembling them. Yeah. See? See, that would bring the countries together because no one could assemble that [expletive] on their own.” — WANDA SYKES

The Punchiest Punchlines (Certifiable Edition)

“Former Vice President Mike Pence’s lawyer reportedly found close to a dozen classified documents last week at Pence’s Indiana home. And when Pence heard that, he stayed white as a ghost.” — SETH MEYERS

“Man, this is starting to feel like the beginning of the pandemic. You hear about one case, then another and before you know it, we’re all going to be locked in our apartments wiping down our mail, terrified that some classified documents are going to get in.” — SETH MEYERS

“The Justice Department has now launched an investigation into the dozen classified documents found at former Vice President Mike Pence’s Indiana home, and, more specifically, why was Joe Biden keeping them there?” — SETH MEYERS

“While a lot of Republicans are mad at Pence, the former V.P. got a boost from the former pres, who truthed: ‘Mike Pence is an innocent man. He never did anything knowingly dishonest in his life.’ Adding, ‘which is why I tried to have him killed.’” — STEPHEN COLBERT

The Bits Worth Watching

The actress Nia Long sat down with Wanda Sykes on Wednesday’s “Daily Show” to talk about her two new projects, the Netflix comedy “You People” and the techno-thriller “Missing.”

[Video: [*Watch on YouTube.*](http://youtube.com/embed/CHszv6PfgaU)]

What We’re Excited About on Thursday Night

Jimmy Kimmel will celebrate the 20th anniversary of his show in prime time on Thursday, with guests from his first episode: George Clooney, Snoop Dogg and a musical performance by Coldplay.

Also, Check This Out

Natasha Lyonne turns into a ***working-class*** sleuth in [*Peacock’s new detective show, “Poker Face.”*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/01/25/arts/television/poker-face-review.html)

PHOTO: “This wasn’t exactly a huge surprise — Zelensky kind of figured it out while it was still wrapped,” Stephen Colbert joked. (PHOTOGRAPH BY CBS FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** January 26, 2023

**End of Document**



[***WM, 51, Separated, Looks to Rekindle Old Bond — With Voters***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68WX-YMG1-JBG3-6195-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

August 9, 2023 Wednesday 10:42 EST

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**Section:** WORLD; canada

**Length:** 1454 words

**Byline:** Norimitsu Onishi

**Highlight:** Justin Trudeau has portrayed himself as a modern husband, father and political figure in his rise to prime minister. How does he redefine himself after the breakup of his 18-year marriage?

**Body**

Justin Trudeau has portrayed himself as a modern husband, father and political figure in his rise to prime minister. How does he redefine himself after the breakup of his 18-year marriage?

In 2005, Justin Trudeau, the son of a legendary Canadian prime minister, and Sophie Grégoire, a well-known television journalist, married inside a stone church in Montreal’s wealthy, French-speaking enclave of Outremont.

“I’m the luckiest woman in the world,” the bride [*said*](https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/justin-trudeau-weds-1.554781) to a crowd of onlookers as she entered the church. Under a sunny sky, the couple drove away in a Mercedes roadster that had belonged to Mr. Trudeau’s father, Pierre Trudeau, producing an iconic wedding photo.

“The wedding was talked about a lot, maybe not as much as Céline Dion’s, but it was talked about,” [*Geneviève Tellier*](https://web5.uottawa.ca/www2/mcs-smc/medias/specialistes-details-998246.html), a political science professor at the University of Ottawa, said, referring to the singer who is from Quebec. “It was a media event.”

Over the next decade, Mr. Trudeau, with his wife and their three children, shrewdly crafted an image that became integral to his rapid ascent — that of a modern husband, father and political figure, who would go on to win votes with a mix of idealism and glamour.

Nearly eight years ago, Mr. Trudeau was swept into Canada’s highest office on a wave of “Trudeaumania,” a fresh-faced leader who championed the idea that a more progressive, diverse and open Canada would make the country stronger and elevate its global standing.

Mr. Trudeau also succeeded in casting himself as an energetic, youthful prime minister and father beyond the country’s borders, and with his family often by his side at world events he became an international star.

But Mr. Trudeau, 51, is entering one of the most turbulent chapters of his career after [*separating*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/02/world/americas/justin-trudeau-separate-wife-sophie-gregoire.html?searchResultPosition=1) from his wife of 18 years, forced to publicly weather the family’s situation, while facing an increasingly skeptical electorate.

Mr. Trudeau, who has clung to power in a minority government following his re-election in 2021, has vowed to run for a fourth term, though many experts say voter fatigue will likely force him to step aside for someone new.

In announcing their separation last week, the Trudeaus said they would raise their children in a “collaborative environment,” including vacationing together, even as they themselves will maintain different homes.

Mr. Trudeau was scheduled to take a family vacation this week, together with Ms. Grégoire Trudeau and their children, just as he has done countless times in his nearly eight years in office.

But this time, when the family returns to Ottawa, the capital, things will be much different. Mr. Trudeau and the children will be going back to their official residence, but Ms. Grégoire Trudeau will be going to her own home.

“Canadians,” the couple said last week, “can expect to often see the family together,” just as they have throughout Mr. Trudeau’s political career.

With his communication and social media skills, Mr. Trudeau revolutionized Canada’s political culture where, traditionally, a sitting prime minister’s spouse could stroll through downtown Montreal or Toronto and go mostly unrecognized.

But the fracturing of a marriage that had been central to the prime minister’s image will test even Mr. Trudeau’s political dexterity, experts say.

“The question now is how will they change the message, the packaging, now that it won’t be about Justin Trudeau in a relationship with his partner and their family,” Ms. Tellier said.

The couple have three children: Xavier, 15, Ella-Grace, 14, and Hadrien, 9.

Ms. Tellier and other experts say that the separation is unlikely to damage Mr. Trudeau politically and could actually elicit some sympathy among voters as the prime minister goes through an experience shared by many Canadians.

But striking the right chord will not be easy, experts say. How would Mr. Trudeau acknowledge any pain from his separation while holding onto the image of a family that still vacations and spends time together, as the couple announced?

“The problem with Justin Trudeau is that whether things are good or bad, there’s always the impression that things are good,” said [*Jean-Marc Léger*](https://leger360.com/profiles/jean-marc-leger/), a leading pollster in Canada. “He keeps smiling, life is good. To many people, he lacks authenticity.”

In recent months, Mr. Trudeau’s government has been buffeted by revelations about [*China’s interference in Canadian politics*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/07/15/world/americas/canada-china-election-interference.html?searchResultPosition=5), and the prime minister has been [*criticized*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/18/world/canada/trudeau-canada-china-election-meddling.html) for not doing enough to combat the problem. Polls show that Mr. Trudeau’s Liberal Party has fallen behind the main opposition Conservative Party.

The right-wing populist leader of the Conservatives, Pierre Poilievre, has tried to smooth his rough edges by showcasing his wife, Anaida, who immigrated from Venezuela as a child and lived in a ***working-class*** neighborhood in Montreal while her father worked gathering fruits and vegetables at a farm.

A week before announcing his separation, Mr. Trudeau, battling voter fatigue and possibly getting ready for a fourth election, carried out a major [*reshuffling*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/07/29/world/canada/justin-trudeau-cabinet-shuffle.html) of his cabinet to bring what he called “fresh energy” to Parliament Hill. As newly appointed ministers brought their spouses for a group photo of the new cabinet, Mr. Trudeau stood conspicuously alone, Ms. Tellier noted.

While Ms. Grégoire Trudeau had been part of cabinet reshuffle announcements in the past, her public appearances had noticeably declined in the past couple of years.

“She wasn’t very present in the election campaign of 2021, while she had been very present in the previous elections, of 2015 and 2019, when she was very often at his side,” Mr. Léger said. “That’s when the rumors about their marriage started spreading.’’

The rumors circulated on and off but were mostly confined to Canada’s political and media circles.

On their wedding anniversary last year, though, Ms. Grégoire Trudeau [*wrote*](https://www.instagram.com/p/CeGt4VduOUA/) on Instagram that “long-term relationships are challenging in so many ways” and that the couple had experienced “sunny days, heavy storms, and everything in between and it ain’t over.”

In joint statements last week, released on their Instagram accounts, the couple said they had decided to separate “after many meaningful and difficult conversations” and pleaded for privacy.

Their plea has, for the most part, been heeded.

“Canadians are normally less interested in intruding on the private lives of public figures than the Americans or certainly the Brits are, where the tabloid culture in Britain has made it open season on public figures,” said Jeffrey Dvorkin, former director of the journalism program at the University of Toronto.

“Canadian culture defers a lot more than American culture does to the elites in society,” added Mr. Dvorkin, who also served as vice president of news and ombudsman for National Public Radio in Washington.

The largely muted reaction to the couple’s separation — opposition politicians have not even mentioned it — stands in sharp contrast to the attention that the marriage received and that the Trudeaus clearly invited.

When Mr. Trudeau was elected prime minister in 2015, Ms. Grégoire Trudeau helped burnish his image with a photo shoot in Vogue that a Canadian magazine labeled “[*steamy*](https://chatelaine.com/news/news-flash-justin-trudeaus-vogue-shoot-is-kinda-steamy/)” and public appearances that encouraged comparisons to another famous political dynasty, the Kennedys.

Mr. Trudeau’s captivating wife, young children and his own youthful good looks helped fuel a new generation of “Trudeaumania” — the term used to describe the popular excitement generated in 1968 when his father, Pierre, was first elected prime minister.

In 1971, Pierre Trudeau married Margaret Sinclair, who was nearly three decades younger. Their first son, Justin, was born that year on Christmas Day. The birth of two other boys gave Pierre Trudeau a youthful profile even though he was already in his 50s when he became a father.

Pierre and Margaret Trudeau separated in 1977, while Mr. Trudeau was still in office. The breakup did not set off much of a political fallout for Mr. Trudeau, who went on to serve as prime minister until 1984, even staging a comeback after nearly a year out of office.

When his marriage unraveled, Pierre Trudeau’s image changed from husband and father to a single father who dated widely.

“After his separation, Pierre Trudeau became the most eligible bachelor in the country,” Mr. Léger said. “Now Justin Trudeau might just become the most eligible bachelor in the country.”

PHOTOS: Justin Trudeau, the son of a Canadian prime minister, and Sophie Grégoire Trudeau after their wedding in Montreal in 2005. (PHOTOGRAPH BY CHRISTINNE MUSCHI/REUTERS); The Trudeau family, including, from left, Hadrien, Xavier and Ella-Grace, watching election coverage in September 2021. (PHOTOGRAPH BY CARLOS OSORIO/REUTERS) This article appeared in print on page A7.

**Load-Date:** August 10, 2023

**End of Document**



[***An Ohio Town Struggles Between Biden’s Clean Energy Agenda and Union Support***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:697G-X381-DXY4-X0F7-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Byline:** Jonathan Weisman

**Highlight:** Contract talks at an electric vehicle battery plant in Lordstown could have even more of an impact than the autoworkers’ strike on the labor standards of the emerging electric-vehicle industry.

**Body**

Contract talks at an electric vehicle battery plant in Lordstown could have even more of an impact than the autoworkers’ strike on the labor standards of the emerging electric-vehicle industry.

In the shadow of a shuttered General Motors plant in Lordstown, Ohio, far from the United Automobile Workers’ picket lines, the U.A.W. and the management of an electric vehicle battery plant are locked in a wholly different conflict.

It may not have the cachet of the national contract talks that have prompted the strikes that [*expanded on Friday to around 40 plants*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/22/business/uaw-strike-general-motors-stellantis.html) and distribution centers, affecting more than 18,000 workers, but the negotiations unfolding in northeast Ohio could more directly answer one of the most burning questions facing President Biden as he heads into his re-election campaign: Will the transition to a clean energy economy yield a bright future for American workers, or will it consign a large cohort of them to low-wage, minimal-benefit jobs that leave voters in some of the most critical swing states pining for an ecologically unsound but better-paid past?

U.A.W. officials take pains to say the talks in Lordstown between the autoworkers union and Ultium Cells, a joint venture between G.M. and LG Energy Solution in South Korea that is building the battery cells to power G.M.’s electric vehicles, are not directly linked to the strikes. But because batteries will replace much of the mechanics that consume the labor of conventional auto work, the Ultium talks could prove critical to the electric vehicle transition — and have captured the attention of Republicans and Democrats alike.

Former President Donald J. Trump, the Republican front-runner, will be in Michigan on Wednesday — the day of the second primary debate — to argue that union leaders should undercut Mr. Biden’s clean-energy agenda. One of his protégés, Senator J.D. Vance, Republican of Ohio, specifically pointed to the struggles of Ultium workers laboring near the old G.M. plant.

“Up the road from the once-iconic Lordstown Assembly Complex, where 15,000 union workers once assembled millions of cars, now stands a battery plant that employs a fraction of the workers at a fraction of the wages,” [*he wrote in the newspaper of Toledo*](https://www.toledoblade.com/opinion/columnists/2023/09/19/vance-biden-ev-agenda-threatens-us-auto-industry/stories/20230919029), Ohio, where U.A.W. workers have walked off the job at a sprawling Jeep complex. “Autoworkers at the Toledo Assembly Complex and Toledo Transmission can look to Lordstown for a cautionary tale of what Joe Biden has in store for them.”

Democrats and their union allies say the notion that an electric-vehicle transition driven by the auto industry can simply be stopped is absurd.

“I love the internal combustion engine. There’s nothing like the sound of a small-block V-8 just rumbling down the street,” said Ethan Surganevic, a sheet-metal worker who maintains Ultium’s heating and air-conditioning systems. “But as we progress into the future, we need some sort of renewable energy source. We need to stop relying on fossil fuels.”

But Democrats, too, have their worries.

“These workers feel betrayed because presidents of both parties, from Bush to Clinton, then Bush 2, then Obama, then Trump, have sold them out,” said Senator Sherrod Brown, a pro-union Democrat who faces a tough re-election bid next year in Ohio. “We keep pushing the White House to do more.” Mr. Brown said Friday morning that he had encouraged Mr. Biden to join the U.A.W. picket lines. [*On Friday afternoon, the president announced*](https://twitter.com/POTUS/status/1705325183697932561) he would, in Michigan on Tuesday.

As the only battery plant organized by a union in the country, Lordstown Ultium is expected to produce a first-ever wage, benefit and worker safety contract, which in turn will influence labor demands in battery plants springing up all over the country.

Yet workers here feel the Biden administration has paid far too little attention to the contract negotiations. Once at full capacity, Ultium could reap tax benefits totaling $1.2 billion a year through legislation signed by the president to speed up the transition to electric vehicles. That is leverage that workers say Mr. Biden is not using.

“If this is truly something they support, they could probably back in a little more,” Eric Manaro, 34, a crew leader in the Ultium packaging department. “I mean, they’ve never been down to the area. You know, proof to the pudding.”

George Goranitis, 33, an Ultium team leader and U.A.W. bargaining representative, went further. “Biden and his team, I honestly truly believe they failed,” he said, adding, “there should have been certain terms and regulations when they gave this money out.”

White House officials on Friday said they were doing all they can to support U.A.W. workers. Energy Secretary Jennifer Granholm called the G.M. chief executive, Mary Barra, twice to ensure a fair union election last December and pointedly did not give final approval to Ultium loan guarantees until after the vote.

“The president has made clear from the start his full commitment to fighting for electric vehicle jobs — including battery jobs — that are good paying, safe U.A.W. jobs that can support a family and bolster the middle class,” said Gene Sperling, Mr. Biden’s envoy to the U.A.W. and Big Three automakers.

But some of the most pro-union provisions in Mr. Biden’s economic agenda were stripped out of the final Inflation Reduction Act. Officials also conceded that they had not communicated their efforts well enough to reach workers like Mr. Manaro and Mr. Goranitis.

Like many workers in Lordstown, both Mr. Manaro and Mr. Goranitis are familiar with presidential politics. There may be no factory town in the United States that has been more of a political football in the past 15 years. In 2009, after he bailed out Detroit, President [*Obama drove a Chevy Cruze*](https://archive.nytimes.com/thecaucus.blogs.nytimes.com/2009/09/15/obama-talks-up-the-auto-rescue/) on the factory floor as a victory lap. Mr. Manaro and Mr. Goranitis were there as assembly line workers. In 2018, G.M. shut down the factory anyway, provoking [*a tirade by President Trump*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/03/18/business/general-motors-donald-trump.html), who then engineered the sale of the plant to a start-up company making electric pickup trucks.

As the plant teetered, he [*told workers the jobs were*](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/11/28/business/economy/gm-plant-jobs-trump.html) “[*all coming back*](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/07/25/us/politics/trump-ohio-rally.html).”

“Don’t move, don’t sell your house,” he counseled.

The [*start-up, Lordstown Motors*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/05/28/business/economy/trump-gm-workhorse-lordstown.html), went [*belly-up*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/27/business/lordstown-motors-bankruptcy-foxconn.html), filing for bankruptcy in June.

U.A.W. union members in a Democratic region that [*swung solidly behind Mr. Trump*](https://www.tribtoday.com/news/local-news/2020/11/trump-wins-in-trumbull-mahoning-counties/) are deeply split on the electric revolution in which they are key participants.

Mr. Surganevic said he was “no fan” of Mr. Trump’s. Mr. Manaro and Mr. Goranitis are. Mr. Manaro even credited the former president’s browbeating of Ms. Barra for her decision to site Ultium in Lordstown, although construction was completed well after he left office and the company denied its location had anything to do with Mr. Trump.

Mr. Biden, it seems, cannot get a break.

For all the downturns and false starts in Lordstown, it is no wonder that many in the Trumbull and Mahoning counties, first hit by the steep decline of steel and then manufacturing, are viewing any new hope for the Mahoning Valley with skepticism — and that Republicans like Mr. Trump are appealing to voters by evoking a return to some halcyon days, just as he did with coal and steel.

But, said A.J. Sumell, an economist at the Center for ***Working Class*** Studies of Youngstown State University, the electric vehicle transition is happening, whether Mr. Trump wants it or not.

When the G.M. plant finally closed for good, it was down to a single shift, with 1,600 workers. Ultium, whose plant sprawls across 2.8 million square feet and which started the year with 1,100 workers, is now at 1,400, with 1,700 expected to be working there within another year.

“Ultium Cells’ work force is the foundation of a dynamic new industry that is transforming American transportation and leading the way to an all-E.V. future,” Katie Burdette, an Ultium spokeswoman, said.

About 600 more are working at the old G.M. facility, but for the Taiwanese contract manufacturer Foxconn, which just started producing [*boutique electric tractors*](https://electrek.co/2023/04/05/foxconn-first-monarch-electric-tractors-off-assembly-lines-lordstown/).

For now, though, that old G.M. plant is a shadow of its former self, with a scattering of cars in its vast parking lot, which is sprouting weeds, and only a fraction of the shop floor in use.

But if pay, benefits and workplace safety concerns can be put to rest at Ultium, the president might get some credit for the clean-energy transition he helped set in motion from the workers actually doing it.

“This plant is going to be the pattern for everything that’s coming in the future,” said Tim O’Hara, who was the vice president of the Lordstown U.A.W. local when the G.M. plant shut down.

The negotiations have already produced results, even before a final contract is reached. In [*late August, Ultium announced*](https://www.ultiumcell.com/newsroom/News/2023/08/27/Ultium-Cells-Ratification-Outcome-August-27th-2023) an interim agreement that gave 1,100 workers an immediate 25 percent pay raise and back pay ranging from $3,000 to $7,000. Mr. Sumell said that lifted hourly wages from the minimum of $16.50 to a starting wage of $20 and a top wage of about $24, still considerably lower than the $32 that G.M. once paid its top earners but likely better than most battery makers springing up with huge subsidies signed into law by Mr. Biden.

The U.A.W. still has [*significant beefs with Ultium*](https://uaw.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/Ultium-White-Paper.pdf), especially with what it says are unsafe working conditions that should be covered by the safety provisions of the national contract. And the talks “have a ways to go,” said Josh Ayers, the bargaining chairman at U.A.W. Local 1112.

Workers would like Mr. Biden to give the process a nudge.

“If he would come out and say these battery plants need to be unionized, need to go U.A.W. or whatever, then we would throw our backs behind him,” Mr. Surganevic said. “But people are seeing the government threw billions of dollars in low-interest loans to the big corporation and didn’t tell them how they were supposed to spend it.”

Of Mr. Biden, he added, “I think he is playing it too safe.”

PHOTOS: Josh Ayers, the bargaining chairman at U.A.W. Local 1112, says talks with battery maker Ultium Cells “have a ways to go.”; “Biden and his team, I honestly truly believe they failed,” said George Goranitis, Ultium team leader and union representative.; Eric Manaro, a crew leader at Ultium, credited Donald J. Trump with G.M.’s decision to build the plant in Lordstown, Ohio.; Lordstown Ultium, the only unionized battery plant in the U.S., is expected to produce a contract that will have nationwide influence. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY JUSTIN MERRIMAN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A20.

**Load-Date:** September 26, 2023

**End of Document**



[***The Most Essential Worker in a Heat Wave? The A.C. Guy***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68RP-CX41-JBG3-61PG-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Highlight:** While trying to cool brutally hot Phoenix, Roberto Guerrero and his sons endure sweltering attics, blazing rooftops and nonstop calls for help.

**Body**

While trying to cool brutally hot Phoenix, Roberto Guerrero and his sons endure sweltering attics, blazing rooftops and nonstop calls for help.

José Guerrero’s phone buzzes from morning to midnight with sweaty pleas for help: The air-conditioner fan just quit. My grandma is stuck in a 90-degree house. My children are overheating. Please come, it’s so hot.

As Phoenix slogs through [*a record 21 straight days of 110-degree or higher temperatures*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/07/18/us/phoenix-heat-record.html), Mr. Guerrero, 33, has emerged as maybe the most essential worker in a town desperate to stay cool: the A.C. repair guy.

“We live in a city where you have to have it,” he said. “If they need us, we go.”

Summer is always his busy season, but air-conditioner service companies around the Southwest are [*seeing*](https://www.8newsnow.com/news/local-news/air-conditioning-repair-in-high-demand-as-las-vegas-valley-nears-record-temperatures/) [*voracious demand*](https://www.myhighplains.com/news/local-news/hvac-repair-in-high-demand-in-amarillo-area-this-summer/) — a result of [*record-breaking temperatures searing the country*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2022/us/heat-wave-map-tracker.html) from [*Florida*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/07/19/us/florida-ocean-temperatures-swimmers.html) to [*California*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/07/18/us/palm-springs-heat-wave.html), compounded by a shortage of skilled technicians and equipment.

So now, Mr. Guerrero, his two brothers and their father roll out seven days a week, heading for suffocating attics and tar-shingled rooftops across the Valley of the Sun to coax ailing air-conditioners back to life. They fix leaking refrigerant lines, replace burned-out capacitors and try to lower Phoenix’s temperature a few degrees.

But keeping the city cool is sweltering work. They endure the heat by guzzling water and wrapping wet cloths around their necks, and try to avoid burning their hands on scalding sheet metal or fainting inside crawl spaces where they say temperatures can soar to 150 degrees.

“We call it going to sleep,” José Guerrero said. “It’s bad up there.”

The men use thermometers to gauge temperatures [*inside houses and around the machinery, which often soar well past the outdoor air.*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2022/11/18/world/middleeast/extreme-heat.html) “163 degrees in the attic,” Edi Guerrero, 30, another brother, reported after coming home drenched in sweat one afternoon.

Most white-collar workers around Phoenix have hunkered inside their air-conditioned homes or icy offices.

But about 20 percent of Arizona’s workers spend their days outside, according to an [*analysis*](https://www.ucsusa.org/about/news/extreme-heat-could-threaten-26-billion-annually-arizona-outdoor-worker-earnings) by the Union of Concerned Scientists, harvesting crops and powering Arizona’s growth by building new roads, semiconductor factories and condos.

The state legislature has rejected efforts to write heat protections into law, but this week, Gov. Katie Hobbs said her administration would send inspectors to check whether workers have access to adequate water, shade and rest in the extreme heat.

On Saturday, the youngest Guerrero brother, Alex, 22, spent the 116-degree afternoon checking air-conditioners at an apartment complex when he felt his breath quicken and his eyes droop. He asked his girlfriend to drive him home, and when he staggered inside, he called out for his mother. and collapsed.

“Next thing I knew, I was on the ground,” he said.

The family called 911 and as they waited for paramedics to arrive, they knew from experience to cool him down with wet cloths and gave him sips of a sports drink. A half-hour later, he sat shirtless inside the family’s mobile home, shaky but recovering: “It was just too damn hot.”

The Guerreros never planned for air-conditioning to become the family industry.

Roberto Guerrero, 51, who immigrated from Chihuahua, Mexico, to Phoenix 30 years ago, said it was a second career after a sudden illness in 2008 left him paralyzed. During an agonizing three-year recovery, as he learned to walk and pick up spoons again, the family’s savings were drained, and they were evicted.

“I needed to do something,” Mr. Guerrero said.

He initially tried to sell air-conditioning units, but said he realized that while few people wanted to buy, everyone needed repairs.

José said he joined his father after losing his corporate job with a delivery app during the pandemic. The elder Mr. Guerrero still walks with a slight limp, so climbing to the roof, where most residential air-conditioners sit, is treacherous even with the security of a strong rope.

The parents, siblings and three of José’s children live together in a drafty mobile home at the Sun ‘n Sand trailer park on the edge of an interstate in northwest Phoenix. They eat homemade enchiladas and watch television crammed around a kitchen table, talking over the day’s jobs and joking about who wilts fastest in the heat.

They own their mobile home, but José and Roberto say they dream about buying some land way west of Phoenix, where they can raise chickens and horses and plant fruit trees, like their relatives in Chihuahua.

They are weary of patching up the mobile home, and are still fixing a flimsy roof that peeled off in a windstorm months ago. They recently replaced their wheezing old window A.C. unit with a new wall-mounted one.

And living in the country, José said, might give him an excuse to ignore the service calls pinging his phone on weekends.

Sometimes, the Guerreros worry they are not charging enough. Repairs can run from $500 for a relatively simple fix, to $10,000 for a new unit, and most of their customers cannot afford nearly that much.

They say they end up knocking hundreds of dollars off repair bills for struggling customers, taking fruit or homemade food instead. The other day, a client whose house hit more than 100 degrees slipped $100 into Jose’s hand, and asked him to do what he could. When another customer could not afford the labor costs of installing an electric part, José said he offered to walk him through it on FaceTime.

“It’s the reason we’re poor, but we’re happy,” the elder Mr. Guerrero said.

On a pre-dawn Tuesday morning, it was already 93 degrees when José and his father pulled up to a home in a ***working-class*** neighborhood in the Phoenix suburb of Mesa.

The customer, Nestor Flores, a roofer, had called the Guerreros when his June electric bill hit $570. His leaky rooftop air-conditioning unit had been running constantly at full speed while only burping out tepid air, making the house so swampy that his three children had started spending summer days with their grandparents. He said José had charged him thousands less than other repair companies.

“He’s cutting me a break,” Mr. Flores said.

José was already sweating through his work shirt as he clambered up a ladder, steadied by his father, and onto the roof spangled with bird poop. He pulled out a drill and undid the bolts holding the 500-pound unit in place.

He had to work fast. Other calls were coming in, and the temperature had just zoomed above 100. In an hour, the roof would be a skillet.

Later that afternoon, Phoenix officially broke its record for the longest stretch ever of 110-degree days. It was big news for weather geeks and news outlets across the region, and for the Guerreros, a reminder of even more miserable weeks ahead.

“We’ve been here all our lives,” José said. “You don’t get used to it.”

PHOTOS: Paramedics treating Alex Guerrero, 22, who collapsed at home after spending a 116-degree afternoon checking air-conditioners at an apartment complex in Phoenix. Right, a nephew of Alex praying for his uncle as the paramedics work. When Alex recovered, he said, “It was just too damn hot.”; Top, Roberto Guerrero, foreground, and his son, in white shirt, supervise as a crane lowers a replacement air-conditioner at a house in the early morning in Phoenix. Above, Roberto and José inspecting an A.C. unit. José said, in their city, people simply need working air-conditioners. “If they need us, we go.” (PHOTOGRAPHS BY ADRIANA ZEHBRAUSKAS FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A11.

**Load-Date:** January 26, 2024

**End of Document**



[***Adams Turns to Real Estate Leaders For His 2025 Campaign Fund-Raising***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68RD-FWK1-DXY4-X2RY-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Length:** 1305 words

**Byline:** By Emma G. Fitzsimmons and Nicholas Fandos

**Body**

The mayor has raised $1.3 million for re-election since January, relying on many wealthy donors from New York City and beyond.

Despite falling poll numbers and critical news coverage, Mayor Eric Adams clearly has the continued monetary support of two influential spheres of influence: real estate leaders and the donor class from New York City and beyond.

Mr. Adams has raised $1.3 million since January for his 2025 re-election effort in the latest reporting period, drawing maximum $2,100 donations from real estate magnates like Marc Holliday, the chief executive of SL Green, the city's largest commercial landlord, and its founder, Steve Green; and Alexander and Helena Durst, members of The Durst Organization real estate dynasty, according to new filings with the city's Campaign Finance Board.

About $550,000 came from donors outside New York City who live in the suburbs, Florida and other states -- a continuation of a pattern displayed early in his tenure, when he held fund-raisers in Beverly Hills and Chicago in his first months in office.

As mayor, Mr. Adams has often taken positions that benefit the real estate industry, including being supportive of rent increases and criticizing state lawmakers for failing to replace a tax-incentive program for developers known as 421a.

He has frequently met with real estate leaders and has used One Vanderbilt, one of the city's newest skyscrapers, developed by SL Green, as a backdrop for photo ops and news conferences. As a small-time landlord, Mr. Adams once declared, ''I am real estate.'' And major landlords have consistently been among his most faithful donors.

Mr. Adams frequently asserts that his political base of ***working-class*** New Yorkers and churchgoers understands and supports his mission. But the continued support from real estate interests only furthers the notion that Mr. Adams may be too aligned with major developers.

Vito Pitta, a lawyer for the Adams campaign, insisted that the mayor's success in addressing crime and job losses was driving donations.

''Our campaign is well on its way to raising the maximum amount it can spend under the city's campaign finance system -- just 18 months into the mayor's tenure -- because New Yorkers see that Mayor Adams is lowering crime, increasing employment, and moving our city in the right direction,'' Mr. Pitta said in a statement.

The spending cap for the 2025 primary is $7.9 million. Under the city's generous public financing system, his campaign is expected to have about $4.6 million on hand, after matching funds are included.

Mr. Adams has faced a series of setbacks in recent weeks. His approval rating fell to 46 percent in a Siena College poll last month. A longtime associate of his was charged in a straw donor scheme to raise money for his mayoral campaign; the mayor was not implicated. The New York Times reported that a photo of a police officer killed in the line of duty, which the mayor said he had long carried in his wallet, was created by employees in the mayor's office last year, and was made to look old.

The mayor also drew attention for his response last month to an 84-year-old tenant-rights activist whose family had escaped the Holocaust. The mayor publicly likened her to a plantation owner after he believed the activist had been disrespectful to him.

Still, Mr. Adams, a Democrat who ran for office on a public safety message, could be difficult to beat in 2025.

He is likely eager to show off a large war chest to fend off a serious competitor. He won a competitive Democratic primary in 2021 by only 7,197 votes.

''The bigger the fund-raising number, the less likely that someone else gets into the race,'' said Chris Coffey, a former campaign manager for Andrew Yang, one of the mayor's primary opponents in 2021.

Mr. Coffey said that the mayor's low approval rating was not too worrisome, noting that Michael R. Bloomberg, the former mayor, had an approval rating as low as 24 percent in his second year in office and still won two more terms.

''If the city has made progress on public safety, it's really hard to see the mayor have any re-election challenges,'' Mr. Coffey said.

The real estate industry once again also provided the largest donor base for Gov. Kathy Hochul, a Buffalo Democrat who narrowly won a full four-year term in November. Of the $4.5 million her campaign raised in the first six months of the year, more than $950,000 came from developers and real estate investors, and more from other industries with business before the state, according to an analysis of her public filings by The Times.

At least 45 donors connected to the real estate industry chipped in $18,000, the new legal maximum for statewide candidates, including Mr. Holliday, Scott Rechler and Jeff Blau. Mr. Rechler and Mr. Blau are both Democratic megadonors whose firms are competing with Mr. Holliday's for a license to operate a casino in the New York City area.

With New York facing an affordable housing crunch, Ms. Hochul has spent much of the year fighting for new government programs to spur development. On Tuesday, she announced she would bypass opponents in the legislature and take executive actions that had been a priority of the real estate industry.

Other major donors included members of the Sands family, which controls the Rochester-based beverage giant Constellation Brands; well-known Albany lobbyists Emily Giske, Giorgio DeRosa and the firm Cozen O'Connor; and tech executives like Dara Khosrowshahi of Uber. Ms. Hochul also brought in more than $250,000 at a fund-raiser this month from board members and doctors connected to Somos Community Care, a Bronx-based nonprofit that has tapped into lucrative government health programs.

Ms. Hochul managed to raise the sum -- plus another $1.5 million for the state Democratic Party -- despite new, stricter contributions limits that cap individual gifts at $18,000, down from nearly $70,000 last election cycle. For much of the period, Ms. Hochul was also dealing with tumult within her political operation after reporting by The Times prompted the ouster of her top political aide.

For his part, Mr. Adams was a prolific fund-raiser in 2021 and received significant support from a super PAC, which received donations from Steven A. Cohen, the hedge fund billionaire who owns the Mets and is vying for a casino license in the city. Earlier this year, SL Green retained Frank Carone, the mayor's former chief of staff, to aid its bid to build a Caesars Palace casino in Times Square.

A Broadway fund-raiser for the mayor last month at a showing of the musical ''New York, New York'' proved especially lucrative. The campaign raised about $600,000 at the event, which was organized by Mr. Carone, according to Evan Thies, a spokesman for the campaign.

Fred Elghanayan, a founder of TF Cornerstone, a real estate company, and Todd Cooper, a founder of RIPCO Real Estate, both donated to the Adams campaign. A dozen people who work at Morgan & Morgan, a national personal injury law firm, donated a total of $25,000 to the mayor's campaign. Four employees of Meridian Properties, another real estate firm, donated $8,400. Six people who work at another real estate firm, Top Rock Holdings, each gave the maximum of $2,100 to the mayor's campaign.

Many donations came from outside the state, including from Alex Havenick, a gambling and cannabis entrepreneur in Miami, and David Kovacs, a virtual reality video game developer in Miami. Brock Pierce, a cryptocurrency investor who once flew Mr. Adams to Puerto Rico on his private jet, donated $2,100. He listed his address as a ZIP code in Puerto Rico.

There were plenty of smaller donations as well. A senior pastor at a church in Queens donated $250 to the mayor's campaign, as did the director of a New York City children's theater.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/07/18/nyregion/adams-real-estate-donors.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/07/18/nyregion/adams-real-estate-donors.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: Mayor Eric Adams is likely fund-raising this early on to ward off potential primary challengers. (PHOTOGRAPH BY HIROKO MASUIKE/THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A18.

**Load-Date:** July 19, 2023

**End of Document**



[***New York City Congestion Pricing Plan Proposes Discounts for Neediest Drivers***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6874-DD51-DXY4-X2PB-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; National Desk; Pg. 19

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**Byline:** By Ana Ley

**Body**

The tolling program, which would be the first of its kind in the nation, is intended to reduce traffic by charging drivers to enter the busiest parts of Manhattan.

As congestion pricing in New York City moves closer to reality, the Metropolitan Transportation Authority has finalized a plan to give the city's neediest drivers a discount and to distribute traffic more evenly by reducing overnight tolls.

The M.T.A. on Friday released a report showing that the authority intends to limit the number of times that drivers of taxis and for-hire vehicles are tolled, give certain low-income drivers a discount, increase discounts for those driving into the area overnight and periodically check on small businesses in the tolling zone to see if the tolls become an impediment.

The tolling program would be the first of its kind in the nation and is intended to reduce traffic by charging drivers to enter the busiest parts of Manhattan. It cleared a major hurdle this month after the Federal Highway Administration tentatively approved the M.T.A.'s report, known as an environmental assessment, which identified ways to mitigate harm congestion pricing may pose to disadvantaged communities.

The public has until June 12 to review the report -- which is tens of thousands of pages -- before the federal government gives the document its final approval, paving the way for the M.T.A. to come up with toll rates.

Once that happens, the M.T.A. says the program, which would affect drivers entering Manhattan south of 60th Street, could begin as soon as spring 2024.

''Congestion pricing means less traffic, cleaner air, safer streets, better transit,'' Janno Lieber, the authority's chairman, said during a news conference.

Advocates, community leaders and urban planning experts celebrated the progress and said congestion pricing was long overdue.

''For decades, New York City has struggled with crushing traffic congestion, which pollutes the air we breathe, clogs our roads, damages our communities and weakens our economy,'' said Tom Wright, the president of the Regional Plan Association, a research and advocacy group. ''We are one step closer to finally addressing this issue and implementing a policy which will benefit drivers, transit riders and communities alike.''

Taxi, Lyft and Uber drivers have criticized the tolling program, noting that the M.T.A.'s own research shows that fare increases prompted by the tolls could slash demand for cabs and for-hire rides by up to 17 percent, frustrating drivers who are already struggling to get by. To lessen their burden, the new report says those drivers would not be tolled more than once per day.

Bhairavi Desai, the executive director of the New York Taxi Workers Alliance, which calls for better working conditions for taxi and app-based drivers, vowed to fight the proposal, arguing that yellow cabs should be exempt.

''Once a day is still thousands of dollars a year for struggling drivers,'' Ms. Desai said. ''This is just a money grab off the backs of a ***working class*** work force that labors 60 hours a week to survive.''

The M.T.A. hasn't set a fee scale yet, but an initial version of the report that it released in August showed that some proposals under review would charge $23 for a rush-hour trip into the tolling zone and $17 during off-peak hours for E-ZPass holders.

Under the final proposal, drivers who earn an annual salary of $50,000 or less or are enrolled in certain government assistance programs would get a 25 percent discount on tolls after making 10 trips per month through the tolling zone, for the first five years that the program is in effect.

The discount would not apply to overnight tolls, which would already be much lower. A 2022 study by the Community Service Society of New York, an anti-poverty group, found that only about 5,000 working New Yorkers in poverty would regularly incur tolls under congestion pricing.

Officials would also ensure the overnight toll rate, which would be in effect between at least midnight through 4 a.m., is at least 50 percent lower than peak toll rates. The goal is to benefit low-income drivers who can travel at that time and to encourage commercial vehicles to drive during off-peak hours, distributing traffic more evenly throughout the day.

The money raised through congestion pricing would be used for infrastructure upgrades, like building new elevators in the subway system and modernizing dated signals that are supposed to keep trains moving. The program is expected to generate $1 billion annually to improve the transit network, according to the M.T.A.

When the M.T.A. released the first draft of the environmental assessment last year, critics were dismayed by evidence that some of New York City's poorest neighborhoods could end up with dirtier air from all the diverted traffic. The final version formally commits millions of dollars in investments for those communities, including $20 million for a program to fight asthma and $10 million to install air filtration units in schools near highways.

The report says the authority plans to set up meetings with small businesses in the congestion pricing zone before and after the program's rollout to assess whether the tolls are negatively affecting commerce.

The program faces its most vociferous opposition from suburbanites who worry that it could place an unfair burden on people who travel to Manhattan for work.

Some, including Gov. Phil Murphy of New Jersey, have threatened legal action if the plan continues to advance.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/12/nyregion/new-york-city-congestion-pricing.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/12/nyregion/new-york-city-congestion-pricing.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: The M.T.A.'s congestion pricing program, which would toll drivers in Manhattan south of 60th Street, could go into effect as soon as next spring. (PHOTOGRAPH BY KARSTEN MORAN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A19.

**Load-Date:** May 13, 2023

**End of Document**



[***A Republican Spending Problem***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67W4-CW91-JBG3-627J-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

March 27, 2023 Monday 15:38 EST

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**Section:** BRIEFING

**Length:** 1886 words

**Byline:** David Leonhardt

**Highlight:** Will the House be willing to cut programs that benefit G.O.P. voters?

**Body**

Will the House be willing to cut programs that benefit G.O.P. voters?

As congressional Republicans [*prepare for a budget showdown*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/23/us/politics/congress-republicans-banks-debt-limit.html) later this year with President Biden, they say that they will insist on large cuts to federal spending. So far, though, they have left out some pretty important details: what those cuts might be.

Republicans have been more willing to talk about what they won’t cut. Party leaders have promised not to touch Medicare and Social Security. Republicans generally oppose reductions in military spending and veterans’ benefits. And neither party can do anything about interest payments on the debt that the government has already accumulated. Combined, these categories make up almost two-thirds of federal government spending.

The largest remaining category involves health care spending that benefits lower- and middle-income families, including from Medicaid and Obamacare. Hard-right Republicans, like some in the Freedom Caucus, [*have signaled*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/08/us/politics/house-republicans-deficit-budget-biden.html) they will propose reductions to these programs. Party leaders, for their part, have said they would eye cuts to anti-poverty programs such as food stamps.

But cuts like these would have a big potential downside for Republicans: The partisan shifts of recent years mean that Republican voters now benefit from these redistributive programs even more than Democratic voters do.

As [*The Atlantic’s Ronald Brownstein recently wrote*](https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2023/03/working-class-white-voters-gop-house-agenda/673500/), “The escalating confrontation between the parties over the federal budget rests on a fundamental paradox: The Republican majority in the House of Representatives is now more likely than Democrats to represent districts filled with older and lower-income voters who rely on the social programs that the G.O.P. wants to cut.”

Almost 70 percent of House Republicans represent districts where the median income is lower than the national median, according to researchers at the University of Southern California. By contrast, about 60 percent of House Democrats represent districts more affluent than the median.

The politics of class, as Brownstein puts it, have been inverted.

Upside down

I’ve written before about the tensions that this inversion [*has created for Democrats*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/04/briefing/democrats-election-working-class-voters.html). The party increasingly reflects the views of upper-income professionals who tend to be more liberal on social issues than most swing voters. Today’s left is less religious and patriotic than the country as a whole and less concerned about crime and border security. The left is more focused on differences among Americans, especially by race, gender and sexuality, than on what Americans have in common.

This shift has been happening for a long time, but it has accelerated in the past decade. “The new left is very conscious of identity,” my colleague Nate Cohn wrote last week. “Obama-era liberals tended to emphasize the commonalities between groups and downplayed longstanding racial, religious and partisan divisions.” (In that article, Nate makes [*a thoughtful attempt to define “woke.”*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/24/upshot/woke-meaning-democrats-republicans.html))

These developments have created challenges for the Democratic Party. It has continued to lose ***working-class*** white voters and recently lost some [*Latino*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/21/briefing/poll-hispanic-voters-us-elections.html) and [*Asian American*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/06/briefing/asian-americans-conservative-republican.html) voters. Biden and his aides spend considerable time thinking about these problems, and he has tried to take a less elitist approach. Democrats don’t “pay nearly as much attention to ***working-class*** folks as we used to,” [*he has said*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/02/20/briefing/biden-2024.html).

But the new class dynamic also creates challenges for the Republican Party. For decades, it was the party that skewed affluent. It still had to manage the differences between its higher-income voters and its evangelical voters, but Republicans were mostly comfortable pushing for lower taxes and smaller government (other than the military). Paul Ryan, the former House speaker, [*embodied this outlook*](https://www.nytimes.com/2012/09/16/opinion/sunday/do-tax-cuts-lead-to-economic-growth.html).

Donald Trump was able to engineer a hostile takeover of the party in 2016 partly because he recognized that many Republican voters had no interest in Ryan-style cuts to Social Security and Medicare. Trump promised to protect those programs and, unlike most Republican politicians, criticized trade deals. These positions helped him win the nomination and then the general election, as Matthew Yglesias of Substack [*has argued*](https://www.slowboring.com/p/unhinged-moderation). In the 2024 Republican campaign, Trump is already using [*a similar strategy*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/02/11/opinion/republicans-trump-biden-desantis.html).

While Trump was president, however, he mostly did not govern as a populist. He acted more like a President Paul Ryan might have, cutting taxes on corporations and the affluent while trying to shrink Medicaid and repeal Obamacare. Those Trump policies weren’t popular. They contributed to the Republican Party’s huge losses in the 2018 midterms and probably hurt Trump’s re-election campaign too.

Polls show that even many Republican voters oppose cuts to government health care programs. The same message is evident in the outcome of state-level ballot initiatives: Idaho, Missouri, Nebraska, Oklahoma and Utah have all voted to expand Medicaid.

The G.O.P. dilemma

The Republican Party has not yet figured out a solution to this problem. If the party were guided solely by public opinion, it might put together an agenda that was well to the right of the Democratic Party on social issues while also calling for higher taxes on the rich. “There is quite a bit of economically populist appetite even among Republicans for raising taxes on the wealthy and corporations,” Bryan Bennett, who oversees polling at the Hub Project, a progressive group, told The Atlantic.

But the Republican Party retains enough of its wealthy base that it remains staunchly opposed to tax increases. Instead, Republicans say that the solution to the budget deficit involves less spending. But the specific cuts that they have talked about so far — like calls to reduce Medicaid and food stamps — don’t come close to balancing the budget. Other Republicans have talked about reducing the “woke bureaucracy,” but it is not clear what that would entail.

“The math doesn’t actually work,” my colleague Catie Edmondson, who covers Congress, said. “This is such a dilemma for Republicans.”

Adding to the challenge for Kevin McCarthy, the speaker, is the slim Republican House majority. McCarthy can lose only four votes and still pass a bill without Democratic support. “It is very hard to envision a Republican budget that can satisfy the Freedom Caucus and still get votes from Republicans in swing districts,” Carl Hulse, The Times’s chief Washington correspondent, told me.

What’s next: Sometime this summer or fall, the U.S. government is likely to reach its debt limit. To avoid defaulting on debt payments — [*and risking a financial crisis*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/07/us/politics/debt-default-economy.html) — Congress will need to raise the limit before then, and Republicans say they will insist on cuts as part of a deal.

Related: Biden and McCarthy are on [*a collision course*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/18/us/politics/biden-mccarthy-relationship.html).

THE LATEST NEWS

Turmoil in Israel

* Protests [*flared up overnight*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2023/03/27/world/israel-judiciary?smid=url-share#heres-the-latest-in-israels-political-crisis) in Israel and are continuing today after Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu fired his defense minister for opposing a plan that would strip power from the supreme court.

1. Unions are threatening to paralyze the economy. Medical strikes are underway and workers shut down outgoing flights at the main airport.
2. Netanyahu’s coalition [*appeared divided on how to respond*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2023/03/27/world/israel-judiciary), with hard-liners resisting suggestions of delaying the overhaul.
3. Here’s The Morning’s [*explainer on the turmoil*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/15/briefing/israel-netanyahu.html).

Politics

* Kamala Harri‌s ‌is visiting Ghana, Tanzania and Zambia, hoping to focus the relationship between the U.S. and Africa on [*collaboration rather than crises*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/27/world/africa/kamala-harris-visit.html).

1. After battles with previous governors, New York’s Native American leaders hoped for a reset under Kathy Hochul. [*Instead, tensions have increased*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/27/nyregion/kathy-hochul-native-americans-graves.html).
2. The House Democrats’ new leader, Hakeem Jeffries, was shaped by Black Brooklyn and [*trained by Manhattan’s legal elite*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/27/nyregion/hakeem-jeffries-profile.html).

Other Big Stories

* The violent storms in the South that killed at least 26 people this weekend have left behind scenes of heartbreak. [*These photos show the devastation*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/26/us/violent-storms-leave-behind-scenes-of-devastation-and-heartbreak.html).

1. First Citizens will [*acquire Silicon Valley Bank*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/27/business/silicon-valley-bank-first-citizens.html), the California lender whose collapse sent shock waves across the financial sector.
2. Twitter says parts of its source code, the underlying computer code on which the social network runs, [*were leaked online*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/26/technology/twitter-source-code-leak.html).
3. Apple is planning to present an augmented reality headset in a few months. Priced at roughly $3,000, [*some employees wonder who’ll buy it*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/26/technology/apple-augmented-reality-dissent.html).

Opinions

Gail Collins and Bret Stephens discuss [*crime, Trump and TikTok*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/27/opinion/trump-bragg-waco-biden-medicare.html).

How to choose a college? This tool — by Quoctrung Bui and Jessia Ma — [*lets you build your own rankings*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/03/27/opinion/build-your-own-college-rankings.html).

To solve a labor shortage, we need higher wages, safer workplaces and better jobs. We [*do not need more child labor*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/27/opinion/child-labor-laws.html), Terri Gerstein writes.

MORNING READS

Made in America: It’s a [*lucrative pitch*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/25/business/the-lure-of-the-made-in-america-sales-pitch.html).

Sticker shock: These pants are $20,000 — [*and secondhand*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/23/style/luxury-mens-clothing-resale.html).

Quiz time: Take [*our latest news quiz*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/03/24/briefing/24news-quiz.html) and share your score (the average was 8.4).

Advice from Wirecutter: [*The best umbrella*](https://www.nytimes.com/wirecutter/reviews/best-umbrella/).

Lives Lived: In works like “John Somebody,” the composer and guitarist Scott Johnson mixed the rigor of classical composition with the sound and attitude of rock. [*He died at 70*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/26/arts/music/scott-johnson-dead.html).

SPORTS NEWS FROM THE ATHLETIC

The men’s Final Four is set: UConn, Florida Atlantic, San Diego State and Miami had a collective 1-in-125,000 chance to make it this far. The Huskies have [*the best odds*](https://theathletic.com/4349961/2023/03/26/final-four-odds-schedule/) to win the title — for now.

March Madness history: Caitlin Clark became the only player [*to record*](https://theathletic.com/4350513/2023/03/26/iowa-louisville-caitlin-clark/) a 40-point triple double in the N.C.A.A. Tournament. Her performance sent Iowa to the Final Four.

A return: LeBron James [*came off the bench*](https://theathletic.com/4348795/2023/03/26/lakers-lebron-james-return-update/) in the Lakers’ loss yesterday, his first action since Feb. 26.

ARTS AND IDEAS

The art of the remake

When video game developers remake games, they have to appeal to both new players and those hoping to relive a favorite. For horror games, there’s an added challenge: [*Can you scare someone twice?*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/23/arts/resident-evil-4-dead-space-remake.html)

In a new version of the 2005 classic Resident Evil 4, developers made the zombie enemies faster and smarter and added elements to surprise even those who had memorized the original. The goal, said Yasuhiro Ampo, the game’s director, was “to create that same feeling from when people played these games for the first time.”

Review: “Newcomers have a chance to understand what the fuss was all about, and the rest of us jump in a time machine,” [*Patrick Klepek writes at Vice*](https://www.vice.com/en/article/m7bjaq/resident-evil-4-review).

PLAY, WATCH, EAT

What to Cook

These [*North African meatballs*](https://cooking.nytimes.com/recipes/12763-north-african-meatballs) go well with couscous.

What to Read

“Grey Bees,” by the Ukrainian author Andrey Kurkov, [*recently won a National Book Critics Circle Award*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/23/books/national-book-critics-circle-award-2023.html).

Television Recap

The Roy family is back for a [*final season of “Succession,”*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/26/arts/television/succession-recap-season-4-premiere.html) and everyone came out swinging. (This article contains spoilers.)

Now Time to Play

The pangram from yesterday’s Spelling Bee was typeface. Here is [*today’s puzzle*](https://www.nytimes.com/puzzles/spelling-bee).

Here’s [*today’s Mini Crossword*](https://www.nytimes.com/crosswords/game/mini), and a clue: “Cool!” (four letters).

And here’s [*today’s Wordle*](https://www.nytimes.com/games/wordle/index.html).

Thanks for spending part of your morning with The Times. See you tomorrow.

P.S. Read a Q. and A. with Bill Keller, The Times’s former executive editor, about his new book [*on America’s prison system*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/25/us/prisons-rehabilitation-san-quentin.html).

Here’s [*today’s front page*](https://static01.nyt.com/images/2023/03/27/nytfrontpage/scan.pdf).

“[*The Daily*](https://www.nytimes.com/thedaily)” is about kids and social media.

Matthew Cullen, Lauren Hard, Lauren Jackson, Claire Moses, Ian Prasad Philbrick, Tom Wright-Piersanti and Ashley Wu contributed to The Morning. You can reach the team at [*themorning@nytimes.com*](mailto:themorning@nytimes.com).

[*Sign up here to get this newsletter in your inbox*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing).

PHOTO: U.S. Capitol in Washington. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Anna Rose Layden for The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** March 27, 2023

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[***'Hillbilly Elegy' Author Seeks Ohio Seat***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6324-TXT1-JBG3-63NV-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; National Desk; Pg. 11

**Length:** 650 words

**Byline:** By Jeremy W. Peters

**Body**

The author and venture capitalist will vie for the Republican nomination in one of the most wide-open 2022 Senate races.

J.D. Vance, an author and venture capitalist whose best-selling memoir, ''Hillbilly Elegy,'' focused on the social and economic underpinnings of former President Donald J. Trump's appeal to the white ***working class***, said on Thursday that he would seek the Republican nomination for the Senate in Ohio.

Mr. Vance, 36, enters the campaign as a well-known and well-financed first-time candidate facing an open field. The Republican incumbent, Senator Rob Portman, is retiring after two terms. The race is one of a few in next year's midterm elections that could determine which party controls the upper chamber of Congress, which is now split 50-50.

At his campaign kickoff event at a steel parts factory in Middletown, the city north of Cincinnati where he grew up, Mr. Vance made his backstory as a son of the Rust Belt central to his identity as a candidate.

He spoke at length about his upbringing, including how his ''mamaw'' had ''kept him on the straight and narrow'' as a youth, before diving into his political pitch. He staked out populist positions on issues like inequality and Big Tech and more conservative ones on matters like immigration and abortion.

''If you look at every issue in this country,'' Mr. Vance said, ''every issue I believe traces back to this fact: On the one hand, the elites in the ruling class in this country are robbing us blind, and on the other, if you dare complain about it, you are a bad person.''

Mr. Vance will benefit from $10 million pledged toward his campaign by the billionaire venture capitalist Peter Thiel. Mr. Thiel was an early backer of Mr. Vance who hired him and later invested in the fund Mr. Vance now runs. But in the Republican primary, Mr. Vance will face a number of candidates who are well known in Ohio G.O.P. politics, including Josh Mandel, a former state treasurer, and Jane Timken, a former chair of the state Republican Party.

Mr. Trump won Ohio twice by comfortable margins. Courting his voters -- thousands of whom showed up for a rally he held last weekend outside Cleveland -- will be crucial to winning a statewide Republican primary contest. Mr. Vance attended the event, Mr. Trump's first since his supporters stormed the Capitol on Jan. 6, but he did not speak there.

After the 2016 publication of ''Hillbilly Elegy,'' Mr. Vance leveraged his fame into a part-time career as a fixture on the speaking circuit and as a media commentator. Lately, he has staked out a position among the more populist voices in his party who are targeting social media companies, China and the left wing of the Democratic Party.

The arc of Mr. Vance's short time as a quasi-political figure has followed the prevailing mood among Republican office holders since Mr. Trump won in 2016. At first, he was deeply critical of the former president, calling him ''noxious'' and saying he worried Mr. Trump was ''leading the white ***working class*** to a very dark place.''

But today Mr. Vance is a prolific tweeter and occasional Fox News guest who has adopted Trumpian culture war language, denouncing ''wokeness'' and calling for more restrictive immigration policies.

His Republican opponents have already started dusting off his old anti-Trump statements as a way of suggesting that he is insincere and has lost touch with ***working-class*** Ohio.

Mr. Vance today is in a much different place than the young man he describes in ''Hillbilly Elegy,'' who struggled to overcome adversity; a mother who had a long history with substance abuse; family members who could not control their anger; and opioid-addicted friends and neighbors.

He served in the Marines, graduated from Yale Law School and joined Mr. Thiel's venture capital firm. ''Hillbilly Elegy'' was made into a movie directed by Ron Howard that was released last year.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2021/07/01/us/politics/jd-vance-ohio-senate.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/07/01/us/politics/jd-vance-ohio-senate.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: J.D. Vance has made his back story as a son of the Rust Belt central to his political identity. (PHOTOGRAPH BY ANDREW SPEAR FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** July 2, 2021

**End of Document**



[***Adams’s Re-election Bid Fueled by Real Estate Titans and Out-of-Towners***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68R9-3VY1-DXY4-X2N9-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

July 18, 2023 Tuesday 00:28 EST

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**Section:** NYREGION

**Length:** 1327 words

**Byline:** Emma G. Fitzsimmons and Nicholas Fandos

**Highlight:** The mayor has raised $1.3 million for re-election since January, relying on many wealthy donors from New York City and beyond.

**Body**

The mayor has raised $1.3 million for re-election since January, relying on many wealthy donors from New York City and beyond.

Despite falling poll numbers and critical news coverage, Mayor Eric Adams clearly has the continued monetary support of two influential spheres of influence: real estate leaders and the donor class from New York City and beyond.

Mr. Adams has raised $1.3 million since January for his 2025 re-election effort in the latest reporting period, drawing maximum $2,100 donations from real estate magnates like Marc Holliday, the chief executive of SL Green, the city’s largest commercial landlord, and its founder, Steve Green; and Alexander and Helena Durst, members of The Durst Organization real estate dynasty, according to new filings with the city’s [*Campaign Finance Board*](https://www.nyccfb.info/VSApps/WebForm_Finance_Summary.aspx?as_election_cycle=2023).

About $550,000 came from donors outside New York City who live in the suburbs, Florida and other states — a continuation of a pattern displayed early in his tenure, when he [*held fund-raisers in Beverly Hills and Chicago*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/06/13/nyregion/eric-adams-fundraising-mayor.html) in his first months in office.

As mayor, Mr. Adams has often taken positions that benefit the real estate industry, including being supportive of [*rent increases*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/21/nyregion/rent-stabilized-apartment-homes-rise.html) and criticizing state lawmakers for failing to replace a tax-incentive program for developers known as 421a.

He has frequently met with real estate leaders and has used One Vanderbilt, one of the city’s newest skyscrapers, developed by SL Green, as a backdrop for photo ops and news conferences. As a small-time landlord, Mr. Adams [*once declared,*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/07/07/nyregion/eric-adams-mayor-nyc.html) “I am real estate.” And major landlords have consistently been among his most faithful donors.

Mr. Adams frequently asserts that his political base of ***working-class*** New Yorkers and churchgoers understands and supports his mission. But the continued support from real estate interests only furthers the notion that Mr. Adams may be too aligned with major developers.

Vito Pitta, a lawyer for the Adams campaign, insisted that the mayor’s success in addressing crime and job losses was driving donations.

“Our campaign is well on its way to raising the maximum amount it can spend under the city’s campaign finance system — just 18 months into the mayor’s tenure — because New Yorkers see that Mayor Adams is lowering crime, increasing employment, and moving our city in the right direction,” Mr. Pitta said in a statement.

The spending cap for the 2025 primary is $7.9 million. Under the city’s generous public financing system, his campaign is expected to have about $4.6 million on hand, after matching funds are included.

Mr. Adams has faced a series of setbacks in recent weeks. His approval rating fell to 46 percent in a [*Siena College poll last month*](https://www.nydailynews.com/news/politics/new-york-elections-government/ny-adams-nyc-poll-siena-popularity-drops-black-residents-20230628-x3lkxu5wgrfhbdw5dku27gaqhq-story.html). A longtime associate of his was [*charged in a straw donor scheme*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/07/07/nyregion/eric-mayor-adams-campaign-donation.html) to raise money for his mayoral campaign; the mayor was not implicated. The New York Times reported that a photo of a police officer killed in the line of duty, which the mayor said he had long carried in his wallet, was [*created by employees in the mayor’s office last year, and was made to look old*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/07/06/nyregion/mayor-adams-photo-venable-fake.html).

The mayor also drew attention for his response last month to an 84-year-old tenant-rights activist whose family had escaped the Holocaust. The mayor publicly likened her to a plantation owner after he believed the activist had been [*disrespectful to him*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/29/nyregion/nyc-eric-adams-plantation-owner.html).

Still, Mr. Adams, a Democrat who ran for office on a public safety message, could be difficult to beat in 2025.

He is likely eager to show off a large war chest to fend off a serious competitor. He won a competitive Democratic primary in 2021 by only 7,197 votes.

“The bigger the fund-raising number, the less likely that someone else gets into the race,” said Chris Coffey, a former campaign manager for Andrew Yang, one of the mayor’s primary opponents in 2021.

Mr. Coffey said that the mayor’s low approval rating was not too worrisome, noting that Michael R. Bloomberg, the former mayor, had an [*approval rating as low as 24 percent*](https://www.nytimes.com/2003/09/09/nyregion/mayor-gains-boost-in-poll-but-is-facing-wide-disapproval.html) in his second year in office and still won two more terms.

“If the city has made progress on public safety, it’s really hard to see the mayor have any re-election challenges,” Mr. Coffey said.

The real estate industry once again also provided the largest donor base for Gov. Kathy Hochul, a Buffalo Democrat who narrowly won a full four-year term in November. Of the $4.5 million her campaign raised in the first six months of the year, more than $950,000 came from developers and real estate investors, and more from other industries with business before the state, according to an analysis of her public filings by The Times.

At least 45 donors connected to the real estate industry chipped in $18,000, the new legal maximum for statewide candidates, including Mr. Holliday, Scott Rechler and Jeff Blau. Mr. Rechler and Mr. Blau are both Democratic megadonors whose firms are [*competing*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/15/nyregion/casino-hudson-yards-manhattan.html) [*with Mr. Holliday’s*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/19/nyregion/casino-times-square.html) for a license to operate a casino in the New York City area.

With New York facing an affordable housing crunch, Ms. Hochul has spent much of the year fighting for new government programs to spur development. On Tuesday, she announced she would bypass opponents in the legislature and [*take executive actions*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/07/18/nyregion/housing-crisis-421a-hochul.html) that had been a priority of the real estate industry.

Other major donors included members of the Sands family, which controls the Rochester-based beverage giant Constellation Brands; well-known Albany lobbyists Emily Giske, Giorgio DeRosa and the firm Cozen O’Connor; and tech executives like Dara Khosrowshahi of Uber. Ms. Hochul also brought in more than $250,000 at a fund-raiser this month from board members and doctors connected to Somos Community Care, a Bronx-based nonprofit that has tapped into lucrative government health programs.

Ms. Hochul managed to raise the sum — plus another $1.5 million for the state Democratic Party — despite new, stricter contributions limits that cap individual gifts at $18,000, down from nearly $70,000 last election cycle. For much of the period, Ms. Hochul was also dealing with tumult within her political operation after [*reporting by The Times*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/04/30/nyregion/adam-sullivan-resignation-hochul.html) prompted the ouster of her top political aide.

For his part, Mr. Adams was a prolific fund-raiser in 2021 and [*received significant support from a super PAC*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/06/21/nyregion/mayor-super-pacs-money.html), which received donations from Steven A. Cohen, the hedge fund billionaire who owns the Mets and is vying for a casino license in the city. Earlier this year, SL Green retained Frank Carone, the mayor’s former chief of staff, to aid its bid to build a Caesars Palace casino in Times Square.

A [*Broadway fund-raiser for the mayor last month*](https://twitter.com/danarubinstein/status/1653743784285306880?s=20) at a showing of the musical “New York, New York” proved especially lucrative. The campaign raised about $600,000 at the event, which was organized by Mr. Carone, according to Evan Thies, a spokesman for the campaign.

Fred Elghanayan, a founder of TF Cornerstone, a real estate company, and Todd Cooper, a founder of RIPCO Real Estate, both donated to the Adams campaign. A dozen people who work at Morgan &amp; Morgan, a national personal injury law firm, donated a total of $25,000 to the mayor’s campaign. Four employees of Meridian Properties, another real estate firm, donated $8,400. Six people who work at another real estate firm, Top Rock Holdings, each gave the maximum of $2,100 to the mayor’s campaign.

Many donations came from outside the state, including from Alex Havenick, a gambling and cannabis entrepreneur in Miami, and David Kovacs, a virtual reality video game developer in Miami. Brock Pierce, a cryptocurrency investor who [*once flew Mr. Adams to Puerto Rico on his private jet*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/01/20/nyregion/eric-adams-bitcoin-cryptocurrency.html), donated $2,100. He listed his address as a ZIP code in Puerto Rico.

There were plenty of smaller donations as well. A senior pastor at a church in Queens donated $250 to the mayor’s campaign, as did the director of a New York City children’s theater.

PHOTO: Mayor Eric Adams is likely fund-raising this early on to ward off potential primary challengers. (PHOTOGRAPH BY HIROKO MASUIKE/THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A18.

**Load-Date:** July 19, 2023

**End of Document**



[***‘The Menu’ Review: Eat, Pray, Run!; Critic’s Pick***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:66WD-DYN1-JBG3-60HC-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

November 17, 2022 Thursday 11:26 EST

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**Section:** MOVIES

**Length:** 493 words

**Byline:** Jeannette Catsoulis

**Highlight:** Ralph Fiennes and Anya Taylor-Joy face off in this pitch-black satire of class and high-end dining.

**Body**

Ralph Fiennes and Anya Taylor-Joy face off in this pitch-black satire of class and high-end dining.

There is nothing subtle about “The Menu,” but that’s a large part of its charm. Like Hawthorn, the exclusive upscale restaurant where most of the action takes place, this brutal satire of class division — viewed through the lens of high-end gorging — is ruthlessly focused and gleamingly efficient. And by unabashedly flaunting its crowd-pleasing ambitions, the script (by Seth Reiss and Will Tracy) cheekily skirts the very pretentiousness it aims to skewer.

At Hawthorn, set on its own island in the Pacific Northwest, every dish comes with a side of ego and a lecture on its provenance by Julian Slowik (Ralph Fiennes), a rock-star chef with a drill-sergeant’s demeanor. In his dining room, mere feet from an army of obsequious underlings, drooling one-percenters have each dropped $1,250 to wrap their gums around Slowik’s fabled tasting menu. Among them are a star-struck foodie (Nicholas Hoult) and his last-minute date, Margot (Anya Taylor-Joy); an arrogant restaurant critic (Janet McTeer); three odious tech workers (Rob Yang, Arturo Castro and Mark St. Cyr); and a fading movie star (John Leguizamo) hoping to pitch a culinary travel show. All except Margot have been carefully chosen, and all are about to become players in Slowik’s elaborate opera of humiliation, self-loathing and revenge.

[Video: [*Watch on YouTube.*](http://youtube.com/embed/C_uTkUGcHv4)]

From amuse-bouche to dessert, Slowik’s creations — and the diners’ punishments — grow steadily more bizarre and threatening. In service to a gleefully malicious tone, Mark Mylod’s direction is cool, tight and clipped, the actors slotting neatly into characters so unsympathetic we become willing accessories to their suffering. Fiennes is fabulous as a man so determined to turn food into art that he’s forgotten its very purpose; his disgust for the act of eating has long extinguished any joy in cooking.

“Even your hot dishes are cold,” spits Margot, the audience surrogate and the first to challenge the insult embedded in each course, like the “bread plate” with no bread. Intrigued by her ***working-class*** wiliness, Slowik is unsettled: He can see that she’s willing to take him on.

Whisking splashes of horror into culinary comedy (“Don’t touch the protein, it’s immature,” admonishes the forbidding hostess during a smokehouse tour), “The Menu” is black, broad and sometimes clumsy, attacking its issues more often with cleaver than paring knife. Yet everyone is having such a good time, it’s impossible not to join them. The movie’s eye might be on haute cuisine, but its heart is pure fish and chips.

The Menu

Rated R for slaying, suicide and exuberant oversaucing. Running time: 1 hour 46 minutes. In theaters.

PHOTO: Ralph Fiennes as an imperious chef and Anya Taylor-Joy as a resistant diner in “The Menu,” directed by Mark Mylod. (PHOTOGRAPH BY ERIC ZACHANOWICH/20TH CENTURY STUDIOS) This article appeared in print on page C6.

**Load-Date:** November 18, 2022

**End of Document**



[***Don’t Buy the Republican Appeal to Workers; Guest Essay***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:66RB-FJ81-JBG3-622B-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

October 29, 2022 Saturday 10:36 EST

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 1183 words

**Byline:** Terri Gerstein

**Highlight:** For ordinary workers living paycheck to paycheck, the G.O.P. is AWOL.

**Body**

J.D. Vance, the Ohio Republican Senate candidate, states on his campaign website that he “fiercely defended ***working-class*** Americans.” In Pennsylvania, Dr. Mehmet Oz, the Republican Senate hopeful, sports a plaid shirt and jeans in a campaign ad, as [*he shoots guns*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J59yo3XQNQ8) of varying sizes. Guitar twangs in the background complete the scene.

Mr. Vance, a venture capitalist and best-selling author, and Dr. Oz, the heart surgeon and TV personality, aren’t alone in their self-presentation as ordinary Joes. As November’s midterm elections near, many Republican candidates are all about pickup trucks, bluejeans and guns, as they perform the role of champions for the working stiff. Scratch the surface, though, and it’s a different story.

This Republican ***working-class*** veneer is playacting. Their positions on workers’ rights make that crystal clear. Nationwide, most Republicans rail against liberal elites and then block a $15 an hour minimum wage, paid leave laws and [*workplace safety protections*](https://jordanbarab.com/confinedspace/2022/09/08/elise-stefanik-and-republican-war-on-workers/). They stymie bills to help workers unionize, and top it off by starving the National Labor Relations Board of funding, even as it faces a surge of union election requests. Several Republican attorneys general have [*sued to stop wage hikes*](https://inthesetimes.com/article/republican-state-attorney-general-biden-wages-federal-contacts-labor-day-unions) for [*nearly 400,000 people*](https://www.epi.org/blog/up-to-390000-federal-contractors-will-get-a-raise-starting-next-week/) working for federal contractors. Republicans also opposed extending [*the popular monthly child tax credit*](https://www.businessinsider.com/mcconnell-biden-child-tax-credit-stimulus-popular-book-2022-5) that helped so many working families afford basic necessities. The “issues” section on the campaign websites of [*Mr. Vance*](https://jdvance.com/issues/) and [*Dr. Oz*](https://doctoroz.com/issues/) contain virtually no labor policy. Howling about China, as they do, isn’t a comprehensive labor plan.

In other instances, what superficially seemed to be examples of Republican support for worker rights were really Trojan horse incursions to advance their culture war.

For example, legislators or policymakers in [*at least six*](https://tcf.org/content/commentary/states-seek-use-unemployment-benefits-break-back-vaccine-mandates/?session=1) conservative states last year swiftly expanded eligibility for unemployment insurance to workers who quit or were fired for refusing to comply with employer Covid-19 vaccination mandates. The sudden largess was at odds with these states’ generally miserly approach to such benefits: They’d previously done most everything possible to limit the lifeline of unemployment insurance, including prematurely [*cutting off federally funded benefits*](https://www.cnbc.com/2021/05/28/millions-of-people-in-24-states-set-to-lose-unemployment-benefits.html) in the summer of 2021.

Only a sliver of the national work force dug in and refused to be vaccinated, including a small number of New York City employees recently [*granted reinstatement*](https://iapps.courts.state.ny.us/fbem/DocumentDisplayServlet?documentId=JK5E3gx5XV1/ku37jnWR_PLUS_w==&amp;system=prod&amp;TSPD_101_R0=08533cd43fab2000d73bf96688c518cece2ad4eac4e32407fef5861ed36f2bfc6b82b4ca9f696deb085b45a1a1144800d4a837bc26e664e66c0b9a4f72455d5b0b08689a70a93a9745eecc8ade3873f5114b37cfcd80d37c9b93988f5f66000149dc75c35e41c109da8b80f0f0c1d82831ee0b0ab9b6ff11) to their jobs by a Staten Island trial court judge. But anti-vax‌ workers were stark outliers in relation to the vast majority of their peers, from [*United Airlines employees*](https://www.cnbc.com/2021/09/28/unvaccinated-united-airlines-staff-faces-termination-as-early-as-today.html) to [*Massachusetts state employees*](https://www.masslive.com/politics/2022/02/more-than-1000-state-workers-were-fired-or-quit-over-gov-charlie-bakers-covid-vaccine-mandate.html), who overwhelmingly complied with mandates.

Why did ‌these conservative Republicans suddenly want a safety net for unvaccinated workers? Because it served a [*culture war narrative*](https://nymag.com/intelligencer/article/republicans-midterms-culture-war.html), one that frames everything in divisive us-versus-them terms and in the case of vaccines, sees them as a nefarious liberal plot and vaccine-or-test mandates as one more example of government overreach.

To that point, consider two legal cases, one brought by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission when its enforcement arm was led by a Trump appointee, and another heard by the Supreme Court, where six of the nine justices are Republican appointees. Both cases involved workers — but neither touched on pocketbook or dignity issues central to most workers’ concerns.

The E.E.O.C. [*case*](https://www.eeoc.gov/newsroom/kroger-company-sued-eeoc-religious-discrimination) involved two Kroger workers who claimed religious discrimination after being fired for refusing to wear company-issued aprons bearing a heart-shaped logo they saw as promoting gay rights. (In pretrial depositions, both [*workers were shown a range of corporate logos*](https://drive.google.com/file/d/14VO9X4kiPVSI1TLPVm7mMGCkddCUq2-Q/view?usp=sharing), and the workers said several of them also represented gay rights and were incompatible with their religion; they included the logos of NBC, Google, Southwest and Apple, as well as the Olympic rings.) A Trump-appointed federal judge in Arkansas rejected Kroger’s motion to end the case, [*ordering the case to trial*](https://www.employmentlawinsights.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/36/2022/06/gov.uscourts.ared_.123904.60.0_1-1.pdf), and this month the company and commission said they had [*reached a deal*](https://www.law360.com/employment-authority/articles/1539559/kroger-strikes-deal-ending-eeoc-religious-bias-suit-) to resolve the dispute.

In a Supreme Court [*case*](https://www.supremecourt.gov/opinions/21pdf/21-418_i425.pdf) that became a national right-wing cause célèbre, the six conservative justices ruled that a Washington State school district violated the free speech and religious rights of a public school football coach who insisted on praying very publicly after games with students at midfield, rejecting more private locations that were offered.

In light of genuine worker struggles in our country, these are the workers conservatives go to bat for? It seems the trickle-down crowd finds their inner Norma Rae only if it helps them “own the libs.” These aren’t workers’ rights issues. They’re divisive culture war battles that happen to occur in the employment arena. For ordinary workers, living paycheck to paycheck, who just want a safe place to work, decent pay, and some dignity, conservatives are AWOL.

The praying coach and Kroger worker cases involved First Amendment and religious rights. But [*the most common example*](https://prospect.org/labor/real-victims-of-cancel-culture-are-americas-workers/) of silenced expression occurs when workers get fired for reporting labor law violations or supporting a union. How many Republicans have spoken up to support the expressive rights of unionizing Starbucks or Amazon workers?

Similarly, Republicans may prioritize benefits for their favored workers (such as people who are unvaccinated), but all workers need a functioning safety net, including an adequately funded and functional unemployment insurance system. What’s also essential are robust and broadly available programs for paid family and medical leave, paid sick leave and universal health care, measures most Republicans have repeatedly opposed. In this context, the rush to ensure unemployment benefits to people refusing a lifesaving vaccine is cynical, indeed.

Workers need safe conditions, good wages, fair treatment and a collective voice on the job. The culture war labor incursions are divorced from what matters most to our country’s working people.

As the midterms approach, Republican candidates may play dress-up in plaids and work boots, as they vie for the votes of our nation’s workers. But even a pickup truck laden with bluejeans and hard hats can’t camouflage the callous facts. The absurdity of the worker causes Republicans champion should drive home the truth to wavering voters: these candidates don’t care about the real needs of working people.

[*Terri Gerstein*](https://lwp.law.harvard.edu/people/terri-gerstein) is a fellow at the Labor and Worklife Program at Harvard Law School and the Economic Policy Institute. She spent more than 17 years enforcing labor laws in New York State, working in the state attorney general’s office and as a deputy labor commissioner.

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PHOTO: J.D. Vance, left, speaking at a Republican event this month. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Brian Kaiser for The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** October 31, 2022

**End of Document**



[***New York City Congestion Pricing Plan Could Give Poor Drivers a Discount***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6870-45N1-JBG3-61TB-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

May 12, 2023 Friday 01:07 EST

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**Section:** NYREGION

**Length:** 955 words

**Byline:** Ana Ley

**Highlight:** The tolling program, which would be the first of its kind in the nation, is intended to reduce traffic by charging drivers to enter the busiest parts of Manhattan.

**Body**

The tolling program, which would be the first of its kind in the nation, is intended to reduce traffic by charging drivers to enter the busiest parts of Manhattan.

As congestion pricing in New York City moves closer to reality, the Metropolitan Transportation Authority has finalized a plan to give the city’s neediest drivers a discount and to distribute traffic more evenly by reducing overnight tolls.

[*The M.T.A. on Friday released a report*](https://new.mta.info/project/CBDTP) showing that the authority intends to limit the number of times that drivers of taxis and for-hire vehicles are tolled, [*give certain low-income drivers a discount*](https://nyc.streetsblog.org/2023/05/09/mta-will-offer-congestion-pricing-discounts-for-low-income-frequent-drivers/), increase discounts for those driving into the area overnight and periodically check on small businesses in the tolling zone to see if the tolls become an impediment.

The tolling program would be the first of its kind in the nation and is intended to reduce traffic by charging drivers to enter the busiest parts of Manhattan. [*It cleared a major hurdle this month*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/05/nyregion/new-york-congestion-pricing.html) after the Federal Highway Administration tentatively approved the M.T.A.’s report, known as an environmental assessment, which identified ways to mitigate harm congestion pricing may pose to disadvantaged communities.

[*The public has until June 12 to review*](https://new.mta.info/project/CBDTP) the report — which is tens of thousands of pages — before the federal government gives the document its final approval, paving the way for the M.T.A. to come up with toll rates.

Once that happens, the M.T.A. says the program, which would affect drivers entering Manhattan south of 60th Street, could begin as soon as spring 2024.

“Congestion pricing means less traffic, cleaner air, safer streets, better transit,” Janno Lieber, the authority’s chairman, said during a news conference.

Advocates, community leaders and urban planning experts celebrated the progress and said congestion pricing was long overdue.

“For decades, New York City has struggled with crushing traffic congestion, which pollutes the air we breathe, clogs our roads, damages our communities and weakens our economy,” said Tom Wright, the president of the Regional Plan Association, a research and advocacy group. “We are one step closer to finally addressing this issue and implementing a policy which will benefit drivers, transit riders and communities alike.”

Taxi, Lyft and Uber drivers have criticized the tolling program, noting that the M.T.A.’s own research shows that [*fare increases prompted by the tolls*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/11/nyregion/nyc-traffic-yellow-cab-tolls.html) could slash demand for cabs and for-hire rides by up to 17 percent, frustrating drivers who are already struggling to get by. To lessen their burden, the new report says those drivers would not be tolled more than once per day.

Bhairavi Desai, the executive director of the New York Taxi Workers Alliance, which calls for better working conditions for taxi and app-based drivers, vowed to fight the proposal, arguing that yellow cabs should be exempt.

“Once a day is still thousands of dollars a year for struggling drivers,” Ms. Desai said. “This is just a money grab off the backs of a ***working class*** work force that labors 60 hours a week to survive.”

The M.T.A. hasn’t set a fee scale yet, but an initial version of the report that it released in August showed that some proposals under review would charge [*$23 for a rush-hour trip into the tolling zone and $17 during off-peak hours*](https://new.mta.info/document/92756) for E-ZPass holders.

Under the final proposal, drivers who earn an annual salary of $50,000 or less or are enrolled in certain government assistance programs would get a 25 percent discount on tolls after making 10 trips per month through the tolling zone, for the first five years that the program is in effect.

The discount would not apply to overnight tolls, which would already be much lower. [*A 2022 study by the Community Service Society of New York*](https://www.cssny.org/news/entry/congestion-pricing-outer-borough-new-yorkers-poverty-data-analysis), an anti-poverty group, found that only about 5,000 working New Yorkers in poverty would regularly incur tolls under congestion pricing.

Officials would also ensure the overnight toll rate, which would be in effect between at least midnight through 4 a.m., is at least 50 percent lower than peak toll rates. The goal is to benefit low-income drivers who can travel at that time and to encourage commercial vehicles to drive during off-peak hours, distributing traffic more evenly throughout the day.

The money raised through congestion pricing would be used for infrastructure upgrades, like building new elevators in the subway system and modernizing dated signals that are supposed to keep trains moving. The program is expected to [*generate $1 billion annually*](https://new.mta.info/document/110756) to improve the transit network, according to the M.T.A.

When the M.T.A. released the first draft of the environmental assessment last year, critics were dismayed by evidence that [*some of New York City’s poorest neighborhoods*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/12/nyregion/nyc-congestion-pricing-manhattan-bronx.html) could end up with dirtier air from all the diverted traffic. [*The final version formally commits millions of dollars in investments*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/28/nyregion/mta-congestion-pricing-pollution-bronx.html) for those communities, including $20 million for a program to fight asthma and $10 million to install air filtration units in schools near highways.

The report says the authority plans to set up meetings with small businesses in the congestion pricing zone before and after the program’s rollout to assess whether the tolls are negatively affecting commerce.

The program faces its most vociferous opposition from suburbanites who worry that it could place an unfair burden on people who travel to Manhattan for work.

Some, including Gov. Phil Murphy of New Jersey, have threatened legal action if the plan continues to advance.

PHOTO: The M.T.A.’s congestion pricing program, which would toll drivers in Manhattan south of 60th Street, could go into effect as soon as next spring. (PHOTOGRAPH BY KARSTEN MORAN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A19.

**Load-Date:** May 13, 2023

**End of Document**



[***The Coal Miners' Army Refuses to Stay Buried***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68S9-7H11-DXY4-X28F-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

July 23, 2023 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section SR; Column 0; Sunday Review Desk; Pg. 8; GUEST ESSAY

**Length:** 2937 words

**Byline:** By Cassady Rosenblum and Aaron Blum

**Body**

The striking miners were 10,000 strong on the first day of September 1921 as they charged up the slope of Blair Mountain, propelled by a radical faith in the American dream. According to an Associated Press reporter who crouched behind a log and watched through field glasses, each time they pressed forward, a ''veritable wall'' of machine gun fire drove them back. As the barrage echoed through the hollows, reminding some of the action they had just seen in the forests of France, the advancing miners soon heard a different sound: deeper, earthshaking explosions. From biplanes above, tear gas, explosive powder and metal bolts rained down. ''My God,'' screamed one miner fighting his way up Crooked Creek Gap. ''They're bombing us!''

''They'' were Sheriff Don Chafin and his deputies, who terrorized the citizens of Logan County, W.Va., by the authority of the coal companies. The miners vastly outnumbered their opponents, but Chafin had the superior position and weapons. ''ACTUAL WAR IS RAGING IN LOGAN,'' one local paper declared the day before.

The miners were fighting for the right to unionize, and to end the reviled ''mine guard system,'' a private force of armed guards who brutally enforced the company's control in the coal fields. Unless the mine guard system was removed, John L. Lewis, president of the United Mine Workers of America, had warned, ''the dove of peace'' would ''never make permanent abode in this stricken territory.''

On Sept. 4, federal troops arrived at Blair Mountain. The miners cheered, thinking Uncle Sam had come to liberate them from King Coal. Uncle Sam had no such plans. In 1921, about three million Americans were unemployed, and Washington was concerned that the industrial war raging in southern West Virginia could spread to other states. The troops told miners to stand down, and they did. ''We wouldn't revolt against the national government,'' one of them said.

The miners were roundly defeated, but their struggle was not in vain: Years later, as part of the New Deal, the rights they were fighting for -- including the right to collectively bargain -- were written into law. Black, white and immigrant, the ''Red Neck Army'' (so named for the red bandannas they wore) had mounted the largest ***working-class*** uprising in U.S. history and the largest armed insurrection since the Civil War.

Today, Blair Mountain is just that: a mountain. While many battlefields are the object of exhaustive study and veneration -- places and times when power wobbled and blood was shed -- Blair Mountain is still largely unexplored. No statue or roadside attraction commemorates it; no tour buses roll up and disgorge visitors. Despite a burst of recent interest, for most West Virginians, the story of Blair Mountain barely even exists.

My family has lived more or less continuously in West Virginia since our patriarch, John Hinkle, settled his brood near Seneca Rocks around 1760. But I spent much of my adolescence dreaming of a world beyond the blue ridges -- a dream my grandmother vigorously encouraged, having bolted over them herself when Representative Ken Hechler offered her a job in Washington. Her implied message to me, delivered via magazine clippings of girls in gaucho pants and trips to cities like Chicago, seemed to be: A much bigger world awaits. So having heard Joe Manchin call West Virginia the ''extraction state,'' I extracted myself. In college several states away, I majored in international relations, casting my attention as far away as I thought I should.

In the time I was gone, the mid-2000s, things back home seemed to further deteriorate. Opioid companies began flooding West Virginia with pills, and by 2010 it became the leading state for overdose deaths, kicking off a cascading crisis in the foster care system. That same year, an explosion at the Upper Big Branch coal mine killed 29 people. Since 2012, many mine operators have filed for bankruptcy. As they did, they paid astonishing sums to management while foisting much of their pension, black lung and environmental obligations onto taxpayers. By the 2020 census, West Virginia had shrunk enough to lose one of its three congressional seats, partially because people keep fleeing. It's easy to understand why: According to one source, West Virginia is the least happy state, the worst for finding a job and the least educated. I blocked it all out, knowing I was part of the brain drain.

Then the pandemic hit, and my personal life imploded, too. Fresh off a breakup, I reluctantly retreated to my family and the hills that raised me, hoping their ancient slopes would teach me some secret about the inevitability, and gradualness, of change.

Many rural places claim the title ''God's Country,'' but West Virginia takes great pride in being ''Almost Heaven.'' Present for the monarchs on the milkweed and cascades of scarlet maple leaves that first autumn of Covid, I felt it -- not for the first time, but in a way that seemed like mine. I met childhood friends at the river, clear and holy, and we blinked at each other as if discovering we were some strange species of fish, all returned to the source. As months turned to years, the idea of our previous urbane lives became laughable compared to the symphony of stars.

The longer I stayed, the more I became curious about my home. I finally wanted to know what everyone always wants to know about West Virginia: How can we be both so beautiful and so damned?

As I began to learn our history for what felt like the first time, the story of Blair Mountain arrived like a shocking clue. My great-grandmother, Idelene Hinkle, had been a columnist for The West Virginia Hillbilly, a satirical homage to West Virginia's ''absurd, fatalistic'' humor. She had always spoken proudly of winning a Golden Horseshoe Award, a prize given to top students in West Virginia history. It seemed inconceivable that I had never heard her, or anyone else I grew up with, talk about the time West Virginia bombed its own people.

It turned out I wasn't alone: ''I am a product of the West Virginian public school system,'' wrote Sam Heywood in a remarkable 2020 honors thesis at Brigham Young University, describing the pride he felt winning the same Golden Horseshoe Award my great-grandmother had. ''I felt deceived when in college, halfway across the country from my home, I learned about the violent history of the Mine Wars.''

So there were two of us, then. Actually, there were far more: When Charles B. Keeney III began teaching history at Southern West Virginia Community and Technical College, most of his students hadn't heard about the Mine Wars or Blair Mountain either, despite the fact that the battlefield lay just a few miles from campus. Professor Keeney, of course, had: He is the great-grandson of Frank Keeney, one of the towering figures of the United Mine Workers who urged his men not to let themselves be ''crushed like a beetle beneath the golden chariot of the money kings.''

According to Mr. Keeney and other scholars, there is a perfectly good reason for our ignorance: Following the Battle of Blair Mountain, West Virginia kept any mention of labor conflict out of its textbooks for more than 50 years, and in many schools it is still absent.

It's not just the story of Blair Mountain that the state seems to want to erase but also the soil itself. In 2009, the National Register of Historic Places, under pressure from the coal industry, delisted the Blair Mountain battlefield. This left the land open for mountaintop removal, a particularly destructive form of surface mining.

A century after the Battle of Blair Mountain, a similar war for identity and belonging is being waged. The difference, Mr. Keeney says, is that the Mine Guard System has become the Mind Guard System.

The first time I went to the State Capitol, I was on a fifth-grade field trip. ''You were so excited to learn about how a bill becomes a law,'' my mother recalled. ''But the tour guide spent nearly the entire time talking about the gold-plated dome and chandeliers.''

Even to a child, the contrast between the lavishness of the government and the trailers that some of my classmates lived in was obvious and uncomfortable. In 2018, this incongruity became a political crisis when the Legislature took the extraordinary step of impeaching the entire State Supreme Court over their office renovations. By all measures, the renovations were grotesque: A blue suede sofa priced at $32,000 does not belong in any public office, especially not in a state where, according to the Census Bureau, the per capita income was about $29,000.

But the extreme measure of impeaching an entire branch of government still struck some as a coup -- the Republican supermajority flexing its muscle against what was the state's last holdout of Democratic power. Today, West Virginia Republicans control all three branches of government and, in a pattern mirroring other red state houses (including Ohio, Tennessee and Indiana) in the country, are using their power to pass tax cuts and approve school vouchers. They are also reviving the old-time tradition of stifling dissent. On the cover of its annual magazine, the West Virginia A.C.L.U. put a finer point on it: ''Is West Virginia abandoning democracy?''

If it is, it's hardly alone, and it is taking many of its cues from the national stage. But in Appalachia unadorned, it's sometimes easier to see the signs.

Last December, the reporter Amelia Knisely was dismissed from a partly state-run radio station after reporting on alleged abuses at government facilities. That same year, the State Senate banned photography during the debate over abortion. A year before that, in 2021, the Legislature outlawed a major source of union funding -- retaliation, the West Virginia University law professor Bob Bastress believes, for a 2018 teachers' strike. When Mr. Bastress filed a pro bono suit on behalf of the unions, W.V.U. informed him that going forward, professors would need permission to represent interests that may be ''adverse to the state.'' But whose state? Adverse to whom?

In earlier decades, unions were a major engine of Democratic power in West Virginia, and part of why West Virginia, now so red, used to be so blue.

''Now,'' said the state senator Mike Caputo when I visited him in his office in January, a throng of miners waiting for him in the echoing halls, ''West Virginia does nothing but weaken labor unions.''

Mr. Caputo should know: He is a union man himself, and one of the last three Democrats in the Senate. ''They took away prevailing wage from our brothers and sisters in the construction industry to make their standard of living lower,'' he said. ''They weakened coal mine health and safety -- probably rolled it back 40 years.''

''People died for those laws,'' he added, ''and they stripped them away because coal operators wanted it done.''

Even as West Virginia attempts to project a bright, modern future, opening a new national park in 2021 and even allowing a renewable battery plant to set up shop in Weirton (despite grumbles from some lawmakers that ''this is coal money that we are giving to a woke company''), the state is still beholden to the interests of the fossil fuel industry -- even at the literal expense of the public.

If utility companies want to switch from coal -- which as of 2021 supplied 91 percent of the state's electricity -- to cheaper energy sources, they must now seek permission from the Public Energy Authority, a long inactive agency that Gov. Jim Justice resuscitated at the West Virginia Coal Association's annual conference. As that rule was signed into law, last March, the governor, who owns mines throughout the southeastern part of the country, held a lump of coal aloft. ''I owe my life to this right here,'' he said.

The next month, Mr. Justice announced his run for the U.S. Senate onstage at the 710-room resort he owns in Greenbrier. Accompanied by his English bulldog, Babydog, Mr. Justice called himself a patriot and ''your Covid dad.'' The benevolent paternalism of his model -- a coal operator as surrogate parent, the citizens as children -- isn't new here, but age has hardly tarnished it: Mr. Justice, until last month the state's richest man, is one of the most popular governors in the country.

By the time he finished talking, you could almost forget that his companies owe millions in mine safety and environmental fines, and that more West Virginians work in Walmart than do below ground.

In 1921, a few weeks before the battle of Blair Mountain, The Times published an editorial about the violence already brewing in southern West Virginia, titled ''The Primitive Mountaineer.'' The people of West Virginia were not of ''ordinary heredity,'' it said, but ''of an inheritance and habit apart'' from the rest of the country. ''Only slow time can cure them,'' concluded the article, but the fighting did have one benefit: It was ''killing off their most active specimens.''

A century later, West Virginians are still largely viewed that way -- as hicks, as deplorables, most of all, as rednecks. It still curdles. You can glimpse that effect in how eagerly the state went for Donald Trump and his politics of resentment.

I saw it in the unusual way my local paper covered an incident when some miners rescued a traveler whose electric vehicle had broken down. The article concluded with a plea for understanding: ''This just shows you coal miners are good people and will go out of their way to help anyone friend or foe.''

Despite supplying much of the coal that industrialized the United States, often at enormous personal cost, many West Virginians feel they have never been properly understood or thanked by our fellow Americans. We search for evidence close to home that we're good, because we're surrounded by messages from outsiders to the contrary.

The hot pride that has attached itself to the term ''redneck'' is reactionary pride, a refusal to be wounded by other people's disdain. But the term also belongs to the men who fought and died at the Battle of Blair Mountain, wearing red bandannas as their uniform. It's not an insult, to be weathered with shame or inverted with bravado -- it's a legacy of honor, of resistance, of power.

During the teachers' strike of 2018, some teachers donned red bandannas in honor of the miners' army. Mitch Carmichael, who was then the State Senate president, denounced them as having a ''radical socialist agenda,'' just as Governor Morgan denounced the striking miners a century before.

What if everyone knew rednecks were patriots who dared to demand fair treatment? Or that the marching miners, when they reached a segregated mess hall, held the cafeteria workers at gunpoint so that miners, Black and white, could eat together?

In small but meaningful ways, the story of multiethnic ***working-class*** solidarity is coming back. In 2011, Professor Keeney and a group of activists embarked on a protest march to save Blair Mountain, walking the same 50-mile route the miners' army once took. Along the way, counterprotesters screamed and even spit at them; later, at public hearings, some activists were threatened. The fight was ugly. But two federal lawsuits later, the battlefield is back on the historic register and the mountain and its story are now safe.

In the town of Matewan, an hour to the southwest, visitors can stop by the West Virginia Mine Wars Museum, a private collection hosted in the old town bank, and see recovered artifacts such as company scrip, which the miners were paid instead of money, and rifle shells from the rounds sprayed into the woods. Someday, the curators and Mr. Keeney hope to build a commemorative park at the battle site itself.

No doubt their progress will be fitful and will be challenged at every turn. That's part of why stories of resistance like Blair Mountain are inspiring: They remind us that rights are rarely given, but are more often bitterly and bloodily won, and that before they are won, they are often lost.

But remembering has another benefit, too: It can feel like a homecoming. Living in West Virginia was not always comfortable for me. Anyone who deviates from the norm is labeled an outsider, and I often felt that way growing up, despite digging ramps with my father each cold spring on the mountain behind our cabin, as John Hinkle likely did centuries before us. Despite loving this land more than all the redwoods and the Rockies combined, I left West Virginia in part because I couldn't see myself reflected in the Appalachian identities that seemed available back then.

Learning the history of Blair Mountain changed that. It's not that I see myself as an actual resistance fighter, but I, too, can wear the red bandanna. This is what West Virginia fears: that more of us will remember who we are. If we do, we might realize that it's possible to be proud mountaineers and also question our loyalty to King Coal. In fact, it's a part of our homegrown heritage.

Cassady Rosenblum, a freelance journalist and West Virginia native, was the 2022-23 New York Times Opinion editing fellow. Aaron Blum is an eighth-generation Scots-Irish Appalachian from the mountains of West Virginia. He is a professor of photography at Carnegie Mellon University and West Virginia University.

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**Graphic**

PHOTOS: PHOTO (PHOTOGRAPH BY AARON BLUM FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (SR8)

Clockwise from top left, a service road near Blair Mountain

fairgrounds in Wetzel County

an example of the state's beauty

a union home outside Charleston

a mural in New Martinsville

a memorial to those who fought at Blair Mountain. (PHOTOGRAPH BY AARON BLUM FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (SR9) This article appeared in print on page SR8, SR9.

**Load-Date:** July 23, 2023

**End of Document**



[***My Father the Frustrated Artist; Fiction***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68B4-C6P1-DXY4-X4Y6-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

May 27, 2023 Saturday 23:53 EST

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**Section:** BOOKS; review

**Length:** 1086 words

**Byline:** Christopher Sorrentino

**Highlight:** Domenico Starnone’s novel “The House on Via Gemito” is a searching work of autofiction about a family in postwar Naples.

**Body**

Domenico Starnone’s novel “The House on Via Gemito” is a searching work of autofiction about a family in postwar Naples.

THE HOUSE ON VIA GEMITO, by Domenico Starnone. Translated by Oonagh Stransky.

“Marriage,” wrote Cyril Connolly in 1938, “can succeed for an artist only where there is enough money to save him from taking on uncongenial work and a wife who is intelligent and unselfish enough to understand and respect the working of the unfriendly cycle of the creative imagination. … There is no more somber enemy of good art than the pram in the hall.”

No doubt Federico Starnone would agree. Federì, the central figure in Domenico Starnone’s searching and sorrowful work of autofiction, “The House on Via Gemito,” feels bedeviled by pram, day job and money worries. He’s a “born painter” living in Naples in the years after World War II, and his problem, as far as he’s concerned, is that he can’t catch a break.

As far as his eldest son, Mimì, is concerned, however, Federì is a crude, bumptious man with a volcanic temper, prone to battering his spouse, bullying and embarrassing his children, and alienating even the most supportive of associates. Federì’s disputatiousness is so ingrained that Mimì, our narrator, describes him as provoking arguments with his long-suffering wife, Rusinè, “as if for company.”

A career employee with Italy’s state railway, Federì is convinced that he’s financially exploited by his in-laws, stuck with a woman who is “not good enough,” and above all snubbed by a clubby art establishment, which he’s convinced is disdainful of his ***working-class*** status and envious of his talent.

Whatever else he may be, Federì is neither delusional about his gifts nor a casual dabbler. (The book’s dust jacket reproduces “The Drinkers,” an impressive painting whose exacting creation by the author’s real-life father is recounted in the text.) It isn’t hard to identify with Federì’s frustration as he’s insulted by critics and peers, excluded from exhibitions, deprived of prizes and ultimately forgotten, his paintings moldering for years on municipal-office walls where they barely register with the bored civil servants working beneath them.

As much a born fabulist as he is a born painter, Federì imparts multiple versions of his life and hard times to his son over the course of decades of harangues. However fantastic these may be, however inconsistent, whatever victories or disappointments they relate, they all lead inevitably to the stifling job, the artistic neglect, the crowded apartment on Via Gemito. Only the attribution of blame changes.

Mainly, though, the blame is placed on Rusinè. An outgoing and lively woman (she is easily more popular than the argumentative Federì), she rouses the anger of her husband when she attracts the attentions of others — men in particular — at the gatherings to which he reluctantly brings her, an anger that as often as not is discharged violently. She is held responsible for everything from household illnesses to the lack of money to the children’s perceived genetic imperfections, and pays the cost in bruises and blood.

Ultimately she surrenders, retreating deeply into herself, “her eyes … full of carefully protected ideas and thoughts,” and into the lingering, misdiagnosed illness that finally kills her in her mid-40s. Looking back on her suffering, Mimì laments that “for a long time I carried — I still carry — the regret that I didn’t realize it, that I had trained myself not to realize it.”

This isn’t a recriminatory book, however; it doesn’t demand that we sit in judgment. While Mimì the son faces lifelong frustration in attempting to solve the enigma of his father’s life and identity, crossing and recrossing the territory of the past like a baffled veteran searching for traces of war on a long-deserted battlefield, Starnone the novelist succeeds beautifully in exploiting Federì’s self-contradictions and the unreliability of memory to create what is both a complex family narrative and a masterpiece on the elusive nature of truth. The treachery of memory is mirrored by the deceptive reality of postwar Naples, where recent history has been papered over by silence and lies concerning the (mis)behavior of ordinary citizens throughout Mussolini’s reign and the years of occupation.

Amid its repeated shifts in time and constant questioning of what may or may not have happened, “The House on Via Gemito” is stabilized by its three sections, each anchoring the narrative to a decisive episode that provides a central focus, and by its explicit emphasis on its own artificiality. Starnone intrudes frequently upon the narrative to mull over one choice or another, making his case that it is the novelist’s selectivity that creates the illusion of life and depth in a work of fiction, even at the granular level of tense, grammar and syntax.

For its first appearance in English, “The House on Via Gemito” (which won Italy’s prestigious Strega Prize in 2001) has been well served by the translator Oonagh Stransky, whose rendering is as vivid as it is lucid, managing to place elegantly descriptive passages side by side on the page with elaborately pungent Neapolitan insults, reproducing many of the latter in dialect, allowing the long compound words to convey their hostility and contempt on their own.

Even Starnone’s bitterest memories are coextensive with a humane empathy for Federì, and a recognition of their affinity. Starnone recalls his childish wonder at discovering that the makeshift studio where his irascible father paints is filled with the same scent he has noticed in rooms where children have been at play, “the aura of a labored and joyful excitement” : For the novelist, the painter’s consuming dedication to “the power of forgetting one world in order to build another” resonates deeply.

The unsuccessful yet dogged father is finally the source of a kind of exasperated pride. At the end of the novel, as Federì nears death, Starnone notes that “he did it all on his own, with words and deeds, thanks to his obsession with his talent, thanks to his stubbornness, because of his unshakable desire to persist.” It’s a good epitaph, and an honest one.

Christopher Sorrentino’s most recent book is the memoir “Now Beacon, Now Sea.”

THE HOUSE ON VIA GEMITO | By Domenico Starnone | Translated by Oonagh Stransky | 451 pp. | Europa Editions | $27

Christopher Sorrentino needs a bio. tkt kt tkt kt tkt kt kt kt kt tk tk tkt kt ktkt tkt kt tk tkt kt tk tkt kt tktktkt

This article appeared in print on page BR8.

**Load-Date:** June 29, 2023

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[***Michigan and the Auto Industry Share a Past. What About the Future?***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:696X-4NJ1-JBG3-60VX-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

September 20, 2023 Wednesday 22:41 EST

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**Section:** US

**Length:** 1743 words

**Byline:** Mitch Smith

**Highlight:** Fewer Michigan residents work in auto manufacturing than before, but a strike by U.A.W. members is a reminder of what the industry still means to the state.

**Body**

Michigan’s economy and identity have been intertwined with auto manufacturing since Henry Ford [*perfected the moving assembly line*](https://www.nytimes.com/2013/10/30/automobiles/100-years-down-the-line.html) and made Detroit a magnet for blue-collar workers seeking a middle-class foothold.

But the symbiosis between the state and its signature industry has been repeatedly challenged in recent decades by [*competition from abroad*](https://www.nytimes.com/2007/04/25/automobiles/25auto.html), [*factory closures*](https://www.nytimes.com/1997/11/22/business/gm-to-close-car-factory-delivering-big-blow-to-flint.html) and [*balance sheets so bad*](https://www.nytimes.com/2009/05/01/business/01auto.html) they required [*federal bailouts*](https://www.nytimes.com/2009/01/01/business/worldbusiness/01iht-bailout.4.19036407.html).

In some ways, that makes the current uncertainty in the state feel familiar. Members of the United Automobile Workers are back on the picket lines. Upstart carmakers outside Michigan are growing in market share. And as electric vehicles gain popularity, urgent questions abound about the auto industry’s future and Michigan’s place in it.

“We cannot let other countries or other states beat us in this competition,” said State Senator Darrin Camilleri, a Democrat whose district is home to several car manufacturing facilities, including a Ford plant where workers are striking. “It’s not only about ensuring that these jobs are well paid,” he added, “but making sure that more of those jobs are still right here.”

Three things are true about the auto industry in Michigan: It is far smaller than it once was. It remains vital to the local and national economies. And its ethos — the idea that you can work hard, make something worthwhile and get a fair wage for doing it — is ingrained deeply in the state’s sense of itself.

“The Motor City, I think that says it all — people just identify cars and Detroit, and being the leader in that,” said John P. Rhaesa, the mayor of Wayne, Mich., a ***working-class*** Detroit suburb where striking Ford employees have lined the main drag this week, perking up each time a passing semi-truck blares a supportive honk.

The Big Three — Ford, General Motors and Stellantis — have an estimated 66,000 U.A.W. employees in Michigan, according to one [*recent study*](https://lsa.umich.edu/content/dam/econ-assets/Econdocs/RSQE%20PDFs/UAW_Strike_Analysis_(RSQE_2023.09).pdf) — more than four times as many as any other state. The figure does not include thousands of workers who staff the automakers’ corporate offices or the employees of auto parts suppliers whose factories dot Southeast Michigan’s industrial corridors.

U.A.W. workers [*began a targeted strike*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/14/business/uaw-strike-plan.html) last week against all three companies, beginning with single plants in Michigan, Missouri and Ohio. The union is seeking significant pay raises, shorter workweeks and [*job security as the industry moves toward electrification*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/16/business/electric-vehicles-uaw-gm-ford-stellantis.html). If deals are not reached by Friday, [*union officials have warned*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/19/business/economy/uaw-strikes-gm-ford-stellantis.html), the strike could expand to more plants.

Officials in Michigan have tried in recent years to lock in their state’s place in the shifting automotive economy, seeking facilities to build not only electric cars, but also parts that would go inside them. A General Motors factory on the edge of Detroit that was once slated to end production was instead [*retooled*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/27/business/gm-detroit-electric.html) as that company’s first plant entirely for electric vehicles. And as Big Three automakers expand their plug-in offerings and compete with electric-focused companies like Tesla, Michigan has aggressively courted new electric battery factories.

“We’re still the cornerstone of the automotive industry,” said Kenyetta Hairston-Bridges, the chief operating officer and an executive vice president at the Detroit Economic Growth Corporation. “Just like that ingenuity and that innovation that happened decades and decades ago, that is still taking place right now.”

But the industry no longer plays an all-consuming role in the state, and its future is in flux. Adding to the uncertainty: Electric cars have fewer parts, and can be made with fewer workers than vehicles with internal combustion engines can.

In Detroit, G.M.’s headquarters still punctuates the skyline, but downtown has flourished in recent years largely because of investments by companies like Rocket Mortgage and Ally Financial. Other sectors, like health care and education, also power the state’s economy, though they lack the cultural resonance of carmaking.

Though large numbers of Michigan residents continue to work in auto manufacturing and parts manufacturing, federal data shows that those numbers have declined sharply — by some measures, around 50 percent — since 2000.

“I still think of the auto industry as kind of the most important industry in Michigan,” said Gabriel Ehrlich, an economic forecaster at the University of Michigan. “But it just doesn’t dominate the state economy the way it did 20 or 30 years ago.”

Before the strike started, Dr. Ehrlich co-wrote a [*paper*](https://lsa.umich.edu/content/dam/econ-assets/Econdocs/RSQE%20PDFs/UAW_Strike_Analysis_(RSQE_2023.09).pdf) outlining the potential fallout if workers left their posts. A protracted full strike at any of the three companies would lead to tens of thousands of lost jobs and tens of millions of dollars in economic impact, the study found. An eight-week full strike at all three companies could lead to 300,000 lost jobs in Michigan, the authors said, with the damage extending past the assembly plants and into parts suppliers and other industries.

Matt Wegener, a Ford employee for 28 years who was picketing outside the Wayne plant this week, said he was already paring back his spending because of the strike. Though his factory is so far the only one in Michigan where workers have struck, the effects of individual cutbacks would multiply if the union calls more workers to the picket lines.

“Before the strike even started, I told myself I’m going to start limiting my budget, because I had a feeling that was coming,” Mr. Wegener, 48, said as he held up a red “U.A.W. on strike” sign in front of a gate leading to a deserted parking lot. “Just little things that you don’t necessarily need at the grocery store. You don’t need to get ice cream.”

Union workers and their supporters said the short-term pain of a strike could lead to sustained economic benefits if employees receive big raises in a new contract and are able to spend more. But if auto companies agree to deals that they cannot afford, analysts said, that could ultimately hurt workers and the state.

“I do really worry about these new contract negotiations, if they are not sustainable for the many aspects of the economy that they affect,” said Tyler Theile, chief operating officer of Anderson Economic Group, a Michigan-based research and consulting firm whose past clients have included the auto companies. “We don’t want to go back to the [*jobs banks*](https://www.reuters.com/article/us-gm-uaw/gm-uaw-reach-deal-on-jobs-bank-idUSN2435023120070524) and bankruptcy. Public opinion isn’t going to digest another bailout.”

Over generations, the auto industry has become part of Michigan’s culture, forging not only the stories of industrial cities like Detroit and Flint and Lansing, but also of families whose grandparents moved to the state to find steady union jobs that paid enough to raise children and buy a house.

Detroit’s N.B.A. team, the Pistons, is named after an engine component. On the state’s highways, Chryslers and Chevys and Fords are notably prevalent, with foreign brands more sparse. And young Michigan residents, though in smaller numbers than before, continue to follow relatives into jobs at the auto plants.

Heaven Brown, 22, said she joined family members at the Wayne factory about three years ago. Her overnight shift helping to build Ford Broncos is physically demanding, she said, and it pays just enough to cover her bills. From her place on the picket line this week, she said she hoped the work stoppage would lead to improvements.

“I think everything is going to work, we’re going to get what we deserve,” Ms. Brown said. Still, she said, “I wonder how long this strike is going to be, how long they’re going to wait.”

The auto industry and its labor movement are deeply fused into Michigan’s politics. About 14 percent of Michigan workers were members of a union in 2022, down from 17 percent of workers in 2012 but still above the national average.

This year, Democrats took [*full control of state government*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/01/18/us/democrats-michigan-minnesota-maryland.html) for the first time since the 1980s. Gov. Gretchen Whitmer and legislative leaders swiftly announced that repealing a so-called [*right-to-work law*](https://www.nytimes.com/2012/12/12/us/protesters-rally-over-michigan-union-limits-plan.html) and restoring the [*prevailing wage*](https://apnews.com/article/c160941605944ed7b5fb94c440d1871f) would be [*among their first priorities*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/09/us/michigan-democrats-right-to-work-lgbtq-guns.html). Both steps reversed Republican policies from the prior decade that unions loathed.

Still, with the state closely divided on partisan lines, Republicans and Democrats have competed fiercely in recent elections for union voters, traditionally a left-leaning constituency.

Donald J. Trump, who made [*inroads with blue-collar workers*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/03/04/us/politics/republicans-workers-covid-bill.html) during his presidential campaigns, and who has criticized the national move toward electric cars, plans to [*speak to union members*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/18/us/politics/trump-detroit-debate.html) in Detroit next week rather than take part in a Republican debate. Facing [*skepticism*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/18/us/politics/uaw-strike-biden.html) from some people in the union, President Biden has [*voiced support*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/15/us/politics/biden-uaw-strike.html) for the striking workers.

The potential stakes in the standoff — the difference between a thriving auto industry and a struggling one — can be seen across Michigan’s industrial landscape.

For hope, look to the [*crumbling train station*](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/06/17/business/ford-detroit-station.html) in Detroit that [*Ford brought back to life*](https://www.crainsdetroit.com/detroit-homecoming/dinner-deal-michigan-central-station-now-part-fords-vision), or the [*Stellantis factory that reopened*](https://media.stellantisnorthamerica.com/newsrelease.do?id=22723&amp;mid=), or the [*electric vehicle supplier*](https://www.detroitnews.com/story/business/autos/2021/10/04/construction-starts-lear-seat-plant-old-cadillac-site-detroit/5955191001/) that is building on the site of an abandoned Cadillac plant.

But there are risks of being so tied to one industry. Detroit and Flint were 20th-century boom towns that grew alongside their car factories and became havens for the middle class. Both saw their fortunes reverse when factories closed: residents fled, property values collapsed, crime rates soared.

Brenda Carter, a Democratic state representative from Pontiac, another factory town that [*fell on hard times*](https://www.nytimes.com/2013/03/14/us/lessons-for-detroit-in-pontiacs-years-of-emergency-oversight.html), said she had witnessed many of the same highs and lows in her city.

Ms. Carter spent more than 30 years in the U.A.W., working in machine repair for G.M.

It was a job she took pride in. It was also a job she walked away from before she planned to, accepting an early retirement package in the depths of the Great Recession.

Still, she said, the auto industry was one worth investing in, worth hitching Michigan’s future to, worth doubling down on, even as it shifts from combustion to electric power.

“We are the manufacturing capital of the world,” Ms. Carter said. “That is who we are.”

PHOTOS: From top: the Stellantis Mack Assembly Complex in Detroit. Members of the United Automobile Workers striking near a Ford plant in Wayne, a blue-collar Detroit suburb. Mayor John P. Rhaesa of Wayne said, “People just identify cars and Detroit.”; A mural, including scenes from the auto industry, on the side of a movie theater in Wayne. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY NICK HAGEN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A12.

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[***Military Spending Fuels the Ongoing Budget Debate***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:689X-1N71-JBG3-633P-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** By Jim Tankersley

**Body**

President Biden has offered to freeze discretionary spending, including for defense. Republicans want to spend more for the military, and cut more elsewhere.

Funding for the military has emerged as a key sticking point in reaching an agreement to raise the nation's borrowing limit and prevent a catastrophic default, with Republicans pushing to spare the Defense Department from spending caps and make deeper cuts to domestic programs like education.

President Biden has balked at that demand, pointing to a long series of past budget agreements that either cut or increased military spending in tandem with discretionary programs outside of defense.

How the sides resolve that issue will be critical for the final outcome of any debt deal. It remains possible that in order to reach a deal that prevents a default, Democrats will accept an agreement that allows military spending to grow even as nondefense spending falls or stays flat.

Mr. Biden's aides and congressional Republicans deputized by Speaker Kevin McCarthy are trying to negotiate an agreement to lift the borrowing limit before the government runs out of money to pay its bills on time, which could be as soon as June 1. Republicans have refused to raise the limit unless Mr. Biden agrees to cuts in federal spending outside of the military.

The talks over spending cuts have narrowed in focus to mostly cover a relatively small corner of the budget -- what is known as discretionary spending. That spending is split into two parts. One is money for the military, which the Congressional Budget Office estimates will total $792 billion for the current fiscal year. The other half funds a wide range of domestic programs, like Head Start preschool and college Pell Grants, and federal agencies like the Interior and Energy Departments. It will total $919 billion this year, the budget office estimates.

A separate category known as mandatory spending has largely been deemed off limits in the talks. That spending, which is the primary driver of future spending growth, includes programs like Social Security and Medicare.

Administration officials have proposed freezing both halves of discretionary spending for next year. That would amount to a budget cut, compared with projected spending, under the way the budget office accounts for spending levels. Spending for both parts of the discretionary budget would be allowed to grow at just 1 percent for the 2025 fiscal year. That could also amount to a budget cut since 1 percent would almost certainly be less than the rate of inflation. That proposal would save about $1 trillion over the span of a decade, compared with current budget office forecasts.

Republicans rejected that plan at the bargaining table. They are pushing to cut nondefense spending in actual terms -- meaning, spend fewer dollars on it next year than the government spent this year. They also want to allow military spending to continue to grow.

''It just sends a bad message and Republicans feel like it would not be in our best interest to cut spending at this juncture, when you're looking at China and Russia and a lot of instability around the world,'' said Representative Robert B. Aderholt, Republican of Alabama, who sits on an Appropriations panel that oversees Pentagon spending. ''That's been the basic position that most Republicans have.''

Mr. McCarthy sounded a similar note when speaking to reporters on Thursday. ''Look, we're always looking where we could find savings and others, but we live in a very dangerous world,'' he said. He added, ''I think the Pentagon has to actually have more resources.''

Republicans included 10-year caps on discretionary spending in a bill they passed last month that also raised the debt ceiling through next year, and party leaders said they would exempt the military from those caps. Mr. Biden has vowed to veto the bill if it passes the Senate in its current form, which is unlikely.

White House officials have hammered Republicans over concentrating their proposed discretionary savings on domestic programs, saying their bill would gut spending on border enforcement, some veterans' care, Meals on Wheels for older Americans and a host of other popular programs.

''Speaker McCarthy and I have a very different view of who should bear the burden of additional efforts to get our fiscal house in order,'' Mr. Biden said on Thursday at the White House. ''I don't believe the whole burden should fall on the backs of the middle class and ***working-class*** Americans.''

Congressional Democrats, including members of committees that oversee military spending, have attacked Republicans for focusing largely on nondefense programs.

''If you're going to freeze discretionary spending, there's no reason on earth why defense shouldn't be part of that conversation,'' said Representative Adam Smith of Washington, the top Democrat on the Armed Services Committee. Republicans, he said, ''are taking a hostage to advance their very narrow agenda. I'm not a fan of that. That's not something I'm going to want to support.''

Any agreement that increased military spending while freezing or cutting other discretionary spending would break from a budget-deal tradition that dates to 2011, when House Republicans refused to raise the debt limit until President Barack Obama agreed to spending cuts. The deal that avoided default was centered on spending caps that split their reductions evenly between defense and nondefense programs.

The push to increase military funding while cutting more heavily elsewhere reflects a divide in the House Republican caucus. It includes a large faction of defense hawks who say the military budget is too small, alongside another large faction of spending hawks who want to significantly shrink the fiscal footprint of the federal government.

Mr. McCarthy needs both factions to retain his hold on the speakership, which he narrowly won this year after a marathon week of efforts to secure the votes. And he will need to navigate them both as he tries to pass any debt-limit agreement with Mr. Biden through the House.

Catie Edmondson contributed reporting.Catie Edmondson contributed reporting.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/25/us/politics/debt-limit-military-spending.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/25/us/politics/debt-limit-military-spending.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: Republicans are insisting that military spending grow as part of any agreement to raise the debt ceiling and prevent default. (PHOTOGRAPH BY KENNY HOLSTON FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A16.

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[***The Redneck Army Refuses to Stay Buried; Guest Essay***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68RV-S931-DXY4-X088-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** Cassady Rosenblum and Aaron Blum

**Highlight:** Proud resistance is our secret birthright.

**Body**

The striking miners were 10,000 strong on the first day of September 1921 as they charged up the slope of Blair Mountain, propelled by a radical faith in the American dream. According to an Associated Press reporter who crouched behind a log and watched through field glasses, each time they pressed forward, a “veritable wall” of machine gun fire drove them back. As the barrage echoed through the hollows, reminding some of the action they had just seen in the forests of France, the advancing miners soon heard a different sound: deeper, earthshaking explosions. From biplanes above, tear gas, explosive powder and metal bolts rained down. “My God,” screamed one miner fighting his way up Crooked Creek Gap. “They’re bombing us!”

“They” were Sheriff Don Chafin and his deputies, who terrorized the citizens of Logan County, W.Va., by the authority of the coal companies. The miners vastly outnumbered their opponents, but Chafin had the superior position and weapons. “ACTUAL WAR IS RAGING IN LOGAN,” one local paper declared the day before.

The miners were fighting for the right to unionize, and to end the reviled “mine guard system,” a private force of armed guards who brutally enforced the company’s control in the coal fields. Unless the mine guard system was removed, John L. Lewis, president of the United Mine Workers of America, had warned, “the dove of peace” would “never make permanent abode in this stricken territory.”

On Sept. 4, federal troops arrived at Blair Mountain. The miners cheered, thinking Uncle Sam had come to liberate them from King Coal. Uncle Sam had no such plans. In 1921, about three million Americans were unemployed, and Washington was concerned that the industrial war raging in southern West Virginia could spread to other states. The troops told miners to stand down, and they did. “We wouldn’t revolt against the national government,” one of them said.

The miners were roundly defeated, but their struggle was not in vain: Years later, as part of the New Deal, the rights they were fighting for — including the right to collectively bargain — were written into law. Black, white and immigrant, the “Red Neck Army” (so named for the red bandannas they wore) had mounted the largest ***working-class*** uprising in U.S. history and the largest armed insurrection since the Civil War.

Today, Blair Mountain is just that: a mountain. While many battlefields are the object of exhaustive study and veneration — places and times when power wobbled and blood was shed — Blair Mountain is still largely unexplored. No statue or roadside attraction commemorates it; no tour buses roll up and disgorge visitors. Despite a burst of [*recent interest,*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/09/06/us/coal-miners-blair-mountain.html) for most West Virginians, the story of Blair Mountain barely even exists.

My family has lived more or less continuously in West Virginia since our patriarch, John Hinkle, settled his brood near Seneca Rocks around 1760. But I spent much of my adolescence dreaming of a world beyond the blue ridges — a dream my grandmother vigorously encouraged, having bolted over them herself when [*Representative Ken Hechler*](https://www.nytimes.com/2016/12/15/opinion/coal-miners-lose-their-appalachian-champion.html) offered her a job in Washington. Her implied message to me, delivered via magazine clippings of girls in gaucho pants and trips to cities like Chicago, seemed to be: A much bigger world awaits. So having heard Joe Manchin call West Virginia the “extraction state,” I extracted myself. In college several states away, I majored in international relations, casting my attention as far away as I thought I should.

In the time I was gone, the mid-2000s, things back home seemed to further deteriorate. Opioid companies began flooding West Virginia with pills, and by 2010 it became the [*leading*](https://www.congress.gov/116/meeting/house/110367/witnesses/HHRG-116-IF02-Wstate-MullinsC-20200114.pdf) state for overdose deaths, kicking off a cascading crisis in the foster care system. That same year, an explosion at the Upper Big Branch coal mine killed 29 people. Since 2012, many mine operators have filed for bankruptcy. As they did, they paid astonishing sums to management while foisting much of their pension, black lung and environmental obligations onto taxpayers. By the 2020 census, West Virginia had shrunk enough to lose one of its three congressional seats, partially because people keep fleeing. It’s easy to understand why: According to [*one source*](https://wallethub.com/edu/statistics), West Virginia is the least [*happy*](https://wallethub.com/edu/happiest-states/6959) state, the worst for finding a [*job*](https://wallethub.com/edu/best-states-for-jobs/35641) and the [*least*](https://wallethub.com/edu/e/most-educated-states/31075) educated. I blocked it all out, knowing I was part of the brain drain.

Then the pandemic hit, and my personal life imploded, too. Fresh off a breakup, I reluctantly retreated to my family and the hills that raised me, hoping their ancient slopes would teach me some secret about the inevitability, and gradualness, of change.

Many rural places claim the title “God’s Country,” but West Virginia takes great pride in being “Almost Heaven.” Present for the monarchs on the milkweed and cascades of scarlet maple leaves that first autumn of Covid, I felt it — not for the first time, but in a way that seemed like mine. I met childhood friends at the river, clear and holy, and we blinked at each other as if discovering we were some strange species of fish, all returned to the source. As months turned to years, the idea of our previous urbane lives became laughable compared to the symphony of stars.

The longer I stayed, the more I became curious about my home. I finally wanted to know what everyone always wants to know about West Virginia: How can we be both so beautiful and so damned?

As I began to learn our history for what felt like the first time, the story of Blair Mountain arrived like a shocking clue. My great-grandmother, Idelene Hinkle, had been a columnist for The West Virginia Hillbilly, a satirical homage to West Virginia’s “[*absurd, fatalistic*](https://www.theparisreview.org/blog/2016/05/17/letter-from-west-virginia/)” humor. She had always spoken proudly of winning a Golden Horseshoe Award, a prize given to top students in West Virginia history. It seemed inconceivable that I had never heard her, or anyone else I grew up with, talk about the time West Virginia bombed its own people.

It turned out I wasn’t alone: “I am a product of the West Virginian public school system,” [*wrote*](https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1115&amp;context=studentpub_uht) Sam Heywood in a remarkable 2020 honors thesis at Brigham Young University, describing the pride he felt winning the same Golden Horseshoe Award my great-grandmother had. “I felt deceived when in college, halfway across the country from my home, I learned about the violent history of the Mine Wars.”

So there were two of us, then. Actually, there were far more: When Charles B. Keeney III began teaching history at Southern West Virginia Community and Technical College, most of his students hadn’t heard about the Mine Wars or Blair Mountain either, despite the fact that the battlefield lay just a few miles from campus. Professor Keeney, of course, had: He is the great-grandson of Frank Keeney, one of the towering figures of the United Mine Workers who urged his men not to let themselves be “crushed like a beetle beneath the golden chariot of the money kings.”

According to Mr. Keeney and other scholars, there is a perfectly good reason for our ignorance: Following the Battle of Blair Mountain, West Virginia kept any mention of labor conflict out of its textbooks for more than 50 years, and in many schools it is still absent.

It’s not just the story of Blair Mountain that the state seems to want to erase but also the soil itself. In 2009, the National Register of Historic Places, under pressure from the coal industry, delisted the Blair Mountain battlefield. This left the land open for mountaintop removal, a particularly destructive form of surface mining.

A century after the Battle of Blair Mountain, a similar war for identity and belonging is being waged. The difference, Mr. Keeney says, is that the Mine Guard System has become the Mind Guard System.

The first time I went to the State Capitol, I was on a fifth-grade field trip. “You were so excited to learn about how a bill becomes a law,” my mother recalled. “But the tour guide spent nearly the entire time talking about the gold-plated dome and chandeliers.”

Even to a child, the contrast between the lavishness of the government and the trailers that some of my classmates lived in was obvious and uncomfortable. In 2018, this incongruity became a political crisis when the Legislature took the extraordinary step of impeaching the entire State Supreme Court over their office renovations. By all measures, the renovations were grotesque: A blue suede sofa priced at $32,000 does not belong in any public office, especially not in a state where, according to the Census Bureau, the per capita income was about $29,000.

But the extreme measure of impeaching an entire branch of government still struck some as a [*coup*](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/08/14/us/west-virginia-impeachment-supreme-court.html) — the Republican supermajority flexing its muscle against what was the state’s last holdout of Democratic power. Today, West Virginia Republicans control all three branches of government and, in a pattern mirroring other red state houses (including Ohio, Tennessee and Indiana) in the country, are using their power to pass tax cuts and approve school vouchers. They are also reviving the old-time tradition of stifling dissent. On the cover of its annual [*magazine*](https://www.acluwv.org/en/2023-magazine), the West Virginia A.C.L.U. put a finer point on it: “Is West Virginia abandoning democracy?”

If it is, [*it’s hardly alone,*](https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2022/08/15/state-legislatures-are-torching-democracy) and it is taking many of its cues from the national stage. But in Appalachia unadorned, it’s sometimes easier to see the signs.

Last December, the reporter Amelia Knisely was [*dismissed*](https://www.npr.org/2023/02/13/1153590012/west-virginia-public-journalist-dismissed-wvpb-political-interference) from a partly state-run radio station after reporting on alleged abuses at government facilities. That same year, the State Senate [*banned photography*](https://www.courthousenews.com/west-virginian-challenges-ban-on-recording-legislative-debate/) during the debate over abortion. A year before that, in 2021, the Legislature [*outlawed*](https://www.wvlegislature.gov/Bill_Status/bills_text.cfm?billdoc=sb321%20intr.htm&amp;yr=2015&amp;sesstype=RS&amp;i=321) [*a major source of union funding*](https://www.wvgazettemail.com/news/politics/union-coalition-sues-to-stop-wv-law-that-threatens-their-funding/article_ce9af60c-aded-5402-95e1-45fb7f8c0969.html) — retaliation, the West Virginia University law professor Bob Bastress believes, for a 2018 teachers’ strike. When Mr. Bastress filed a pro bono suit on behalf of the unions, W.V.U. informed him that going forward, professors would need permission to represent interests that may be “adverse to the state.” But whose state? Adverse to whom?

In earlier decades, unions were a major engine of Democratic power in West Virginia, and part of why West Virginia, now so red, used to be so blue.

“Now,” said the state senator Mike Caputo when I visited him in his office in January, a throng of miners waiting for him in the echoing halls, “West Virginia does nothing but weaken labor unions.”

Mr. Caputo should know: He is a union man himself, and one of the last three Democrats in the Senate. “They took away [*prevailing wage*](https://www.wsaz.com/content/news/West-Virginia-House-to-vote-on-repeal-of-prevailing-wage-366679441.html) from our brothers and sisters in the construction industry to make their standard of living lower,” he said. “They weakened coal mine health and safety — probably rolled it back 40 years.”

“People died for those laws,” he added, “and they stripped them away because coal operators wanted it done.”

Even as West Virginia attempts to project a bright, modern future, opening a [*new national park*](https://www.nps.gov/neri/index.htm) in 2021 and even allowing a [*renewable battery plant*](https://governor.wv.gov/News/press-releases/2023/Pages/Gov.-Justice-signs-HB-2882-at-former-Weirton-Steel-Mill,-new-home-of-Form-Energy%E2%80%99s-West-Virginia-Manufacturing-Plant.aspx) to set up shop in Weirton (despite [*grumbles*](https://mountainstatespotlight.org/2023/02/20/weirton-wv-form-energy-battery-plant/) from some lawmakers that “this is coal money that we are giving to a woke company”), the state is still beholden to the interests of the fossil fuel industry — even at the literal expense of the public.

If utility companies want to switch from coal — which as of 2021 supplied [*91 percent*](https://www.eia.gov/state/?sid=WV) of the state’s electricity — to cheaper energy sources, they must now seek permission from the Public Energy Authority, a long inactive agency that Gov. Jim Justice [*resuscitated*](https://www.wvgazettemail.com/news/legislative_session/wv-house-approves-bill-that-would-require-public-energy-authority-approval-for-decommissioning-power-plants/article_e78e22d6-5c97-5b44-a300-90f2ab3c3454.html) at the West Virginia Coal Association’s annual conference. As that rule was signed into law, last March, the governor, who owns mines throughout the southeastern part of the country, [*held a lump of coal aloft*](https://www.cnn.com/2023/06/06/us/coal-plants-republican-lawmakers-energy-transition-invs/index.html). “I owe my life to this right here,” he said.

The next month, Mr. Justice [*announced*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gp2N4qSurJk) his run for the U.S. Senate onstage at the 710-room resort he [*owns*](https://www.propublica.org/article/west-virginia-greenbrier-governor-jim-justice-little-trump) in Greenbrier. Accompanied by his English bulldog, Babydog, Mr. Justice called himself a patriot and “your Covid dad.” The benevolent paternalism of his model — a coal operator as surrogate parent, the citizens as children — isn’t new here, but age has hardly tarnished it: Mr. Justice, until last month the state’s richest man, is one of the [*most popular*](https://pro.morningconsult.com/instant-intel/democratic-governors-are-resisting-bidens-decline) governors in the country.

By the time he finished talking, you could almost forget that his companies [*owe millions in mine safety*](https://apnews.com/article/west-virginia-governor-jim-justice-mine-fines-3d98e07c4d14646a194ee9f739b5f770) and [*environmental*](https://www.propublica.org/article/jim-justice-coal-empire-sued-by-federal-government-again#:~:text=Federal%20authorities%20sued%20West%20Virginia,campaign%20for%20the%20U.S.%20Senate.) fines, and that more West Virginians work in Walmart than do below ground.

In 1921, a few weeks before the battle of Blair Mountain, The Times [*published an editorial*](https://www.nytimes.com/1921/08/03/archives/the-primitive-mountaineer.html) about the violence already brewing in southern West Virginia, titled “The Primitive Mountaineer.” The people of West Virginia were not of “ordinary heredity,” it said, but “of an inheritance and habit apart” from the rest of the country. “Only slow time can cure them,” concluded the article, but the fighting did have one benefit: It was “killing off their most active specimens.”

A century later, West Virginians are still largely viewed that way — as hicks, as deplorables, most of all, as rednecks. It still curdles. You can glimpse that effect in how eagerly the state went for Donald Trump and his politics of resentment.

I saw it in [*the unusual way*](https://parsonsadvocate.com/news/pa-top-stories/headlines/local-coalminers-to-the-rescue/) my local paper covered an incident when some miners rescued a traveler whose electric vehicle had broken down. The article concluded with a plea for understanding: “This just shows you coal miners are good people and will go out of their way to help anyone friend or foe.”

Despite supplying much of the coal that industrialized the United States, often at [*enormous personal cost*](https://www.nytimes.com/2010/04/09/us/09governor.html), many West Virginians feel they have never been properly understood or thanked by our fellow Americans. We search for evidence close to home that we’re good, because we’re surrounded by messages from outsiders to the contrary.

The hot pride that has attached itself to the term “redneck” is reactionary pride, a refusal to be wounded by other people’s disdain. But the term also belongs to the men who fought and died at the Battle of Blair Mountain, wearing red bandannas as their uniform. It’s not an insult, to be weathered with shame or inverted with bravado — it’s a legacy of honor, of resistance, of power.

During the teachers’ strike of 2018, some teachers [*donned*](https://explorepartsunknown.com/west-virginia/the-return-of-the-red-bandanna/) red bandannas in honor of the miners’ army. Mitch Carmichael, who was then the State Senate president, denounced them as having a “[*radical socialist agenda*](https://wvmetronews.com/2018/07/17/carmichael-says-teachers-union-has-radical-socialist-agenda/),” just as Governor Morgan denounced the striking miners a century before.

What if everyone knew rednecks were patriots who dared to demand fair treatment? Or that the marching miners, when they reached a segregated mess hall, held the cafeteria workers at gunpoint so that miners, Black and white, could eat together?

In small but meaningful ways, the story of multiethnic ***working-class*** solidarity is coming back. In 2011, Professor Keeney and a group of activists embarked on a protest march to save Blair Mountain, walking the same 50-mile route the miners’ army once took. Along the way, counterprotesters screamed and even spit at them; later, at public hearings, some activists were threatened. The fight was ugly. But two federal lawsuits later, the battlefield is back on the historic register and the mountain and its story are now safe.

In the town of Matewan, an hour to the southwest, visitors can stop by the [*West Virginia Mine Wars Museum*](https://wvminewars.org/), a private collection hosted in the old town bank, and see recovered artifacts such as company scrip, which the miners were paid instead of money, and rifle shells from the rounds sprayed into the woods. Someday, the curators and Mr. Keeney hope to build a commemorative park at the battle site itself.

No doubt their progress will be fitful and will be challenged at every turn. That’s part of why stories of resistance like Blair Mountain are inspiring: They remind us that rights are rarely given, but are more often bitterly and bloodily won, and that before they are won, they are often lost.

But remembering has another benefit, too: It can feel like a homecoming. Living in West Virginia was not always comfortable for me. Anyone who deviates from the norm is labeled an outsider, and I often felt that way growing up, despite digging ramps with my father each cold spring on the mountain behind our cabin, as John Hinkle likely did centuries before us. Despite loving this land more than all the redwoods and the Rockies combined, I left West Virginia in part because I couldn’t see myself reflected in the Appalachian identities that seemed available back then.

Learning the history of Blair Mountain changed that. It’s not that I see myself as an actual resistance fighter, but I, too, can wear the red bandanna. This is what West Virginia fears: that more of us will remember who we are. If we do, we might realize that it’s possible to be proud mountaineers and also question our loyalty to King Coal. In fact, it’s a part of our homegrown heritage.

Cassady Rosenblum, a freelance journalist and West Virginia native, was the 2022-23 New York Times Opinion editing fellow. Aaron Blum is an eighth-generation Scots-Irish Appalachian from the mountains of West Virginia. He is a professor of photography at Carnegie Mellon University and West Virginia University.

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PHOTOS: PHOTO (PHOTOGRAPH BY AARON BLUM FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (SR8); Clockwise from top left, a service road near Blair Mountain; fairgrounds in Wetzel County; an example of the state’s beauty; a union home outside Charleston; a mural in New Martinsville; a memorial to those who fought at Blair Mountain. (PHOTOGRAPH BY AARON BLUM FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (SR9) This article appeared in print on page SR8, SR9.

**Load-Date:** July 22, 2023

**End of Document**



[***Military Spending Emerges as Big Dispute in Debt-Limit Talks***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:689R-W491-JBG3-62T1-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

May 25, 2023 Thursday 11:34 EST

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**Section:** US; politics

**Length:** 1058 words

**Byline:** Jim Tankersley

**Highlight:** President Biden has offered to freeze discretionary spending, including for defense. Republicans want to spend more for the military, and cut more elsewhere.

**Body**

President Biden has offered to freeze discretionary spending, including for defense. Republicans want to spend more for the military, and cut more elsewhere.

Funding for the military has emerged as a key sticking point in reaching an agreement to raise the nation’s borrowing limit and prevent a catastrophic default, with Republicans pushing to spare the Defense Department from spending caps and make deeper cuts to domestic programs like education.

President Biden has balked at that demand, pointing to a long series of past budget agreements that either cut or increased military spending in tandem with discretionary programs outside of defense.

How the sides resolve that issue will be critical for the final outcome of any debt deal. It remains possible that in order to reach a deal that prevents a default, Democrats will accept an agreement that allows military spending to grow even as nondefense spending falls or stays flat.

Mr. Biden’s aides and congressional Republicans deputized by Speaker Kevin McCarthy are trying to negotiate an agreement to lift the borrowing limit before the government runs out of money to pay its bills on time, which could be as soon as June 1. Republicans have refused to raise the limit unless Mr. Biden agrees to cuts in federal spending outside of the military.

The talks over spending cuts have [*narrowed in focus*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/24/us/politics/debt-ceiling-deal-federal-spending.html) to mostly cover a relatively small corner of the budget — what is known as discretionary spending. That spending is split into two parts. One is money for the military, which the Congressional Budget Office estimates will total $792 billion for the current fiscal year. The other half funds a wide range of domestic programs, like Head Start preschool and college Pell Grants, and federal agencies like the Interior and Energy Departments. It will total $919 billion this year, the budget office estimates.

A separate category known as mandatory spending has largely been deemed off limits in the talks. That spending, which is the primary driver of future spending growth, includes programs like Social Security and Medicare.

Administration officials have proposed freezing both halves of discretionary spending for next year. That would amount to a budget cut, compared with projected spending, under the way the budget office accounts for spending levels. Spending for both parts of the discretionary budget would be allowed to grow at just 1 percent for the 2025 fiscal year. That could also amount to a budget cut since 1 percent would almost certainly be less than the rate of inflation. That proposal would save about $1 trillion over the span of a decade, compared with current budget office forecasts.

Republicans rejected that plan at the bargaining table. They are pushing to cut nondefense spending in actual terms — meaning, spend fewer dollars on it next year than the government spent this year. They also want to allow military spending to continue to grow.

“It just sends a bad message and Republicans feel like it would not be in our best interest to cut spending at this juncture, when you’re looking at China and Russia and a lot of instability around the world,” said Representative Robert B. Aderholt, Republican of Alabama, who sits on an Appropriations panel that oversees Pentagon spending. “That’s been the basic position that most Republicans have.”

Mr. McCarthy sounded a similar note when speaking to reporters on Thursday. “Look, we’re always looking where we could find savings and others, but we live in a very dangerous world,” he said. He added, “I think the Pentagon has to actually have more resources.”

Republicans included 10-year caps on discretionary spending in a bill they passed last month that also raised the debt ceiling through next year, and party leaders said they would exempt the military from those caps. Mr. Biden has vowed to veto the bill if it passes the Senate in its current form, which is unlikely.

White House officials have hammered Republicans over concentrating their proposed discretionary savings on domestic programs, saying their bill would gut spending on border enforcement, some veterans’ care, Meals on Wheels for older Americans and a host of other popular programs.

“Speaker McCarthy and I have a very different view of who should bear the burden of additional efforts to get our fiscal house in order,” Mr. Biden said on Thursday at the White House. “I don’t believe the whole burden should fall on the backs of the middle class and ***working-class*** Americans.”

Congressional Democrats, including members of committees that oversee military spending, have attacked Republicans for focusing largely on nondefense programs.

“If you’re going to freeze discretionary spending, there’s no reason on earth why defense shouldn’t be part of that conversation,” said Representative Adam Smith of Washington, the top Democrat on the Armed Services Committee. Republicans, he said, “are taking a hostage to advance their very narrow agenda. I’m not a fan of that. That’s not something I’m going to want to support.”

Any agreement that increased military spending while freezing or cutting other discretionary spending would break from a budget-deal tradition that dates to 2011, when House Republicans refused to raise the debt limit until President Barack Obama agreed to spending cuts. [*The deal that avoided default*](https://www.nytimes.com/2011/08/03/us/politics/03fiscal.html) was centered on spending caps that [*split their reductions evenly*](https://www.cbpp.org/research/how-the-across-the-board-cuts-in-the-budget-control-act-will-work) between defense and nondefense programs.

The push to increase military funding while cutting more heavily elsewhere reflects a divide in the House Republican caucus. It includes a large faction of defense hawks who say the military budget is too small, alongside another large faction of spending hawks who want to significantly shrink the fiscal footprint of the federal government.

Mr. McCarthy needs both factions to retain his hold on the speakership, which he narrowly won this year after a marathon week of efforts to secure the votes. And he will need to navigate them both as he tries to pass any debt-limit agreement with Mr. Biden through the House.

Catie Edmondson contributed reporting.

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PHOTO: Republicans are insisting that military spending grow as part of any agreement to raise the debt ceiling and prevent default. (PHOTOGRAPH BY KENNY HOLSTON FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A16.

**Load-Date:** May 26, 2023

**End of Document**



[***This Is Not How Buttigieg Wanted to Visit Ohio***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67NB-R9F1-DXY4-X2F2-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

February 28, 2023 Tuesday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; Editorial Desk; Pg. 22; THE CONVERSATION

**Length:** 1572 words

**Byline:** By Gail Collins and Bret Stephens

**Body**

Gail Collins: Bret, Democratic strategists are worried about hanging on to support in the ***working class***. The good news, from my perspective, is that it looks like the big problem is economic concerns, not cultural ones.

Saying that's good news because the Biden administration can respond to those worries by pointing to a ton of effort to create jobs and fight inflation.

Guessing you may, um, disagree?

Bret Stephens: In the immortal words of the ''Airplane'' sequel: ''Just a tad.''

The big problem for Democrats is that their economic message -- that happy times are here again -- isn't landing in the places where they need to win, particularly factory towns where elections in states like Wisconsin or Ohio are sometimes decided. Inflation is still too high and probably means the Fed will continue to raise interest rates. Unemployment is low in part because so many people have dropped out of the labor force. Years of lax border control creates a perception that cheap immigrant labor will further undercut ***working-class*** wages. And a lot of the projects that President Biden's spending bills are supposed to fund will take years to get off the ground because there's rarely such a thing as a ''shovel-ready'' project.

Gail: Yeah, gearing up for a big construction effort does take time. But people who've suffered with terrible transportation problems for years do know the shovels are coming. Like the bridge project over the Ohio River that Democrats in Cincinnati have joined hands with Mitch McConnell to celebrate.

Bret: The other problem for Democrats is that if they aren't winning the messaging battle when it comes to the economy, they are losing it badly when it comes to cultural issues. You and I often rue the collapse of the moderate wing of the G.O.P. that was occasionally willing to break with right-wing orthodoxies, but Democrats could also do more to embrace candidates who depart from progressive orthodoxies on issues like guns, immigration, school choice, trans issues and so on.

Gail: ''Depart from progressive orthodoxies'' is a nice way of saying ''embrace the bad.'' I appreciate that it would be strategic for some purple-state Democrats to take moderate positions on guns, immigration, etc. But I'm not gonna be applauding somebody who, for instance, votes against an assault weapon ban.

Bret: You're reminding me of the story, probably apocryphal, of the supporter who told Adlai Stevenson, during one of his presidential runs in the 1950s, that ''Every thinking person in America will be voting for you.''

''I'm afraid that won't do,'' he supposedly replied. ''I need a majority.''

Gail: Let's go back to infrastructure for a minute. Big story about that train wreck in Ohio. Do you agree with me that the whole thing is the fault of Republicans caving in to pressure from the rail industry to loosen regulations?

Bret: Er, no. I read recently that there were more than 1,000 train derailments last year, which averages out to more than two a day, and that there's been a 60 percent decline in railroad safety incidents since 1990. Accidents happen. When they do, they shouldn't become a partisan issue.

Gail: When major accidents happen in an industry that's both necessarily regulated and greatly lobbied over, it should be a call for investigation.

And while we're on this subject, please let's talk about our transportation secretary, Pete Buttigieg ....

Bret: So, to illustrate my point, I'm not going to raise an accusing finger at him. Not even remotely his fault, even if Republicans are trying hard to pin him with the blame. Although, for someone with presidential aspirations, he didn't exactly help himself by showing up a day after Donald Trump did.

Gail: Sort of embarrassed that while I was trying to ponder rail regulation, my thoughts kept drifting off to Buttigieg the possible presidential candidate.

He's one of the guys we always mention when we talk about who might be nominated if Biden doesn't go for a second term. But Buttigieg's performance in Ohio was definitely not the work of a guy who knows how to run for that job.

Bret: Switching subjects again, we should talk about the legacy of President Jimmy Carter. I was a 7-year-old child living in Mexico City when he left office, so your recollections of him are much more valuable and interesting than mine.

Gail: I distinctly remember bemoaning the energy shortage that left drivers waiting in long lines at the gas stations, but that's hardly an insider's story.

Bret: Those lines put last year's spike in gas prices in perspective.

Gail: And every Democrat worried about Carter's minimal talent for communication. He made a big TV appearance to promote energy conservation, wearing a sweater and sitting next to a fire, looking more silly than inspiring.

Now, when I recall some of the stuff he did -- environmental protection, promoting diversity, negotiating a peace agreement between Israel and Egypt -- I appreciate him a lot more.

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Gail: But the biggest thing he's leaving us, Bret, is the story of his post-presidency. Campaigning endlessly for human rights, fair voting around the world and housing for the poor. Rather than holding press conferences to make his point, he'd swing a hammer with the crew at low-income housing construction sites.

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Gail: I read Michelle's great piece and remembered how paranoid I was as a teenager when I thought two of my friends might be talking about me on the phone after school. Can't imagine how I'd have felt if they had the capacity to do it as a group, while they were supposed to be studying after dinner. With a transcript available to the entire class later in the evening.

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Gail: Just saying that kids can't use social media sounds very attractive. But somehow I have my doubts it'll work. Wonder if the more likely outcome might be a system the more sophisticated kids could use while the poorer, or less technologically cool ones, got sidelined.

Am I being overly paranoid?

Bret: No ban works perfectly. But if we were able to more or less end teenage cigarette smoking over the last 20 years, it shouldn't be out of the question to try to do the same with social-media use. I can't imagine that it's beyond the technological reach of a company like Apple to write some code that stops social-media apps from being downloaded to phones whose primary users they know are under the age of 16.

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Bret: I would welcome it, and I suspect most teenagers would, too. It's hard enough being 14 or 15 without needing to panic about some embarrassing Instagram pic or discovering too late that something stupid or awful you wrote on Facebook or Twitter at 16 comes back to haunt you at 20.

Gail: Hey, it's traumatic enough being haunted by what I said last month.

Bret: Or last week.

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[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/02/27/opinion/buttigieg-ohio-carter-teenagers-depression.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/02/27/opinion/buttigieg-ohio-carter-teenagers-depression.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO (POOL PHOTO BY BROOKE LAVALLEY) This article appeared in print on page A22.

**Load-Date:** February 28, 2023

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[***This Is Not How Pete Buttigieg Wanted to Visit Ohio; The Conversation***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67N5-4G21-JBG3-62KJ-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

February 27, 2023 Monday 16:00 EST

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 1567 words

**Byline:** Gail Collins and Bret Stephens

**Highlight:** There are many different ways to be lonely.

**Body**

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PHOTO (POOL PHOTO BY BROOKE LAVALLEY) This article appeared in print on page A22.

**Load-Date:** February 28, 2023

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[***Army Veteran Gets G.O.P. Nomination for a Hotly Contested Nevada House Seat***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65PC-R761-JBG3-605X-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

June 15, 2022 Wednesday 12:55 EST

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**Section:** US; politics

**Length:** 327 words

**Byline:** Jazmine Ulloa

**Highlight:** Mark Robertson’s message centered on protecting freedom of speech and pushing back against government mandates.

**Body**

Mark Robertson’s message centered on protecting freedom of speech and pushing back against government mandates.

Mark Robertson, an Army veteran and business owner, has clinched the Republican nomination for a House seat in Nevada with a large campaign war chest and a message centered on protecting freedom of speech and pushing back against government mandates.

Mr. Robertson will face the Democratic incumbent, Representative Dina Titus, 72, in the general election in November in a race that reflects national Democrats’ struggles over the economy amid the coronavirus crisis.

The Associated Press called the race for Mr. Robertson on Wednesday, a day after voters chose from a crowded field of Republicans hoping to unseat Ms. Titus.

Ms. Titus, who is in her sixth term, has for years easily claimed victory with the support of ***working-class*** voters and Latinos. But Republicans have a higher chance of success this fall after her district, which includes the urban center of Las Vegas, was redrawn to add more Republican voters by taking in larger portions of Henderson and Boulder City in Clark County.

Ms. Titus has also been facing stronger political headwinds because her tourist-heavy district has been hit hard by the pandemic. High unemployment along with rising gasoline and food prices have made her vulnerable to attacks from Republicans on crime, jobs and inflation.

The seat will be hotly contested: The National Republican Campaign Committee has added Ms. Titus to its target list of vulnerable Democrats, and Ms. Titus [*failed to get the ambassadorship she sought*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/03/12/us/politics/biden-pelosi-democrats-midterm-elections.html) from the Biden administration because Democrats could not risk losing her seat.

Mr. Robertson, who served in the military for 30 years, touted himself as a fiscal conservative determined to fight mandates on education and health care.

PHOTO: Mark Robertson at a campaign event in Henderson, Nev., in May. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Bill Clark/CQ-Roll Call, Inc via Getty Images FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** June 15, 2022

**End of Document**



[***Will Abortion Issue Sway Voters’ Choices? N.Y. House Race Poses Test.***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:664X-RJ01-JBG3-602C-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** NYREGION

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**Byline:** Grace AshfordGrace Ashford covers New York government and politics for The Times.

**Highlight:** An Aug. 23 special election to replace a Democrat, Antonio Delgado, could help answer one of the biggest questions of the midterms.

**Body**

An Aug. 23 special election to replace a Democrat, Antonio Delgado, could help answer one of the biggest questions of the midterms.

CHATHAM, N.Y. — In New York’s Hudson Valley, ubiquitous lawn signs underscore how an upcoming special election for an open House seat has taken on outsize implications.

“Choice Is on the Ballot,” one sign says, the white lettering cast over a background of pink and blue, and a smaller line beneath it for the Democratic candidate, Pat Ryan.

The Aug. 23 contest for the seesaw district, which routinely wavers between Democratic and Republican control, had initially been cast as a potential bellwether of President Biden’s stature among swing voters.

But the race — among the first House special elections in a swing district since the Supreme Court overturned Roe v. Wade — has quickly morphed into a closely watched test case of how important abortion rights may be in a tossup general election.

Mr. Ryan, a combat veteran who serves as executive of Ulster County, is in favor of protecting abortion access nationwide. Marc Molinaro, the Republican executive of Dutchess County, is not.

Like many other Democratic congressional candidates around the country, Mr. Ryan is trying to make the threat to abortion rights a central issue in the campaign. He cites the rollbacks of reproductive rights, voting rights and access to health care as urgent indicators.

“It is an existential moment for our democracy,” he said.

Mr. Molinaro has similarly adopted a [*Republican Party strategy*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/05/us/politics/republicans-abortion-kansas.html) — avoid talking about abortion whenever possible — that is beginning to take hold, especially after voters in Kansas, a Republican state, overwhelmingly [*rejected a referendum*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/05/us/politics/republicans-abortion-kansas.html) that would have removed abortion rights from the state’s constitution.

[*Polling shows*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/05/us/politics/republicans-abortion-kansas.html) that 65 percent of Americans believe that abortion should be legal in most or all cases — a number that has grown in the past decade. But whether that belief is enough to persuade voters to stick with Democrats despite high gas prices and inflation remains to be seen — and is a question that reflects the party’s larger struggle to energize a socially and economically diverse base in the upcoming midterms.

The 19th Congressional District in New York — last represented by Antonio Delgado, a Democrat who gave up his seat this spring to serve as lieutenant governor — is among the nation’s dwindling number of true swing districts. Combining both the liberal cities of Kingston and Hudson with more conservative rural areas of Greene and Delaware Counties, the district went for President Barack Obama in 2012 and Donald J. Trump in 2016 before returning narrowly to the Democrats in 2020.

When Mr. Delgado won in 2018 and again in 2020, some saw the impact of [*well-heeled*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/05/us/politics/republicans-abortion-kansas.html) city-dwellers, many of whom vote Democrat, who had begun to migrate into the Hudson Valley. That trend has only increased during the pandemic, revitalizing small towns but also [*exacerbating the area’s housing crisis*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/05/us/politics/republicans-abortion-kansas.html) and [*contributing to local tensions*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/05/us/politics/republicans-abortion-kansas.html).

Mr. Molinaro has tried to tailor his campaign to middle- and ***working-class*** concerns, speaking often about crime and economic woes, a struggle he says he knows first hand as a child growing up on food stamps. He blames Democratic policies in Albany and Washington for the inflation and high consumer prices that he says are hurting upstate New Yorkers, urging voters to send a message to “limousine liberals.”

On social issues, Mr. Molinaro mostly toes the party line, saying he opposes bans on assault rifles and is personally opposed to abortion. But where [*he once said*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/05/us/politics/republicans-abortion-kansas.html) that he considered the constitutional right to abortion to be settled law, he now says that he believes the decision belongs with states and he would vote against a federal law ensuring abortion access nationwide. Similarly, he says that he would oppose a nationwide ban.

The position has put him on the defensive, particularly given the weight that Mr. Ryan has given the issue in campaign literature and advertising. Indeed, Mr. Molinaro rarely speaks about it except when pressed, as in a recent debate, when he invoked rare late-term abortions as a reason to restrict abortion rights.

“Like most people of this district, I just think there ought to be some thoughtful limitations,” he said. Later, he prodded Mr. Ryan: “Are you OK, Pat, with no limitations? None? You think that even to the second before delivery, you are OK with abortion?”

Mr. Ryan frames his campaign as an outgrowth of the call to service that led him to the military, speaking often about responsibility to community and the promise that government should be a force for good.

Like Mr. Molinaro, he agrees that the economy is not working for many in the ***working class***, but blames large corporations for taking more than their share. Calling out entrenched politicians on both sides of the aisle, he envisions a “people-centered” economy bolstered by investments in child care, housing and infrastructure.

The contest has drawn notice from partisan backers. In the most recent three-month reporting period, Mr. Ryan raised over a million dollars. Mr. Molinaro has received an assist from the National Republican Congressional Committee, which plans to spend more than $700,000 on TV ads in this race, according to the media tracking firm AdImpact.

Mr. Molinaro also boasts $1 million cash on hand and high name recognition locally, first as a teenage mayor of the village of Tivoli and later as a 2018 candidate for governor.

At the Greene County Youth Fair in late July, would-be voters differed about the extent to which the Supreme Court’s abortion ruling would influence their ballot choices.

Alea Fanelli, a registered Republican, said she viewed herself as an independent. And while she disapproves of Democratic prison reforms that she says have made her husband’s job as a corrections officer more dangerous, she said she is still likely to vote for Mr. Ryan, because of his support for abortion rights.

The mother of a daughter, she said her views were shaped by the need to “think about our kids, for the future.” If abortion is outlawed, she said, “then what, we’re back to back rooms, alleys, men kicking us in the stomach?”

Other attendees at the youth fair, who spoke over the bleating of prize goats, suggested that the abortion rights issue was overblown. Many Republican-leaning voters said that though they believed abortion ought to be available in certain instances, it was not a motivating issue for them.

Some disagreed with the premise that the procedure was under threat, noting that it would remain available in New York State. Others said that Republicans had no intention of banning the procedure outright — despite [*efforts*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/05/us/politics/republicans-abortion-kansas.html) to impose bans in [*nearly a dozen states*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/05/us/politics/republicans-abortion-kansas.html).

Roger Maben, a member of the Greene County Republican Committee, has “mixed feelings” about abortion, but says that’s beside the point. “There’s an old saying in elections: It’s the economy stupid!” he said, adding: “Abortion doesn’t matter.”

Adding to the intrigue is the [*chaos of redistricting*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/05/us/politics/republicans-abortion-kansas.html), which has muddled timelines and scrambled political races across the state, perhaps none more so than here.

The winner of the race will serve out the four-month remainder of Mr. Delgado’s term. There will be a separate election in November for the newly redrawn 19th District — whose geographic contours stretch west to take in Tompkins and Tioga Counties but lose much of the Hudson Valley.

Regardless of whether Mr. Molinaro wins the special election in August, he has committed to running for the new 19th District seat in November. Mr. Ryan, however, has entered a three-way Democratic primary for a newly redrawn 18th District, which comprises Dutchess and Orange counties as well as Ulster County, where he lives.

So by January, if Mr. Molinaro wins in the new 19th and Mr. Ryan wins in the new 18th, each could hold seats in Congress — though it is also possible that both will find themselves out of a job. For now though, the two rivals are focusing on the special election in a moment both say is critical.

Given all of the upheaval the district has seen in recent years, local issues could also play a role in the race.

Abi Mesick, a Democratic town board member from Chatham, is supporting Mr. Ryan. But she said she feared that her party has not done enough to reach out to ***working-class*** Hudson Valley residents whose communities have been changed by an influx of second homeowners and city dwellers.

She worried that they would be drawn to Mr. Molinaro’s charisma. “I bet you three-quarters of them are going to vote for him, even if there’s a couple of things they don’t like,” she said.

“Because they don’t like these guys,” she added, casting a glance at a group of older women dressed in head-to-toe linen. “These guys don’t represent them.”

PHOTOS: Marc Molinaro, a Republican, personally opposes abortion. (PHOTOGRAPH BY LIBBY MARCH FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES); Pat Ryan, a Democrat, favors protecting access to abortion. (PHOTOGRAPH BY RICHARD BEAVEN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** October 25, 2024

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[***Commuters in New York City Are Still Waiting for the 'Bus Mayor'***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6908-DHG1-DXY4-X1TK-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Length:** 1429 words

**Byline:** By Emma G. Fitzsimmons and Ana Ley

**Body**

Mayor Eric Adams pledged to create 150 miles of bus lanes in four years in New York City, home to the nation's slowest buses. Then politics interfered.

Early in Mayor Eric Adams's first term, he rode a B41 bus through Brooklyn to cement his commitment to speed up New York City's notoriously slow buses, part of his campaign pledge to be an advocate for bus riders and bicyclists.

Bus riders thought they had their champion. A riders group presented Mr. Adams that day with a jacket that read ''N.Y.C. Bus Mayor'' across the back and celebrated his vow to create 150 miles of new dedicated bus lanes in four years.

Then politics interfered.

The city, which has the slowest buses in the nation -- averaging eight miles per hour -- is expected to add as few as 10 miles of bus lanes this year. In 2022, Mr. Adams's first year as mayor, just shy of a dozen miles were added.

The Adams administration is drawing up plans for new bus lanes on half a dozen more routes, including a three-mile proposal for a busy corridor along Fordham Road in the Bronx. More commuters rely on the bus in the Bronx, per capita, than in any other borough, and 60 percent of households do not own a car, according to analyses of Census Bureau data by city agencies.

But now that plan seems in limbo, after local businesses objected and one of the mayor's political allies, Representative Adriano Espaillat, raised doubts.

Richard Davey, the president of New York City Transit who oversees the city's vast subway and bus system, said in an interview that Mr. Adams had been a ''huge transit mayor for us,'' citing the mayor's focus on subway crime and support for discount MetroCards for poor New Yorkers.

But the Metropolitan Transportation Authority is powerless to speed up its buses unless the city creates more bus lanes.

Without urgently tackling projects, ''the math won't add up by the end of the mayor's four years,'' Mr. Davey said on Monday as he rode a Bx36 bus through the Bronx.

Transit advocates worry that other bus-friendly proposals could be in jeopardy, such as a major bus-lane plan for Flatbush Avenue in Brooklyn that travels through the heart of neighborhoods that Mr. Adams won in 2021. Rita Joseph, the councilwoman who represents Flatbush, says she supports bringing a bus lane to her district.

''I have heard from my neighbors -- both for and against, and now as an elected leader it is my responsibility to work with my colleagues to find a compromise that everyone can agree on,'' Ms. Joseph said in a statement.

With New York City mired in traffic gridlock and grappling with the impact of climate change, giving priority to buses seems an obvious solution.

London and Beijing have sped up their fleets by giving more street space to buses. But in New York, the voices of drivers and business leaders are often louder than those of the city's 1.2 million daily bus riders, many of them ***working-class*** New Yorkers.

A spokesman for the mayor, Charles Kretchmer Lutvak, said in a statement that the Adams administration had improved commute time on many bus routes, including on Northern Boulevard in Queens, and ''continues to do everything we can to meet the ambitious goals that the mayor laid out in his campaign.''

But as Mr. Adams, a Democrat, gears up to run for re-election in 2025, his administration has been deferential toward powerful interests and local leaders.

One of the mayor's closest aides, Ingrid Lewis-Martin, has opposed street redesign projects and overrode the transportation commissioner in February 2022 to allow cars back onto an eight-block stretch in Fort Greene, Brooklyn, reserved for pedestrians.

Ms. Lewis-Martin also raised concerns about two bike lane plans in Brooklyn: one on McGuinness Boulevard in Greenpoint opposed by Gina and Tony Argento, influential Democratic donors to Mr. Adams who own a local film production company; and another on Ashland Place in Fort Greene opposed by Two Trees Management, a major real estate firm led by an Adams donor, according to two people who were familiar with the matter.

Mr. Lutvak denied that Ms. Lewis-Martin had meddled in the Ashland Place project and said that it was moving forward. On Wednesday, he said the city was also proceeding with a scaled-back version of the McGuinness Boulevard project, a development first reported by Gothamist.

Oswald Feliz, a local City Council member who is part of Mr. Espaillat's so-called Squadriano political alliance, is fighting the proposal for Fordham Road, which has 85,000 daily bus riders. He, along with other opponents like the Bronx Zoo and Fordham University, fear that the plan would snarl car traffic and push it to surrounding streets because cars would be confined to one lane in each direction.

Less than 6 percent of visitors who drive to the zoo and other nearby attractions use Fordham Road to access it, Department of Transportation data shows.

Mr. Feliz would rather have the city repaint the existing bus lanes red and install more traffic enforcement cameras.

''We would strongly support a busway or offset bus lanes in neighborhoods where they are necessary for faster buses; but what Fordham buses need is a fixing of current bus lanes,'' he said in a statement.

Mr. Espaillat discussed the Fordham Road plan in a phone call last month with officials from the M.T.A., the governor's office and the city's Transportation Department and told them it was clear it did not have local support, according to a person who was on the call and granted anonymity to discuss a sensitive matter. The call was first reported by the website Streetsblog.

A spokeswoman for Mr. Espaillat, who is Dominican American and a key ally in Mr. Adams's coalition of Black and Latino leaders, said in a statement that he backed local officials ''to make the best determination in the interests of city residents.'' She noted Mr. Espaillat's past support for faster bus routes when he was a state lawmaker.

Mr. Davey, noting that the city Transportation Department was short-staffed, said he was so eager to help the city start construction on the Fordham Road project this year that ''I'll go out and paint, personally, a bus lane.''

Opponents of the Fordham Road plan include a business group led by Peter Madonia, a bakery owner and former chief of staff to Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg, and donors to Mr. Adams such as John Calvelli, executive vice president of the Bronx Zoo, and Marc Jerome, president of Monroe College.

The corridor was originally expected to become a busway, like the one on 14th Street in Manhattan that bars almost all through traffic except for buses and commercial trucks and has been shown to improve service. After a stretch of Main Street in Flushing, Queens, was turned into a busway in 2021, rush-hour bus speeds rose by 50 percent.

A new compromise proposal would add an ''offset lane'' for buses in the middle of Fordham Road, allowing for a parking and loading lane next to the curb.

A letter to the mayor from Mr. Feliz and three state lawmakers last month said the new plan would ''negatively impact our thriving economic, social, and health ecosystem,'' which includes Little Italy on Arthur Avenue in the Bronx and ''destinations for visitors and others to the Bronx from all over the world.''

Transit advocates have pushed back, sometimes in eye-catching ways: A giraffe costume was deployed to draw attention to the Bronx Zoo's opposition.

''Riders are demanding that the mayor keep his promise, and nowhere is that promise more significant -- more meaningful -- than on Fordham Road,'' said Danny Pearlstein, a spokesman for Riders Alliance, a transit advocacy group.

On a scorching hot day last week, Jennifer Reyes, 18, waited for the Bx12 bus on Fordham Road, which she takes to school, Marine training and a job as a cashier at a fried chicken restaurant in Times Square.

Ms. Reyes, a lifelong Bronx resident, said buses often arrive late and are too packed to board, so she leaves home early to make up for frequent delays.

''I know it's going to, like, make people mad,'' Ms. Reyes said of the proposal to prioritize buses. ''But us students, workers, we need to get to our places.''

Milagros Matías, a home care worker, said she was frustrated by the number of delivery vehicles clogging the street and hoped the city would move quickly to clear the way for buses.

''There needs to be more space for public transit,'' Ms. Matías, 54, said in Spanish. ''This mode of transportation is essential.''

Jeffery C. Mays contributed reporting.Jeffery C. Mays contributed reporting.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/17/nyregion/eric-adams-buses-nyc.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/17/nyregion/eric-adams-buses-nyc.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Above, buses move slowly on Fordham Road in the Bronx because of heavy traffic. Left, Richard A. Davey, head of New York City Transit, said he would paint a bus lane himself on Fordham Road. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY THALIA JUAREZ FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A14.

**Load-Date:** August 20, 2023

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[***Literary Destinations / Read Your Way Through Appalachia***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6967-KJD1-DXY4-X021-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

September 17, 2023 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section BR; Column 0; Book Review Desk; Pg. 14

**Length:** 1840 words

**Byline:** By Barbara Kingsolver

**Body**

Barbara Kingsolver, whose Pulitzer-winning ''Demon Copperhead'' offered a variegated portrait of the region, guides readers through a literary landscape ''as bracing and complex as a tumbling mountain creek.''

Read Your Way Around the World is a series exploring the globe through books.

Appalachia is a region and a mind-set. Our devotion to our place belies the fact that we're hard to pin down on a map: a swath of highlands crossing parts of Georgia, Tennessee, North Carolina, Virginia and the coal country of Kentucky and West Virginia, plus a smidgen of Pennsylvania and points north. State lines make little sense here; we have more in common with other mountain communities than with the far ends of our states and their capitals. Appalachia has few large cities, our economies are land-based and, unless you live here, we're probably not what you think.

For starters, outsiders call it ''Appal-AY-sha,'' a mispronunciation that hurts our ears. It's ''Appal-achia.'' As in, ''If you keep that up, I'll throw this apple atcha.'' But in fact, we won't. We tend toward heart-blessing kindness in the way of small-town folks who rely on each other in good times and bad, and live together regardless. We love our families to death, and laugh at ourselves. As one of the nation's last strongholds of small family farms, we're likely to measure time by the planting seasons. We make things: gardens, quilts, music and, above all, stories, in a vernacular all our own with its lexical ties to ***working class*** Anglo-Irish and the King James Bible. It adds up to a literature as bracing and complex as a tumbling mountain creek.

What should I read before I pack my bags?

Weighing in at nearly three pounds, ''Writing Appalachia: An Anthology,'' edited by Katherine Ledford and Theresa Lloyd, is too big to pack but too wonderful to miss. It serves up the region's iconic talents -- James Still, Jesse Stuart and Harriette Simpson Arnow, to name a few -- in appetizer sized portions to tempt a reader to go find their longer works. (And you should, especially Arnow's ''The Dollmaker.'') But the comprehensive sweep of this collection begins with Native American oral traditions, enslaved people's narratives, and work songs, then moves through 20th-century classics into a modern chorus of queer and straight, white, Black and Indigenous voices. For any reader who needs it, this book will put away the stereotype of Appalachians as a dull monoculture.

Another good starting point is Steven Stoll's ''Ramp Hollow: The Ordeal of Appalachia,'' a readable social history that offers a rare understanding of land-based economies, and how cultural rootedness has been penalized by global development. Stoll explains Appalachia's poverty and ''otherness'' not as the failing of mountain people, but as a fate perpetrated on them by centuries of extractive industries and urban presumptions of success. A reader may be impressed by how cannily Appalachians have survived anyway.

What books or authors should I bring along with me?

If you only have room for slim books in your suitcase, bring the poets, who connect our past and present through the sound of spoken language. When I read Maurice Manning's pointed modern debates with God (whom he calls ''Boss'') in ''Bucolics,'' I can hear James Wright's high school football players, four generations back, aching with empty prospects as they ''gallop terribly against each other's bodies'' in ''The Branch Will Not Break.'' To simultaneously pray, curse and laugh at our bleak history is sublimely Appalachian, and nobody ever nailed it quite like Jim Wayne Miller; start with ''The Brier Poems.''

Frank X Walker's ''Affrilachia,'' published in 2000, first gave a name to the Black Appalachian experience, a poetic tradition further enriched by Nikki Giovanni, bell hooks and Crystal Wilkinson, among many others. On my shelves of Appalachian poetry, women slightly outnumber the men. To name one, George Ella Lyon has written at least three poems I've put on a list to be read at my funeral. So has Wendell Berry. (Somebody else will have to pare down that list.) Berry's northern Kentucky farm is not quite in Appalachia, but no writer speaks better for our agrarian spirit and character. Under the quiet surface of such novels as ''Hannah Coulter'' and ''Jayber Crow'' lies a reckoning as subversive as his ''Mad Farmer'' manifestoes. But since we're still discussing poetry, read ''This Day: Collected and New Sabbath Poems.''

Really, though, you should make room for fiction. It would be hard to find a better distillation of Appalachia than Silas House's first three novels: ''Clay's Quilt,'' ''A Parchment of Leaves'' and ''The Coal Tattoo.'' The prolific House is also a poet, a playwright and Kentucky's current -- and first openly gay -- poet laureate.

My own search for a writerly voice first found purchase in the territory between Lee Smith's mountain women in ''Fair and Tender Ladies'' and the twelve heart-stopping stories Breece D'J Pancake left us from his short life. And like every artist I know around here, I've been shaped by the polemics of a place where big capital runs up hard against mortal human labor. Denise Giardina's ''Storming Heaven'' and Ann Pancake's ''Strange as This Weather Has Been'' cover a century of that story in West Virginia's coal camps. The Cherokee writer Annette Saunooke Clapsaddle, in ''Even as We Breathe,'' takes a different look back at the historical collision of Indigenous communities and moneyed privilege in North Carolina. Adding to these accounts of caste and class, Rahul Mehta's short story collection ''Quarantine'' layers in the complexities of growing up queer and South Asian in West Virginia. Running through all these books is a current of attachment -- to family, place and impossible duty -- that makes them Appalachian.

What literary pilgrimage destinations would you recommend?

Hindman Settlement School, in Hindman, Ky., was founded in 1902 as an educational experiment in a hollow that could only be reached by mule. Its work carries on to this day through readings, concerts and creative support of local arts traditions. In nearby Whitesburg, Appalshop's media arts center holds valuable archives and produces theater, music and spoken-word recordings, telling local stories that too often go untold by commercial media. Both Appalshop and Hindman School suffered catastrophic damage in last summer's floods, and, with characteristic resilience, both have given and received enormous community support as they work to recover.

In one of Appalachia's few cities, Asheville, N.C., you can visit Thomas Wolfe's grave or his sprawling childhood home, a boardinghouse run by his mother. Residents and neighbors who found themselves in his novel ''Look Homeward, Angel'' were sufficiently peeved to get it banned from local libraries. In nearly a century since, it has never gone out of print.

Not far from Asheville, lifting its 6,000-foot peak above the Pisgah National Forest, is the inspiration for Charles Frazier's historical novel of exile and longing, ''Cold Mountain.'' Visitors can approach it on foot or via the scenic Blue Ridge Parkway.

What books give a sense of the nature of the place?

If you haven't come here to climb a mountain, you haven't come. The Appalachian Range runs from Alabama to Newfoundland, extending far north and south of culturally defined Appalachia. But here in the high middle, we know these ancient mountains have made us the people we are, while also providing a home to some of the richest biodiversity on the continent. The Appalachian Trail is the full immersion, but casual hikers can find plenty to explore, from the Great Smoky Mountains and Shenandoah National Parks to Grandfather Mountain, New River and dozens of other state parks. Most offer trail maps and field guides to slip into your pack.

In the evening, by lamplight, Scott Weidensaul's ''Mountains of the Heart: A Natural History of the Appalachians'' will help you absorb the wonders around you. Or enjoy ''A Literary Field Guide to Southern Appalachia,'' edited by Rose McLarney and Laura-Gray Street. Calling to mind an earlier era of naturalists, before science and poetry divorced, this guide introduces trees, birds, insects and more, each with a hand-drawn illustration and a poem written in its honor, showcasing dozens of the region's artists. Where else are you going to find an ode to the Eastern Hellbender?

If I can't visit, what books could take me there instead?

Every author mentioned here will paint pictures in your mind, but these two have done the painting for you.

Depictions of farm life have a tiresome tendency to romanticize or condescend, but Arwen Donahue's ''Landings: A Crooked Creek Farm Year,'' does neither. Her prose and ink-watercolor images celebrate the full measure of her family's connection to their land as they labor to make ends meet, while remembering to honor the oriole's song and the occasional need for a swim in the cold creek.

Suzanne Stryk, a visual artist with a scientist's eye, crossed her home state to chart Virginia's natural and cultural ecology in ''The Middle of Somewhere.'' The book also includes the Coastal and Piedmont regions, but Stryk's home and heart are in Southwest Virginia, and she celebrates our mountains as the center of their own universe.

For anyone tempted to think of this rambling rural domain as the middle of nowhere, our writers make a case that Appalachia is somewhere, all right. For plenty of us, it's everything.

Barbara Kingsolver's Appalachia Reading List

''Writing Appalachia: An Anthology,'' edited by Katherine Ledford and Theresa Lloyd

''The Dollmaker,'' Harriette Simpson Arnow

''Ramp Hollow: The Ordeal of Appalachia,'' Steven Stoll

''Bucolics,'' Maurice Manning

''The Branch Will Not Break,'' James Wright

''The Brier Poems,'' Jim Wayne Miller

''Affrilachia,'' Frank X Walker

Poetry by Nikki Giovanni, bell hooks, Crystal Wilkinson and George Ella Lyon

''Hannah Coulter,'' ''Jayber Crow,'' ''The Mad Farmer Poems'' and ''This Day: Collected and New Sabbath Poems,'' Wendell Berry

''Clay's Quilt,'' ''A Parchment of Leaves'' and ''The Coal Tattoo,'' Silas House

''Fair and Tender Ladies,'' Lee Smith

''The Stories of Breece D'J Pancake,'' Breece D'J Pancake

''Storming Heaven,'' Denise Giardina

''Strange as This Weather Has Been,'' Ann Pancake

''Even as We Breathe,'' Annette Saunooke Clapsaddle

''Quarantine,'' Rahul Mehta

''Look Homeward, Angel,'' Thomas Wolfe

''Cold Mountain,'' Charles Frazier

''Mountains of the Heart: A Natural History of the Appalachians,'' Scott Weidensaul

''A Literary Field Guide to Southern Appalachia,'' edited by Rose McLarney and Laura-Gray Street

''Landings: A Crooked Creek Farm Year,'' Arwen Donahue

''The Middle of Somewhere,'' Suzanne Stryk

Barbara Kingsolver is the author of 17 works of fiction, nonfiction and poetry. Her most recent novel, ''Demon Copperhead,'' was awarded a Pulitzer Prize. She lives on a farm in Appalachian Virginia.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/09/books/barbara-kingsolver-appalachia-books.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/09/books/barbara-kingsolver-appalachia-books.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: A rural scene near Meadowview, Va. (PHOTOGRAPH BY MIKE BELLEME FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (BR15) This article appeared in print on page BR14, BR15.

**Load-Date:** September 17, 2023

**End of Document**



[***Columns That Scrutinized, and Skewered, the Literary World; Nonfiction***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6892-T9K1-DXY4-X3ND-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

May 22, 2023 Monday 23:40 EST

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**Section:** BOOKS

**Length:** 980 words

**Byline:** Dwight Garner

**Highlight:** “NB by J.C.” collects the variegated musings of James Campbell in the Times Literary Supplement.

**Body**

“NB by J.C.” collects the variegated musings of James Campbell in the Times Literary Supplement.

NB BY J.C.: A Walk Through the Times Literary Supplement, by James Campbell

If you are a subscriber to the [*Times Literary Supplement*](https://www.the-tls.co.uk/), or TLS, that august literary review out of London, you know that its good, gray issues roll in every week, more quickly than it is possible to keep up.

Determined not to become a hoarder, Lydia Davis arrived at a solution to this abundance. In her 2014 book of stories, “Can’t and Won’t,” there is a cheerful piece called “How I Read as Quickly as Possible Through My Back Issues of the TLS.” Davis goes by topic:

Interested in:

the social value of altruism

the building of the Pont Neuf

the history of daguerreotypes

and

Not interested in:

a cultural history of the accordion in America.

Davis didn’t mention it, but one part of the TLS no one skips, in my experience, is the [*NB column*](https://www.the-tls.co.uk/categories/regular-features/nb/), which runs inside the back cover. (NB = nota bene, Latin for “note well.”) The column is a miscellany: three or four items, irreverent and journalistic in tone. It’s a small treat for readers who make it to the end.

From 1997 to 2020, its golden age, the column was signed J.C. This correspondent has officially been outed as James Campbell, a biographer of James Baldwin and a longtime editor at the magazine. He was a good steward of the column, and his best material has been collected now in “NB by J.C.: A Walk Through the Times Literary Supplement.”

His NB was not a gossip column, Campbell explains. He hoped never to see the words “Martin” and “Amis” in proximity, and he mostly lived up to that vow. Instead, his droll NB skewered pomposity in its many forms.

He liked to bestow mock awards. He disliked academic gibberish, so he regularly handed out an Incomprehensibility Prize. He also invented and dispensed the Jean-Paul Sartre Prize for Prize Refusal (Sartre turned down the Nobel in 1964). New recipients seemed to surface every few months.

Late-period Maya Angelou was a target, especially when she partnered with Hallmark, the greeting card company. One NB column began: “The Preposterousness of Maya Angelou: An inexhaustible series.” Colum McCann, Benjamin Kunkel, Prince Charles and Jean-Michel Basquiat were also hazed for moments of preposterousness.

Campbell wrote about translations, and book titles, and clichés, and publicity campaigns, and the timidity of reviewers. When [*Cormac McCarthy’s manual typewriter*](https://www.nytimes.com/2009/12/01/books/01typewriter.html) sold at auction in 2009, the awe-struck book dealer Glenn Horowitz remarked that it was “as if Mount Rushmore was carved with a Swiss Army knife.” Campbell responded: “Who could fail to be similarly moved? It is as if the complete works of Shakespeare were written with a quill pen.”

He distrusted identity politics. “The subject of race in modern Britain is so delicate, so hedged about by hypocrisy and euphemism, so confused, that it has become impossible to talk about it in plain language,” he wrote. He tried to do so anyway.

He distrusted, as well, the culture of cancellation. He listed the foibles of many, many, many writers but arrived at the realization that “if you insist on judging writers by their personal behavior, you’ll be better off not reading at all.”

Editors were once lionized for issuing banned books (“Lady Chatterley’s Lover,” “Ulysses,” “Lolita”). In these times, he wrote, “an editor is in danger of being sacked for publishing something that doesn’t fit someone else’s definition of ‘appropriate.’”

He defended what’s become known as cultural appropriation, in every direction. (“If the art is good, it justifies its own creation. If bad, it predicts its own oblivion.”)

He was no special fan of Margaret Thatcher, but he was weary of hearing her tenure as prime minister damned in hyperbolic terms. When Joyce Carol Oates, [*reviewing a memoir by Jeanette Winterson*](https://www.nybooks.com/articles/2012/05/24/panic-about-love/) in The New York Review of Books, described Winterson as “a fierce and eloquent supporter of the literary arts, having lived through Thatcher’s England as a university student at Oxford,” Campbell was moved to reply:

Is that Thatcher’s England in which tanks rolled on to campuses, soldiers rounded up the intelligentsia and bonfires were made out of books beloved by Jeanette Winterson? Or Thatcher’s England where a ***working-class*** girl from Accrington could go to Oxford and receive not just a free education but a generous maintenance as well?

He printed Elmore Leonard’s now-famous [*10 rules for writing fiction*](https://www.nytimes.com/2001/07/16/arts/writers-writing-easy-adverbs-exclamation-points-especially-hooptedoodle.html) (“Never open a book with the weather,” “Try to leave out the part that readers tend to skip”) and tore them apart. He noted that, in nearly every case, each could be replaced with its opposite. “Our rule for the cultivation of good writing is much simpler,” he wrote. “Stay in, read and don’t limit yourself to American crime fiction.”

Campbell wrote about writers who pretend not to read their reviews, and biographers who hate their subjects. He wrote about pop lyrics derived from classic literature. He took note of mentions of the TLS in literature. (He missed one of my favorites, from a biography of Angela Carter. She described the vibe in the critic Lorna Sage’s house as “tea bags, Tampax and the TLS.”) There are animadversions against literary back-scratching. Campbell sought to distinguish the sham from the genuine.

He was interested in everything. When he needed material for a column, he would sometimes walk to a bookstore, buy something unusual and write about its contents. He made it work.

NB is the sort of column that people looked at and thought, “I could do that.” Turns out they couldn’t. I still read NB every week with pleasure, but absent J.C., the column has lost a sliver of its freshness and nerve, and is still seeking to (re)find its voice.

NB BY J.C.: A Walk Through the Times Literary Supplement | By James Campbell | 374 pp. | Paul Dry Books | Paperback, $24.95

PHOTOS This article appeared in print on page C2.

**Load-Date:** May 22, 2023

**End of Document**



[***In Phoenix, Heat Becomes a Brutal Test of Endurance***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68NX-N8H1-DXY4-X0X0-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

July 12, 2023 Wednesday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; National Desk; Pg. 11

**Length:** 1259 words

**Byline:** By Jack Healy

**Body**

Arizona is used to scorching summers, but the region's 11th straight day of 110-degree temperatures is straining patience and resources.

Rachelle Williams was sick of delivering mail in Indiana winters, so in 2019, she put in for a transfer to Arizona and joined the flood of newcomers who have made Phoenix one of the country's fastest-growing cities.

She was questioning her move this week as the temperature hit 110 degrees for an 11th straight day on Monday, with no end in sight. Ms. Williams wore long sleeves, black gloves and a broad-brimmed visor with flaps covering her neck to deflect the sun as she walked her route. But no matter how much water or electrolyte solution she drank, her legs tingled and her head spun.

''I don't even know how I do it,'' Ms. Williams, 35, said.

Summers in Phoenix are now a brutal endurance match. As the climate warms, forecasters say that dangerous levels of heat crank up earlier in the year, last longer -- often well past Halloween -- and lock America's hottest big city in a sweltering straitjacket.

In triple-digit heat, monkey bars singe children's hands, water bottles warp and seatbelts feel like hot irons. Devoted runners strap on headlamps to go jogging at 4 a.m., when it is still only 90 degrees, come home drenched in sweat and promptly roll down the sun shutters. Neighborhoods feel like ghost towns at midday, with rumbling rooftop air-conditioners offering the only sign of life.

A relentless heat wave is broiling the Southwest, with some 50 million people across the United States now facing dangerous temperatures. Forecasters say that the current streak of consecutive 110-degree days may end up being the longest Phoenix has ever seen, potentially breaking an 18-day record set in 1974.

Arizona's woes have been amplified this summer by the delay of monsoons that sweep up from the Gulf of Mexico and help quench tinder-dry deserts and mountainsides. The ''heat island'' effect of Phoenix's growing urban footprint means that nighttime also now swelters. The low temperature dipped only to 91 degrees before dawn on Tuesday.

All of this has added up to an ultramarathon of sweat -- one that is testing whether Phoenix can adapt to a new reality of longer, deadlier heat waves at a time of water shortages and soaring housing costs that have pushed record numbers of people to sleep on baking streets and forced others to choose between paying rent or air-conditioning bills.

''We haven't even gotten to the worst,'' said Stacey Sosa, 19, a fashion-design student who grew up in Phoenix, adding that she was bracing for months of heat. ''We're just starting out.''

Heat is often described as an invisible disaster -- one that leaves few visible scars like the floods ravaging towns in Vermont and upstate New York but that kills far more people every year than hurricanes, tornadoes or wildfires.

Last year, 425 people died of heat-related causes in Maricopa County, which encompasses about 4.5 million people in Phoenix and its suburbs. It was a record high death toll, and a 25 percent increase over the previous year. Most of the victims were homeless or elderly. Phoenix's homeless population has grown by 70 percent over the past six years, to more than 9,600, according to a census count this year.

The number of extreme heat days is also growing. In the early 1900s, Phoenix averaged five days a year with temperatures of 110 degrees or higher, according to Erinanne Saffell, the state's climatologist. In recent years, the city has sweltered through an average of 27 110-degree days a year.

Phoenix has tried to confront the crisis by setting up a first-in-the-nation city office dedicated to heat. Its efforts include planting trees in shadeless neighborhoods, resurfacing heat-absorbing streets with more reflective pavement and handing out towels, water and emergency heat supplies.

In Washington, Representative Ruben Gallego, a Democrat from Phoenix, and other Western lawmakers have introduced legislation that would require federal emergency managers to treat heat waves like other natural disasters.

This summer, Phoenix is running 62 cooling centers and water stations, and has set up ''respite centers'' that offer people -- many of them homeless -- a place to rest and sleep during the day.

''Even if our summers are longer and hotter, that doesn't mean people have to suffer,'' said David Hondula, the director of Phoenix's Office of Heat Response and Mitigation.

But across the city, a loose collection of volunteers and community groups say official outreach efforts have failed to help many homeless and low-income people. So they deliver water, ice and electrolyte packets to homeless encampments, check on older residents in mobile homes and hand out slow cookers so people who don't want to fire up the stove can still make dinner.

On Monday morning, as the temperature arced past 100 degrees, Jeffrey Elliott, 36, a volunteer with Feed Phoenix, a community group, heaved three water bottles and 100 pounds of ice into the back of his car and headed out to make his deliveries. He moved to Phoenix from Atlanta two months ago, and said he did not know whether his actions were actually helping. But he said he felt compelled to do something.

''Can you imagine being that hot and miserable?'' he said. ''It's like walking around in a blow-dryer.''

He stopped beside a spit of grass near an interstate where six people were clumped in the meager shade of a mesquite tree. Fifty feet away, in the full sun, a friend of theirs who had been using fentanyl had fallen asleep under a reflective windshield cover.

Phoenix says its heat-relief centers serve about 1,600 people a day, but several homeless people said in interviews that they did not know where to find a cooling center -- or did not realize they even existed. The city has created online maps showing each location, but homeless people said their phones were often dead or got easily fried in the heat.

Robert Jefferson, 47, said he was willing to take his chances sleeping on the hot streets because being inside a shelter taxed his mental health. He was frustrated that the park's bathrooms were locked, preventing him from even washing his hands.

''What do they expect us to do?'' he asked.

By noon, Perry Park, in a ***working-class*** Latino neighborhood on the east side of town, was eerily quiet. A few weeks earlier, the public pool had been bursting with children and families, but it had shut down for the summer -- a symptom of the city's struggles to hire enough trained pool managers.

After two years of Covid-related disruptions, 18 of Phoenix's 29 public pools opened this year, but an analysis by The Arizona Republic found many of those that remained closed were in neighborhoods with high poverty rates. At a community center across the street from Perry Pool, several children said they could not understand why theirs was empty.

Mia, 9, said she had loved the pool, especially because she could not be outside in the 110-degree heat, which gave her ''a really weird stomach feeling.'' Adriely, 13, said she had loved being able to walk from her house to the pool.

Outside of her summer job teaching dance classes to younger children at the community center, Adriely said she mostly felt confined to stay inside on 110-degree days. Arizona's snowbirds and families in wealthier neighborhoods can slip away for the summer, but Adriely said her parents and others in the neighborhood had to work.

''You can't really do anything,'' she said. ''I'm just trying to survive.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/07/11/us/phoenix-heat-wave.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/07/11/us/phoenix-heat-wave.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Mia, 9, drinking water and getting relief from the extreme heat at a community center in Phoenix on Monday. The pool in her neighborhood remained closed.

Joseph Cisneros, a captain with the Salvation Army Emergency Response team, worked at a hydration and cooling center.

People heading to Tempe Beach Park, which offers a splash park, boating, fishing, a baseball diamond and other athletic fields.

Jason Solo, 47, helping himself. Volunteers delivered water, ice and electrolyte packets to homeless camps across Phoenix. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY ADRIANA ZEHBRAUSKAS FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A11.

**Load-Date:** July 12, 2023

**End of Document**



[***Migrant Influx Strains Support Of New Yorkers***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69BR-0J61-DXY4-X04V-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

October 8, 2023 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; National Desk; Pg. 1

**Length:** 1977 words

**Byline:** By John Leland

**Body**

As the city's resources strain under the influx of thousands of migrants, New Yorkers are still resolutely in favor of welcoming newcomers. But for how long?

Carin Bail said she was walking with a friend in Queens this spring when they stopped to talk with a woman who was holding a baby and crying. The woman had just arrived at a nearby migrant shelter, she explained in Spanish, and her baby would not eat the food there.

Ms. Bail bought the woman baby food and diapers. ''What tugged at my heartstrings,'' she said, ''was she had a kid with her.''

Yet Ms. Bail, who teaches special education and yoga in public school, opposes the migrant shelters, and has spoken at rallies against them. She complained of overcrowding at her school, in Jamaica, Queens, which recently took in 132 students, many of whom do not speak English.

When asked to describe her feelings toward the migrants, she paused. Her own parents immigrated to the United States after the Holocaust, seeking a better life.

''These are human beings who deserve a chance at life and opportunities,'' she said. ''My heart goes out to some of these folks. But then on the flip side, I feel that our government and our leadership have been failing us. There's not one positive outcome that has come from this yet. And it seems like it's just heading toward a downward spiral.''

New York has long proclaimed its openness to new arrivals, enshrined in the welcoming words on the Statue of Liberty. But the influx of more than 110,000 migrants in a little more than a year, and the strain on the city's already stretched resources, has called that openness into question. What happens when the tired, huddled masses are suddenly not a poetic conceit but a continuous tide of very needy newcomers, living in temporary shelters in residential neighborhoods?

''People are extremely internally conflicted,'' said Don Levy, director of the Siena College Research Institute, which has polled New Yorkers on their attitudes toward the migrants.

The migrants -- a mix of Venezuelans, West Africans, Afghans and others -- began to arrive in significant numbers last spring, driven from their home countries by poverty or political strife, and drawn to New York for its job opportunities and generous public services. In a city whose population is more than one-third foreign-born, the influx, swelling to fill more than 200 shelters, has divided neighbors and families.

In polls, large majorities of New Yorkers say immigrants bring new vitality to the country, and that the current migrants want only to build a better life. They reject the suggestion that immigrants want handouts or that they bring crime or drugs.

But majorities also say the recent influx of migrants is a ''serious problem,'' and that it is time to slow or stop the flow of new arrivals. Nearly half say migrants to the state over the past 20 years have been a ''burden'' rather than a ''benefit.''

Mr. Levy said New Yorkers fall into three comparably sized categories. About a third hold generally negative views of the migrants. Another third are resolutely supportive. That leaves a large swath in the middle, Mr. Levy said.

''They agree that migration and immigrants have built this country,'' he said. ''But then they turn around and go, 'What about now?''' He mentioned makeshift tent shelters and an intake center at a Midtown Manhattan hotel that was so overcrowded that migrants slept outside on the sidewalk, an emblem of a failing system. When otherwise-supportive New Yorkers see such scenes, Mr. Levy said, their reaction is often, '''This can't be.' So there's an internal conflict and there's a frustration.''

For many New Yorkers, the migrant crisis was once an abstraction -- something they saw on the news or heard about in budget statistics. For Aruna Raghavan, who lives near the Brooklyn Navy Yard, the abstraction became real in late summer, when the city opened a shelter for as many as 2,000 single men a few blocks from her home.

''It just happened overnight,'' she said. ''Nobody was consulted. There was no heads up to the community.''

She noticed more litter on the street and men hanging out under the elevated highway; stores in the neighborhood complained that foot traffic would drop because people were afraid to go near the shelter.

But she said the problems that many neighbors predicted had not materialized. The men she passes on the street have been ''very respectful,'' and the ones she speaks to say they just want to work but are prevented by regulations. If they were loitering outside buildings, she said, it was in search of free Wi-Fi to better their circumstances.

''I understand people being concerned, but it's important to have a personal engagement with the people, rather than just chatter about it because it seems to be the topic of the day,'' she said.

But she added that the city and its business sector were failing both the migrants and the people living around them.

''I don't understand why we're not getting more corporate involvement from big companies that can afford it,'' she said. ''It would take nothing for large corporations to set up basic infrastructure within these shelters, to help with their application process and their job search. It takes nothing to sponsor a room of 10 computers connected to the internet where they can actually do some work to get out of the situation they're in.''

Mayor Eric Adams has said that the migrants will cost the city $5 billion this fiscal year, and warned that the influx ''will destroy New York City.'' But by many measures, the city was fraying well before the migrants started to arrive last year. The coronavirus pandemic emptied much of Manhattan, gutting retail businesses and city tax revenues and leading economists to warn of an ''urban doom loop.'' Repeated sightings of rats on the streets and emotionally disturbed people on the subways contributed to a sense of a city unraveling.

The surge of migrants, federally barred from working for six months, exacerbated frustrations that were already building.

In College Point, Queens, a ***working-class*** neighborhood near La Guardia Airport, Jennifer Shannon, 53, said she believed in helping those in need, including the women in a homeless shelter that opened there in 2019. But after a respite center for migrants opened in July, Ms. Shannon was livid.

''We just added 500 more people to a community that's already falling apart,'' she said.

During the early days of the pandemic, Ms. Shannon started a neighborhood association to support food pantries and provide meals to emergency medical workers, earning citations from Mr. Adams -- who was then Brooklyn borough president -- and State Senator John Liu.

But now she says the migrants have devalued life in the neighborhood.

''We have people sitting all over people's private property, drinking, smoking marijuana, hanging out until 4 in the morning in the municipal lot, blasting music,'' she said. ''It's a disgrace.''

''It's not everybody in there. You have people who are genuinely just trying to get away from hell and make a better life for themselves. But that's not who you see sitting in the park benches at 11 o'clock at night, with their friends, men urinating in broad daylight. That's what we're seeing.''

She said her opposition to the shelter was not racial, pointing out that her husband is Mexican. ''I'm not against helping people. But what's going on in our community is unacceptable.''

Mr. Liu, whose Senate district includes a large immigrant population, said many of the complaints about migrants were not coming from areas that have been traditionally anti-immigrant. Instead, he said, protests followed the shelters, so ''even in parts of the city that tend to be very pro immigrant, many of those residents are up in arms.''

Jaslin Kaur, 27, saw frustrations rise in her largely-immigrant neighborhood in eastern Queens after the city opened a 1,000-bed tent shelter at Creedmoor Psychiatric Center in Queens Village, where hundreds of people have converged to protest since August. When Ms. Kaur organized a small counter-demonstration supporting the migrants, she said, opponents screamed at her and posted her identity and home address on social media.

''To see this kind of backlash against people who look like me and have really horrible stories about what it took for them to get to this city -- it's not the neighborhood I know,'' she said, ''not the neighborhood I grew up in.''

She said migrants were being blamed for fiscal problems created by years of government neglect. She recalled the period after Sept. 11, 2001, when her father, a Sikh, stopped wearing his turban in his taxi to avoid being attacked. ''So it's really hard to see immigrant communities facing this kind of hatred all over again, but for a different reason,'' she said.

A flashpoint of conflict is the school system, where plans last spring to press gyms and auditoriums into service as emergency shelters sparked an angry backlash. In Astoria, Queens, Shabbir Suhal, 40, an accountant with three children in public school, said he was alarmed by published reports of students from shelters being permitted to attend school without being immunized against polio, measles, chickenpox and other diseases. Under state law, students in temporary housing have 30 days to start the process of getting immunized.

''I don't think it's safe for my kids,'' Mr. Suhal said. ''I don't think this is right.''

Mr. Suhal, whose family immigrated to the United States from Bangladesh when he was 12, said New York could no longer afford to be a sanctuary city. It particularly galled him to see migrants housed in a local building called the Collective Paper Factory, a ''hipster hotel'' that he and his family cannot afford.

But he said he hesitated to voice his views in public.

Supporters of the migrants ''have become successful at making people afraid to speak their minds,'' he said. ''It's everywhere. I'm sure a lot of politicians want to say the right thing, but they can't, because the No. 1 message is that he's a racist, he's anti-immigrant. We shouldn't be afraid to speak our minds.''

A lifelong Democrat, Mr. Suhal said he was now becoming more of a Republican, and a conservative one.

On a balmy afternoon in late September, Debra Michlewitz, 71, a retired public school teacher, worried about pending cuts to the school system, which is already strained by the surge of migrants and the effects of the pandemic shutdown.

''It would be unrealistic to say that New York can absorb every single person that needs to come right now,'' she said.

But when she looked at the indigent migrants, she thought of her own parents. They came to New York after World War II, after President Harry Truman issued an executive order that opened the door to Jewish refugees, against opposition from Congress. Like the current arrivals, Ms. Michlewitz's parents slept and ate their first meals in facilities for new migrants.

Though she worried about the financial strain posed by the recent arrivals, she said, New York was resilient. It survived the crises of the 1970s; it would survive the current challenges.

''I think we have no choice,'' she said. ''It's the right thing to do. I would feel terrible telling anyone I don't think we should make room for them. That's selfish. People didn't want to make room for my family, and it was only when a president made it happen that they came here.

''It's personal for me. And there are other people who have stories like this, and if they're not remembering that their families were immigrants, it's not right. They need to have empathy.''

In the meantime, as the city continues to add more and larger migrant shelters, tensions will likely spread to more communities.

Ten thousand more migrants are expected to arrive in the next month.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/07/nyregion/nyc-migrant-crisis.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/07/nyregion/nyc-migrant-crisis.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: CARIN BAIL, a teacher in Queens who opposes migrant shelters.

JASLIN KAUR, recalling her family's experience after Sept. 11, 2001.

ARUNA RAGHAVAN, who lives near a shelter in Brooklyn. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY JAMES ESTRIN/THE NEW YORK TIMES)

An intake center at the Roosevelt Hotel in Midtown Manhattan was so crowded this summer that migrants slept on the sidewalk, an emblem of a failing system. (PHOTOGRAPH BY JEENAH MOON FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A18) This article appeared in print on page A1, A18.

**Load-Date:** October 8, 2023

**End of Document**



[***The Mayor's Shifting Plans for Migrants***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:688W-2S81-JBG3-61BP-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

May 21, 2023 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section MB; Column 0; Metropolitan Desk; Pg. 3; BIG CITY

**Length:** 1021 words

**Byline:** By Ginia Bellafante

**Body**

The spontaneous governing style of the Adams administration struggles to adapt to the migrant housing crisis.

Last weekend, several Brooklyn principals were told that their schools would immediately be sheltering hundreds of asylum seekers, by way of mayoral fiat. The schools commandeered into service were chosen because they had stand-alone gyms, apart from the main buildings, which would separate children from the adults who would temporarily be staying there, side by side in tight rows of green cots.

The schools themselves were not in affluent neighborhoods but rather served ***working-class*** families of color, who were now livid. Parents, many immigrants themselves, were concerned about safety and felt cheated that their children would be denied gym in schools that were hardly abundant with amenities. They began lining up as early as 3 in the morning on Tuesday in protest; some brought their children, others refused to send them to school at all. By the next day, after frantic meetings between administrators and parents, Mayor Eric Adams seemed to have reversed course, removing asylum seekers from a school gym in Coney Island and sending them to a vacant office in Midtown. The administration maintained that this turnaround had nothing to do with the rallies.

''Migrants flow in and out of these sites as other more suitable space becomes available, and they have and will continue to be used as a last resort,'' a spokesperson from City Hall said. ''As the mayor has continued to say, everything is on the table when it comes to placement of asylum seekers.''

The situation around migrants -- at least 40,000 of whom are currently in New York's care, making up roughly half of the city's shelter population -- has left the mayor in an almost untenable political position. Any stinting on compassion becomes both a gift to the DeSantis right and a source of agitation to the Ocasio-Cortez left, and any semblance of overreaching acquiescence enrages the centrists who helped the mayor get elected.

Writing earlier this week in City Journal, the urban-policy magazine of the conservative Manhattan Institute, Nicole Gelinas faulted the mayor for spending so much time converting hotels into shelters for the displaced, arguing that the reopening of the Roosevelt Hotel, after a long closure, should have been ''a symbol of New York's post-pandemic resurgence'' but was now, instead, a sign of the mayor's ''failure to lead.''

The past few weeks have emphasized the extent to which Mr. Adams, a politician of high-metabolism guided by his frenetic energy, has leaned into a style of governance defined by improvisation over ideology. Earlier this month, his administration issued an executive order loosening some of the rules around the city's right-to-shelter law, sacrosanct to progressives, which requires families to be placed in private rooms with kitchens and bathrooms rather than in congregate settings.

A week later, the administration signed another order, which seemed philosophically contradictory, suspending rules covering the city's land-review process for siting and building homeless shelters -- a process that often results in NIMBY opposition, long delays and in some cases the abandonment of a project altogether. The result of what can seem like whiplash decision making is a city left living inside the mayor's thought process in real time -- unsure of a broader vision.

''In fairness to the mayor, I will say that this is a situation that is very difficult to manage,'' Diana Ayala, the deputy speaker of the City Council, representing East Harlem and parts of the Bronx, told me. ''It would be a challenge for anyone. I really feel for the administration because I don't think that they have received the resources they need from the federal government.''

Stressing the need for engagement with long-term objectives, she added, ''But I would also welcome a little bit more collaboration.'' In the fall, for example, when the administration moved to build tents on Orchard Beach as temporary migrant housing, the Council pushed back, suggesting that as a flood zone it was ill-suited for the purpose. The administration went ahead anyway -- only to relocate the complex shortly after.

''My biggest concern is that we're being reactive,'' said Ms. Ayala, who was herself once homeless. ''You have to have a holistic approach. We need to be as proactive as possible in trying to identify plans that would move families stuck in the shelter system out of it.'' As others have done, the deputy speaker has been pushing for the elimination of the rule that requires homeless people to have spent 90 days in a shelter before becoming eligible for housing vouchers. So far the administration has been resistant.

Since the governors of Texas and Arizona began sending busloads of migrants northward last year in a show of let's-see-how-you-deal-with-it gamesmanship, the mayor has repeatedly pointed out that the city is left in an impossible situation without more federal funding. Earlier this week, the administration even floated the idea that some asylum seekers might be housed in an unused building on Rikers Island, where an inmate in a psychiatric unit died on Tuesday after a fall.

Yet, as The Daily News reported last month, the city did not appear to proceed with a great sense of urgency in applying for $650 million in reimbursement from the Federal Emergency Management Agency; it waited until four days before the deadline to submit the paperwork for eight months worth of expenses related to housing asylum seekers.

However divergent their approaches to the migrant crisis and the longstanding housing emergencies that it has compounded might be, progressives and those to their right seem unified in their desire for more efficiency, policy that seems carefully drawn rather than quickly sketched. ''We all understand that a crisis like this requires a creative approach,'' Lincoln Restler, a council member from Brooklyn told me this week. ''We'd just like to see more managerial deliberation.''Email [*bigcity@nytimes.com*](mailto:bigcity@nytimes.com); follow Ginia Bellafante on Twitter: @GiniaNYT

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/20/nyregion/nyc-eric-adams-migrants.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/20/nyregion/nyc-eric-adams-migrants.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: Parents and students protesting on Tuesday at P.S. 172 in Brooklyn, after Mayor Eric Adams proposed that some public school gyms house migrants. (PHOTOGRAPH BY TIMES BRITTAINY NEWMAN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page MB3.

**Load-Date:** May 21, 2023

**End of Document**



[***To Keep TV Shows Afloat, Some Networks Are Cutting Actors’ Pay***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68V1-B8N1-DXY4-X3PK-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

July 31, 2023 Monday 13:32 EST

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**Section:** BUSINESS; media

**Length:** 1338 words

**Byline:** Nicole Sperling

**Highlight:** In a shrinking business, actors on some shows are being guaranteed less money, an issue that’s helping to fuel the Hollywood strike.

**Body**

In a shrinking business, actors on some shows are being guaranteed less money, an issue that’s helping to fuel the Hollywood strike.

Starring on the CBS sitcom “Bob Hearts Abishola” has been good for Bayo Akinfemi. Being a regular cast member for four years has given him financial security and made him a star in his native Nigeria, where the show is wildly popular. It even helped him branch out from acting, when producers gave him the opportunity to direct an episode.

But Mr. Akinfemi and 10 of his castmates were told this year that the only way the half-hour show was going to get a fifth season was if budgets were cut. How the actors were paid was going to change.

No longer would they be guaranteed pay for all 22 episodes of a season. Instead, Mr. Akinfemi and his castmates would be reclassified as recurring cast members. They would be paid the same amount per episode, but unlike regular cast members, they would be paid only for the episodes in which they appeared and would be guaranteed only five of those in a truncated 13-episode season, once the actors’ strike was over and performers returned to work. (Only Billy Gardell, who plays the white middle-aged businessman Bob, and Folake Olowofoyeku, who plays Abishola, the Nigerian nurse he loves, will remain series regulars.)

“It was a bit surprising, for all of 10 seconds,” Mr. Akinfemi said in an interview before SAG-AFTRA, the actors’ union, went on strike. “We are disappointed, but we also understand at the end of the day it’s a business.”

For decades, actors playing supporting characters on successful network television shows have been able to renegotiate their contracts in later seasons and reap financial windfalls. But this is a new era for network TV.

It’s a business that has been struggling with depressed ratings, decreased advertising revenue and fierce competition from streaming services, resulting in millions of viewers cutting their cable subscriptions. And one way networks and production companies are trying to deal with the changing economics is to ask the casts of some long-running shows to take pay cuts.

“The glory days of linear television are sadly behind us,” said [*Channing Dungey*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/19/business/media/channing-dungey-warner-bros-netflix.html?searchResultPosition=2), the chairwoman and chief executive of Warner Bros. Television Studios, the studio behind “Bob Hearts Abishola.”

This new reality in network television is one of the reasons behind the Hollywood writers’ and actors’ strikes. Those on strike say the economics of the streaming era have effectively reduced their pay and cut into money they get from residuals, a type of royalty. The studios say they aren’t making the kind of money they used to, meaning that they’re having to shave costs wherever they can.

The sides are at a standstill. The writers haven’t spoken to the studios since going out on strike on May 2, and the actors haven’t since walking out on July 14. No negotiations are scheduled.

“Blue Bloods,” a CBS drama starring Tom Selleck, is returning for its 14th season only because the entire cast agreed to a 25 percent pay cut when the strike is over. On the CW network, “Superman &amp; Lois,” which is entering its fourth season, and “All American: Homecoming,” which is hanging on for a third season, saw their budgets cut and cast members reduced to day players or eliminated.

Not even the juggernaut represented by Dick Wolf’s lineup of shows on NBC is immune. A number of the actors on shows like “Chicago P.D.” and “Chicago Fire” are being guaranteed appearances in fewer episodes for the coming season, according to two people familiar with the productions, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss personnel matters.

“This is something that’s happening across the board,” Ms. Dungey said, adding that CBS wanted to renew “Bob Hearts Abishola” only if Warner Bros. was able to produce it for the network at a reduced cost. “There are a number of different shows, both on CBS and elsewhere, where the same kinds of considerations are coming into play.”

CBS and NBC declined to comment.

Word of the salary adjustments for “Bob Hearts Abishola” came out in late April, just days before SAG-AFTRA authorized its strike with a 97.9 percent vote in favor.

“This is the beginning of the end for ***working-class*** actors,” the actress Ever Carradine, who has been in shows like “Commander in Chief” on ABC and Hulu’s “The Handmaid’s Tale,” wrote on Twitter at the time. “I have never worked harder in my career to make less money, and I am not alone.”

Today, first-time series regulars often earn anywhere from $20,000 to $50,000 an episode, depending on the budget of the show, the size of the role, and the studio or network that’s footing the bill. Commissions for agents and management are subtracted from those sums.

To some, the recent reductions are an inevitable correction from the era of peak television, when studios were eager to lure talent with lucrative contracts. Some executives argue that paring back salaries will ultimately allow more shows to be made, at a more reasonable price.

Network shows do not draw anywhere close to the viewer numbers they did when 20 million people were watching “Seinfeld” and “Friends” every week in the 1990s.

At the end of its fourth season, “Bob Hearts Abishola” was averaging 6.9 million viewers per episode, according to Nielsen’s Live +35 metric, which measures the first 35 days of viewing on both linear and digital platforms. Hits had bigger audiences, like CBS’s “Ghosts,” which averaged 11 million viewers over 35 days, and ABC’s “Abbott Elementary,” which averaged 9.1 million.

But the rise of streaming has cannibalized network television on a scale the networks weren’t prepared for, and not even scaling back on scripted offerings has been enough to stem the bleeding. “Bob Hearts Abishola” is one of four prime-time scripted comedies left on CBS.

“It is hard now to get shows to Seasons 5 and beyond, but it doesn’t mean that it can’t happen,” Ms. Dungey said. “It just is less likely to happen as often as it did in the past.”

Yet the new reality means actors must decide whether to remain on a show at a reduced rate but with some job security or leave to see if they can find other jobs.

The management team for Kelly Jenrette, an actress on the CW’s “All American: Homecoming,” told the trade publication [*Deadline*](https://deadline.com/2023/07/all-american-homecoming-peyton-alex-smith-kelly-jenrette-exit-series-regulars-season-3-budget-cuts-1235423712/) that she had chosen to become a recurring character rather than “opt for a return as a series regular on reduced episodic guarantees.”

Ms. Jenrette declined to be interviewed because, she said, she was told that doing so would violate the actors’ union’s ban on promoting projects associated with struck companies. The CW declined to comment.

For some, the pride they take in their shows is also an enticement to stay. On “Bob Hearts Abishola,” Mr. Akinfemi plays Goodwin, an employee of Bob’s compression sock company who was on his way to becoming an economics professor in Nigeria before he left the country.

Fans have stopped him in the Nigerian airport, in the streets of Toronto, even at the CVS near his home in Los Angeles to marvel that whole scenes of the show are spoken in Mr. Akinfemi’s native Yoruba tongue. (He also serves as the language consultant for the sitcom.)

“The idea that there could be a show like this that really showcases Nigerian culture, it’s just unfathomable,” Mr. Akinfemi said. “That we are really representing Nigerian culture as accurately as possible and in a positive light, on American television, is mind-blowing to a lot of Nigerians and Africans.”

He and the 10 other cast members affected by the pay changes on “Bob Hearts Abishola” all chose to stay.

“These actors are attached to good, important, groundbreaking work,” said Tash Moseley, Mr. Akinfemi’s manager. “I think they knew that the actors would come back and do it no matter what.”

PHOTOS: Bayo Akinfemi in the CBS sitcom “Bob Hearts Abishola,” above. Channing Dungey, the C.E.O. of Warner Bros. Television Studios, the studio behind the show, right. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY SONJA FLEMMING/CBS; DAVID LIVINGSTON/GETTY IMAGES) (B4) This article appeared in print on page B1, B4.

**Load-Date:** August 1, 2023

**End of Document**



[***Migrant Crisis Tests New Yorkers Who Thought They Supported Immigration***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69BG-5FY1-JBG3-6004-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

October 7, 2023 Saturday 19:52 EST

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**Section:** NYREGION

**Length:** 2033 words

**Byline:** John Leland John Leland is a reporter covering life in New York City for The Times.

**Highlight:** As the city’s resources strain under the influx of thousands of migrants, New Yorkers are still resolutely in favor of welcoming newcomers. But for how long?

**Body**

As the city’s resources strain under the influx of thousands of migrants, New Yorkers are still resolutely in favor of welcoming newcomers. But for how long?

Carin Bail said she was walking with a friend in Queens this spring when they stopped to talk with a woman who was holding a baby and crying. The woman had just arrived at a nearby migrant shelter, she explained in Spanish, and her baby would not eat the food there.

Ms. Bail bought the woman baby food and diapers. “What tugged at my heartstrings,” she said, “was she had a kid with her.”

Yet Ms. Bail, who teaches special education and yoga in public school, opposes the migrant shelters, and has spoken at rallies against them. She complained of overcrowding at her school, in Jamaica, Queens, which recently took in 132 students, many of whom do not speak English.

When asked to describe her feelings toward the migrants, she paused. Her own parents immigrated to the United States after the Holocaust, seeking a better life.

“These are human beings who deserve a chance at life and opportunities,” she said. “My heart goes out to some of these folks. But then on the flip side, I feel that our government and our leadership have been failing us. There’s not one positive outcome that has come from this yet. And it seems like it’s just heading toward a downward spiral.”

New York has long proclaimed its openness to new arrivals, enshrined in the welcoming words on the Statue of Liberty. But the influx of more than 110,000 migrants in a little more than a year, and the strain on the city’s already stretched resources, has called that openness into question. What happens when the tired, huddled masses are suddenly not a poetic conceit but a continuous tide of very needy newcomers, living in temporary shelters in residential neighborhoods?

“People are extremely internally conflicted,” said Don Levy, director of the [*Siena College Research Institute*](https://scri.siena.edu/), which has polled New Yorkers on their attitudes toward the migrants.

The migrants — a mix of Venezuelans, West Africans, Afghans and others — began to arrive in significant numbers last spring, driven from their home countries by poverty or political strife, and drawn to New York for its job opportunities and generous public services. In a city whose population is more than one-third foreign-born, the influx, swelling to fill more than 200 shelters, has divided neighbors and families.

In polls, large majorities of New Yorkers say immigrants bring [*new vitality*](https://scri.siena.edu/) to the country, and that the current migrants want only to build a better life. They reject the suggestion that immigrants want handouts or that they bring crime or drugs.

But majorities also say the recent influx of migrants is a “[*serious problem*](https://scri.siena.edu/),” and that it is time to slow or stop the flow of new arrivals. Nearly half say migrants to the state over the past 20 years have been a “burden” rather than a “benefit.”

Mr. Levy said New Yorkers fall into three comparably sized categories. About a third hold generally negative views of the migrants. Another third are resolutely supportive. That leaves a large swath in the middle, Mr. Levy said.

“They agree that migration and immigrants have built this country,” he said. “But then they turn around and go, ‘What about now?’” He mentioned makeshift tent shelters and an intake center at a Midtown Manhattan hotel that was so overcrowded that migrants slept outside on the sidewalk, an emblem of a failing system. When otherwise-supportive New Yorkers see such scenes, Mr. Levy said, their reaction is often, “‘This can’t be.’ So there’s an internal conflict and there’s a frustration.”

For many New Yorkers, the migrant crisis was once an abstraction — something they saw on the news or heard about in budget statistics. For Aruna Raghavan, who lives near the Brooklyn Navy Yard, the abstraction became real in late summer, when the city opened a [*shelter for as many as 2,000 single men*](https://scri.siena.edu/) a few blocks from her home.

“It just happened overnight,” she said. “Nobody was consulted. There was no heads up to the community.”

She noticed more litter on the street and men hanging out under the elevated highway; stores in the neighborhood complained that foot traffic would drop because people were afraid to go near the shelter.

But she said the problems that many neighbors predicted had not materialized. The men she passes on the street have been “very respectful,” and the ones she speaks to say they just want to work but are prevented by regulations. If they were loitering outside buildings, she said, it was in search of free Wi-Fi to better their circumstances.

“I understand people being concerned, but it’s important to have a personal engagement with the people, rather than just chatter about it because it seems to be the topic of the day,” she said.

But she added that the city and its business sector were failing both the migrants and the people living around them.

“I don’t understand why we’re not getting more corporate involvement from big companies that can afford it,” she said. “It would take nothing for large corporations to set up basic infrastructure within these shelters, to help with their application process and their job search. It takes nothing to sponsor a room of 10 computers connected to the internet where they can actually do some work to get out of the situation they’re in.”

Mayor Eric Adams has said that the migrants will cost the city $5 billion this fiscal year, and warned that the influx “[*will destroy New York City*](https://scri.siena.edu/).” But by many measures, the city was fraying well before the migrants started to arrive last year. The coronavirus pandemic emptied much of Manhattan, gutting retail businesses and city tax revenues and leading economists to warn of an “[*urban doom loop*](https://scri.siena.edu/).” Repeated sightings of rats on the streets and emotionally disturbed people on the subways contributed to a sense of a city unraveling.

The surge of migrants, federally barred from working for six months, exacerbated frustrations that were already building.

In College Point, Queens, a ***working-class*** neighborhood near La Guardia Airport, Jennifer Shannon, 53, said she believed in helping those in need, including the women in a homeless shelter that opened there in 2019. But after a respite center for migrants opened in July, Ms. Shannon was livid.

“We just added 500 more people to a community that’s already falling apart,” she said.

During the early days of the pandemic, Ms. Shannon started a neighborhood association to support food pantries and provide meals to emergency medical workers, earning [*citations*](https://scri.siena.edu/) from Mr. Adams — who was then Brooklyn borough president — and State Senator John Liu.

But now she says the migrants have devalued life in the neighborhood.

“We have people sitting all over people’s private property, drinking, smoking marijuana, hanging out until 4 in the morning in the municipal lot, blasting music,” she said. “It’s a disgrace.”

“It’s not everybody in there. You have people who are genuinely just trying to get away from hell and make a better life for themselves. But that’s not who you see sitting in the park benches at 11 o’clock at night, with their friends, men urinating in broad daylight. That’s what we’re seeing.”

She said her opposition to the shelter was not racial, pointing out that her husband is Mexican. “I’m not against helping people. But what’s going on in our community is unacceptable.”

Mr. Liu, whose Senate district includes a large immigrant population, said many of the complaints about migrants were not coming from areas that have been traditionally anti-immigrant. Instead, he said, protests followed the shelters, so “even in parts of the city that tend to be very pro immigrant, many of those residents are up in arms.”

Jaslin Kaur, 27, saw frustrations rise in her largely-immigrant neighborhood in eastern Queens after the city opened a 1,000-bed tent shelter at [*Creedmoor Psychiatric Center*](https://scri.siena.edu/) in Queens Village, where hundreds of people have converged to [*protest*](https://scri.siena.edu/) since August. When Ms. Kaur organized a small counter-demonstration supporting the migrants, she said, opponents screamed at her and posted her identity and home address on social media.

“To see this kind of backlash against people who look like me and have really horrible stories about what it took for them to get to this city — it’s not the neighborhood I know,” she said, “not the neighborhood I grew up in.”

She said migrants were being blamed for fiscal problems created by years of government neglect. She recalled the period after Sept. 11, 2001, when her father, a Sikh, stopped wearing his turban in his taxi to avoid being attacked. “So it’s really hard to see immigrant communities facing this kind of hatred all over again, but for a different reason,” she said.

A flashpoint of conflict is the school system, where plans last spring to press gyms and auditoriums into service as emergency shelters sparked an angry backlash. In Astoria, Queens, Shabbir Suhal, 40, an accountant with three children in public school, said he was alarmed by [*published reports*](https://scri.siena.edu/) of students from shelters being permitted to attend school without being immunized against polio, measles, chickenpox and other diseases. Under state law, students in temporary housing have 30 days to start the process of getting immunized.

“I don’t think it’s safe for my kids,” Mr. Suhal said. “I don’t think this is right.”

Mr. Suhal, whose family immigrated to the United States from Bangladesh when he was 12, said New York could no longer afford to be a sanctuary city. It particularly galled him to see migrants housed in a local building called the [*Collective Paper Factory*](https://scri.siena.edu/), a “hipster hotel” that he and his family cannot afford.

But he said he hesitated to voice his views in public.

Supporters of the migrants “have become successful at making people afraid to speak their minds,” he said. “It’s everywhere. I’m sure a lot of politicians want to say the right thing, but they can’t, because the No. 1 message is that he’s a racist, he’s anti-immigrant. We shouldn’t be afraid to speak our minds.”

A lifelong Democrat, Mr. Suhal said he was now becoming more of a Republican, and a conservative one.

On a balmy afternoon in late September, Debra Michlewitz, 71, a retired public school teacher, worried about pending cuts to the school system, which is already strained by the surge of migrants and the effects of the pandemic shutdown.

“It would be unrealistic to say that New York can absorb every single person that needs to come right now,” she said.

But when she looked at the indigent migrants, she thought of her own parents. They came to New York after World War II, after President Harry Truman issued an [*executive order*](https://scri.siena.edu/) that opened the door to Jewish refugees, against opposition from Congress. Like the current arrivals, Ms. Michlewitz’s parents slept and ate their first meals in facilities for new migrants.

Though she worried about the financial strain posed by the recent arrivals, she said, New York was resilient. It survived the crises of the 1970s; it would survive the current challenges.

“I think we have no choice,” she said. “It’s the right thing to do. I would feel terrible telling anyone I don’t think we should make room for them. That’s selfish. People didn’t want to make room for my family, and it was only when a president made it happen that they came here.

“It’s personal for me. And there are other people who have stories like this, and if they’re not remembering that their families were immigrants, it’s not right. They need to have empathy.”

In the meantime, as the city continues to add more and larger migrant shelters, tensions will likely spread to more communities.

Ten thousand more migrants are expected to arrive in the next month.

PHOTOS: CARIN BAIL, a teacher in Queens who opposes migrant shelters.; JASLIN KAUR, recalling her family’s experience after Sept. 11, 2001.; ARUNA RAGHAVAN, who lives near a shelter in Brooklyn. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY JAMES ESTRIN/THE NEW YORK TIMES); An intake center at the Roosevelt Hotel in Midtown Manhattan was so crowded this summer that migrants slept on the sidewalk, an emblem of a failing system. (PHOTOGRAPH BY JEENAH MOON FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A18) This article appeared in print on page A1, A18.

**Load-Date:** March 20, 2024

**End of Document**



[***Mayor Adams Improvises His Way Through an Impossible Crisis; Big CITY***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:688M-K071-DXY4-X2GR-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

May 20, 2023 Saturday 05:00 EST

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**Section:** NYREGION

**Length:** 1056 words

**Byline:** Ginia Bellafante

**Highlight:** The spontaneous governing style of the Adams administration struggles to adapt to the migrant housing crisis.

**Body**

The spontaneous governing style of the Adams administration struggles to adapt to the migrant housing crisis.

Last weekend, several Brooklyn principals were told that their schools would immediately be sheltering hundreds of asylum seekers, by way of mayoral fiat. The schools commandeered into service were chosen because they had stand-alone gyms, apart from the main buildings, which would separate children from the adults who would temporarily be staying there, side by side in tight rows of green cots.

The schools themselves were not in affluent neighborhoods but rather served ***working-class*** families of color, who were now livid. Parents, many immigrants themselves, were concerned about safety and felt cheated that their children would be denied gym in schools that were hardly abundant with amenities. They began lining up as early as 3 in the morning on Tuesday in protest; some brought their children, others refused to send them to school at all. By the next day, after frantic meetings between administrators and parents, Mayor Eric [*Adams seemed to have reversed course*](https://www.thecity.nyc/2023/5/17/23727079/migrants-exit-brooklyn-school-gyms-eric-adams), removing asylum seekers from a school gym in Coney Island and sending them to a vacant office in Midtown. The administration maintained that this turnaround had nothing to do with the rallies.

“Migrants flow in and out of these sites as other more suitable space becomes available, and they have and will continue to be used as a last resort,” a spokesperson from City Hall said. “As the mayor has continued to say, everything is on the table when it comes to placement of asylum seekers.”

The situation around migrants — at least 40,000 of whom are currently in New York’s care, making up roughly half of the city’s shelter population — has left the mayor in an almost untenable political position. Any stinting on compassion becomes both a gift to the DeSantis right and a source of agitation to the Ocasio-Cortez left, and any semblance of overreaching acquiescence enrages the centrists who helped the mayor get elected.

Writing earlier this week in [*City Journal*](https://www.city-journal.org/article/mayor-adams-is-making-the-migrant-crisis-worse-for-new-york), the urban-policy magazine of the conservative Manhattan Institute, Nicole Gelinas faulted the mayor for spending so much time converting hotels into shelters for the displaced, arguing that the reopening of the Roosevelt Hotel, after a long closure, should have been “a symbol of New York’s post-pandemic resurgence” but was now, instead, a sign of the mayor’s “failure to lead.”

The past few weeks have emphasized the extent to which Mr. Adams, a politician of high-metabolism guided by his frenetic energy, has leaned into a style of governance defined by improvisation over ideology. Earlier this month, his administration issued an executive order loosening some of the rules around the city’s right-to-shelter law, sacrosanct to progressives, which requires families to be placed in private rooms with kitchens and bathrooms rather than in congregate settings.

A week later, the administration [*signed another order*](https://gothamist.com/news/mayor-adams-suspends-nyc-review-process-for-building-shelters-as-more-migrants-arrive), which seemed philosophically contradictory, suspending rules covering the city’s land-review process for siting and building homeless shelters — a process that often results in NIMBY opposition, long delays and in some cases the abandonment of a project altogether. The result of what can seem like whiplash decision making is a city left living inside the mayor’s thought process in real time — unsure of a broader vision.

“In fairness to the mayor, I will say that this is a situation that is very difficult to manage,” [*Diana Ayala*](https://council.nyc.gov/district-8/), the deputy speaker of the City Council, representing East Harlem and parts of the Bronx, told me. “It would be a challenge for anyone. I really feel for the administration because I don’t think that they have received the resources they need from the federal government.”

Stressing the need for engagement with long-term objectives, she added, “But I would also welcome a little bit more collaboration.” In the fall, for example, when the administration moved to build tents on Orchard Beach as temporary migrant housing, the Council pushed back, suggesting that as a flood zone it was ill-suited for the purpose. The administration went ahead anyway — only to relocate the complex shortly after.

“My biggest concern is that we’re being reactive,” said Ms. Ayala, who was herself once homeless. “You have to have a holistic approach. We need to be as proactive as possible in trying to identify plans that would move families stuck in the shelter system out of it.” As others have done, the deputy speaker has been pushing for the elimination of the rule that requires homeless people to have spent 90 days in a shelter before becoming eligible for housing vouchers. So far the administration has been resistant.

Since the governors of Texas and Arizona began sending busloads of migrants northward last year in a show of let’s-see-how-you-deal-with-it gamesmanship, the mayor has repeatedly pointed out that the city is left in an impossible situation without more federal funding. Earlier this week, the administration even floated the idea that some asylum seekers might be housed in an unused building on Rikers Island, where an inmate in a psychiatric unit died on Tuesday after a fall.

Yet, as [*The Daily News reported last month*](https://sports.yahoo.com/nyc-submits-fema-application-650-163200271.html), the city did not appear to proceed with a great sense of urgency in applying for $650 million in reimbursement from the Federal Emergency Management Agency; it waited until four days before the deadline to submit the paperwork for eight months worth of expenses related to housing asylum seekers.

However divergent their approaches to the migrant crisis and the longstanding housing emergencies that it has compounded might be, progressives and those to their right seem unified in their desire for more efficiency, policy that seems carefully drawn rather than quickly sketched. “We all understand that a crisis like this requires a creative approach,” Lincoln Restler, a council member from Brooklyn told me this week. “We’d just like to see more managerial deliberation.”

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PHOTO: Parents and students protesting on Tuesday at P.S. 172 in Brooklyn, after Mayor Eric Adams proposed that some public school gyms house migrants. (PHOTOGRAPH BY TIMES BRITTAINY NEWMAN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page MB3.

**Load-Date:** May 20, 2023

**End of Document**



[***Eric Adams Promised to Be the Bus Mayor. Riders Are Still Waiting.***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68YK-N5J1-JBG3-63KF-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

August 17, 2023 Thursday 16:34 EST

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**Section:** NYREGION

**Length:** 1461 words

**Byline:** Emma G. Fitzsimmons and Ana Ley

**Highlight:** Mayor Eric Adams pledged to create 150 miles of bus lanes in four years in New York City, home to the nation’s slowest buses. Then politics interfered.

**Body**

Mayor Eric Adams pledged to create 150 miles of bus lanes in four years in New York City, home to the nation’s slowest buses. Then politics interfered.

Early in Mayor Eric Adams’s first term, he rode a B41 bus through Brooklyn to cement his commitment to speed up New York City’s notoriously slow buses, part of [*his campaign pledge*](https://www.gothamgazette.com/city/11118-adams-2021-moving-forward-together-transportation) to be an advocate for bus riders and bicyclists.

Bus riders thought they had their champion. A riders group presented Mr. Adams that day [*with a jacket*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5PyqMIZZk44) that read “N.Y.C. Bus Mayor” across the back and celebrated his vow to create 150 miles of new dedicated bus lanes in four years.

Then politics interfered.

The city, which has the [*slowest buses in the nation*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/31/nyregion/q23-slow-bus-queens.html) — averaging eight miles per hour — is expected to add as few as 10 miles of bus lanes this year. In 2022, Mr. Adams’s first year as mayor, just shy of a dozen miles were added.

The Adams administration is drawing up plans for new bus lanes on half a [*dozen more*](https://www.nyc.gov/office-of-the-mayor/news/405-22/mayor-adams-mta-hold-first-transit-improvement-summit-plans-immediately-improve-mass) routes, including a three-mile proposal for a busy corridor along Fordham Road in the Bronx. More commuters rely on the bus in the Bronx, per capita, than in any other borough, and 60 percent of households [*do not own a car*](https://edc.nyc/article/new-yorkers-and-their-cars), according to analyses of Census Bureau data by city agencies.

But now that plan seems in limbo, after local businesses objected and one of the mayor’s political allies, Representative Adriano Espaillat, raised doubts.

Richard Davey, the president of New York City Transit who oversees the city’s vast subway and bus system, said in an interview that Mr. Adams had been a “huge transit mayor for us,” citing the mayor’s focus on subway crime and support for discount MetroCards for poor New Yorkers.

But the Metropolitan Transportation Authority is powerless to speed up its buses unless the city creates more bus lanes.

Without urgently tackling projects, “the math won’t add up by the end of the mayor’s four years,” Mr. Davey said on Monday as he rode a Bx36 bus through the Bronx.

Transit advocates worry that other bus-friendly proposals could be in jeopardy, such as a major bus-lane plan for Flatbush Avenue in Brooklyn that travels through the heart of neighborhoods that Mr. Adams won in 2021. Rita Joseph, the councilwoman who represents Flatbush, says she supports bringing a bus lane to her district.

“I have heard from my neighbors — both for and against, and now as an elected leader it is my responsibility to work with my colleagues to find a compromise that everyone can agree on,” Ms. Joseph said in a statement.

With New York City mired in traffic gridlock and grappling with the impact of climate change, giving priority to buses seems an obvious solution.

London and Beijing have sped up their fleets by giving more street space to buses. But in New York, the voices of drivers and business leaders are often louder than those of the city’s 1.2 million daily bus riders, many of them ***working-class*** New Yorkers.

A spokesman for the mayor, Charles Kretchmer Lutvak, said in a statement that the Adams administration had improved commute time on many bus routes, including on [*Northern Boulevard in Queens*](https://www.nyc.gov/html/dot/html/pr2023/northern-blvd-bus-priority.shtml), and “continues to do everything we can to meet the ambitious goals that the mayor laid out in his campaign.”

But as Mr. Adams, a Democrat, gears up to run for re-election in 2025, his administration has been deferential toward powerful interests and local leaders.

One of the mayor’s closest aides, Ingrid Lewis-Martin, has [*opposed street redesign projects*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/18/nyregion/ingrid-lewis-martin-adams.html) and overrode the transportation commissioner in February 2022 to allow cars back onto an eight-block stretch in Fort Greene, Brooklyn, reserved for pedestrians.

Ms. Lewis-Martin also raised concerns about two bike lane plans in Brooklyn: one on [*McGuinness Boulevard in Greenpoint*](https://www.thecity.nyc/2023/7/6/23786520/argento-eric-adams-mcguinness-redesign) opposed by Gina and Tony Argento, influential Democratic donors to Mr. Adams who own a local film production company; and another on Ashland Place in Fort Greene opposed by Two Trees Management, a major real estate firm led by an Adams donor, according to two people who were familiar with the matter.

Mr. Lutvak denied that Ms. Lewis-Martin had meddled in the Ashland Place project and said that it was moving forward. On Wednesday, he said the city was also proceeding with a scaled-back version of the McGuinness Boulevard project, a development first [*reported by Gothamist*](https://gothamist.com/news/nyc-has-new-plan-for-mcguinness-boulevard-in-brooklyn-after-months-of-controversy).

Oswald Feliz, a local City Council member who is [*part of Mr. Espaillat’s so-called Squadriano political alliance*](https://www.cityandstateny.com/politics/2022/09/how-rep-adriano-espaillat-built-squadriano/376969/), is fighting the proposal for Fordham Road, which has 85,000 daily bus riders. He, along with other opponents like the Bronx Zoo and Fordham University, fear that the plan would snarl car traffic and push it to surrounding streets because cars would be confined to one lane in each direction.

Less than 6 percent of visitors who drive to the zoo and other nearby attractions use Fordham Road to access it, [*Department of Transportation data shows*](https://www.nyc.gov/html/dot/downloads/pdf/fordham-rd-inwood-cb6-jun2023.pdf).

Mr. Feliz would rather have the city repaint the existing bus lanes red and install more traffic enforcement cameras.

“We would strongly support a busway or offset bus lanes in neighborhoods where they are necessary for faster buses; but what Fordham buses need is a fixing of current bus lanes,” he said in a statement.

Mr. Espaillat discussed the Fordham Road plan in a phone call last month with officials from the M.T.A., the governor’s office and the city’s Transportation Department and told them it was clear it did not have local support, according to a person who was on the call and granted anonymity to discuss a sensitive matter. The call was [*first reported by the website Streetsblog*](https://nyc.streetsblog.org/2023/08/03/rep-adriano-espaillat-rallying-bronx-pols-against-fordham-road-bus-lane-fixes-sources).

A spokeswoman for Mr. Espaillat, who is Dominican American and a key ally in Mr. Adams’s coalition of Black and Latino leaders, said in a statement that he backed local officials “to make the best determination in the interests of city residents.” She noted Mr. Espaillat’s past support for faster bus routes when he was a state lawmaker.

Mr. Davey, noting that the city Transportation Department was short-staffed, said he was so eager to help the city start construction on the Fordham Road project this year that “I’ll go out and paint, personally, a bus lane.”

Opponents of the Fordham Road plan include a business group led by Peter Madonia, a bakery owner and former chief of staff to Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg, and donors to Mr. Adams such as John Calvelli, executive vice president of the Bronx Zoo, and Marc Jerome, president of Monroe College.

The corridor was originally expected to become a busway, like the one [*on 14th Street in Manhattan*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/10/13/nyregion/14th-street-cars-banned.html) that bars almost all through traffic except for buses and commercial trucks and has been shown to improve service. After a stretch of Main Street in Flushing, Queens, was turned into a busway in 2021, rush-hour bus speeds rose by 50 percent.

A [*new compromise proposal*](https://www.nyc.gov/html/dot/downloads/pdf/fordham-rd-inwood-cb6-jun2023.pdf) would add an “offset lane” for buses in the middle of Fordham Road, allowing for a parking and loading lane next to the curb.

A letter to the mayor from Mr. Feliz and three state lawmakers last month said the new plan would “negatively impact our thriving economic, social, and health ecosystem,” which includes Little Italy on Arthur Avenue in the Bronx and “destinations for visitors and others to the Bronx from all over the world.”

Transit advocates have pushed back, sometimes in eye-catching ways: [*A giraffe costume*](https://nyc.streetsblog.org/2023/06/22/animal-farm-activists-dress-up-to-shame-bronx-zoo-botanical-garden) was deployed to draw attention to the Bronx Zoo’s opposition.

“Riders are demanding that the mayor keep his promise, and nowhere is that promise more significant — more meaningful — than on Fordham Road,” said Danny Pearlstein, a spokesman for Riders Alliance, a transit advocacy group.

On a scorching hot day last week, Jennifer Reyes, 18, waited for the Bx12 bus on Fordham Road, which she takes to school, Marine training and a job as a cashier at a fried chicken restaurant in Times Square.

Ms. Reyes, a lifelong Bronx resident, said buses often arrive late and are too packed to board, so she leaves home early to make up for frequent delays.

“I know it’s going to, like, make people mad,” Ms. Reyes said of the proposal to prioritize buses. “But us students, workers, we need to get to our places.”

Milagros Matías, a home care worker, said she was frustrated by the number of delivery vehicles clogging the street and hoped the city would move quickly to clear the way for buses.

“There needs to be more space for public transit,” Ms. Matías, 54, said in Spanish. “This mode of transportation is essential.”

Jeffery C. Mays contributed reporting.

Jeffery C. Mays contributed reporting.

PHOTOS: Above, buses move slowly on Fordham Road in the Bronx because of heavy traffic. Left, Richard A. Davey, head of New York City Transit, said he would paint a bus lane himself on Fordham Road. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY THALIA JUAREZ FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A14.

**Load-Date:** August 20, 2023

**End of Document**



[***Abortion Stand By One Senator Stalls Pentagon***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:695K-0MY1-JBG3-62CS-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

September 14, 2023 Thursday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; National Desk; Pg. 1

**Length:** 1705 words

**Byline:** By Helene Cooper

**Body**

Tommy Tuberville of Alabama has refused to lift his hold unless the Pentagon cancels a policy ensuring that service members have access to abortion.

Near the river entrance of the outermost ring of the Pentagon, where visiting dignitaries are greeted with full honors, the hallways that usually house photos of senior military leaders are more bare these days.

A section reserved for the country's most senior military leaders will be missing four photos out of eight when Gen. Mark A. Milley, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, steps down on Oct. 1. And a space for a photo that would make history, of a woman on that wall for the first time, will be empty, too.

For more than six months, Senator Tommy Tuberville, Republican of Alabama, has held up military nominations in protest of a Pentagon policy created to ensure that service members have access to abortions and other reproductive medical care. Hundreds of promotions have now been delayed in a battle that has it all.

It is a showdown between a white former football coach and the country's first Black defense secretary, two Alabama men, both with deep roots at Auburn University. It is a preview of just how much of an albatross the Supreme Court's overturning of Roe v. Wade might be on Republicans in elections next year. And it is a political game of chicken in which the country's national security is at stake.

Caught in the middle is the Pentagon and the people picked by the military and the White House to fill top positions: the Army and Air Force chiefs of staff; the chief of naval operations and the Marine Corps commandant; the head of the Missile Defense Agency; the under secretary of defense -- the Pentagon's top policy post -- who helps manage the American response to a surging Chinese military and the war in Ukraine and everything in between.

And many more.

The problem will be on sharp display in coming weeks when General Milley retires. In May, President Biden nominated Gen. Charles Q. Brown Jr. of the Air Force to become the next chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. But the vice chairman, Adm. Christopher Grady of the Navy, will serve as acting chairman until the blockade is lifted.

Many of the other senior positions will also be filled on an ''acting'' basis. But acting officials are transition figures -- like substitute teachers in grade school. They cannot hire people to staff their new positions. They cannot move into the quarters that come with the job. They cannot impose any long-term vision on the military.

The holds are cutting deep at a time when the military is struggling to meet recruiting goals that would keep the number of active-duty service members at 1.4 million, the strength that planners say is necessary to protect Americans at home and American national security interests abroad. The Pentagon had hoped to offset lackluster recruiting by retaining more people.

Mr. Tuberville's holds make that almost impossible.

The U.S. military is an all-volunteer force. The officers most affected by the holds are top performers who could easily find more lucrative jobs in the private sector -- captains, majors, colonels and generals who have already met the 20-year service requirement that allows them to retire with a full military pension. The military manages to keep many of these people by promoting them to more senior and challenging positions.

If promotions are denied, one frustrated senior officer said in an interview, what is the point of staying if you already qualify for your pension? The most talented will leave first, the officer said, speaking on the condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to discuss the issue publicly.

Moreover, the holds on senior jobs mean the junior jobs that accompany them will remain unfilled too, leaving thousands of military families in limbo, unsure when they will have to move or where they will live in the foreseeable future.

''These are middle-class, ***working-class*** families who are saying, 'We can't enroll our child in school because we don't know when we're going to move,''' said Kathy Roth-Douquet, the chief executive of Blue Star Families, a nonprofit organization founded in 2009 by military spouses.

Those families may be in purgatory for some time.

With a slew of military bases in red states that put new abortion restrictions in place after the Supreme Court decision, Defense Secretary Lloyd J. Austin III ordered the department to offer time off and travel reimbursement to service members who need to go out of state for abortions. The policy does not fund abortions -- under federal law, the Defense Department can perform the procedure only when the life of the mother is at risk or in cases of rape and incest.

Even as criticism of the delays grows louder -- including from the Republican Senate leader, Mitch McConnell, who on Tuesday called the holds a ''mistake'' -- Mr. Tuberville has refused to back down. He denies that the holds are hurting the military and insists that Democrats could put each job to a vote on the Senate floor, a process that would take hours per nomination.

But with the abortion issue proving to be a loser for Republicans, Democrats in the Senate have little political incentive to negotiate. Democratic leaders say that making an exception, even for General Brown, would set a damaging precedent.

Unless Republican leaders somehow lean on the freshman senator to lift his hold, the fight could drag on for months, and perhaps all the way through the presidential election next year.

Peter D. Feaver, a professor at Duke University who has studied the armed forces, said that U.S. troops ''are the noncombatants in the culture war, and they're getting slaughtered.''

''We have to develop a new norm where we give the uniformed military noncombatant immunity in the culture wars, and that means we have to stop targeting them, which is what Senator Tuberville is doing over culture war issues,'' said Professor Feaver, the author of ''Thanks for Your Service: The Causes and Consequences of Public Confidence In The U.S. Military.''

General Brown, who would be only the second Black man to be chairman, after Colin Powell, was easily cleared by the Senate Armed Services Committee on July 20 on a voice vote. All that remains is a vote on the Senate floor.

Enter Mr. Tuberville, a former football coach at Auburn University and a first-term senator from Alabama.

Mr. Tuberville, his aides said, considered Mr. Austin a fellow Alabamian. After all, Mr. Austin got a master's degree at Auburn and served on the school's board of trustees, although not at the same time that Mr. Tuberville was football coach. Mr. Austin, a retired Army general, was one of the few Biden political nominees whom the Alabama senator voted for, according to one of Mr. Tuberville's staff members.

But Mr. Austin ''ignored letter after letter from Coach,'' Steven Stafford, a spokesman for Mr. Tuberville, said in an interview. For months, he said, the senator warned that he would put a hold on nominations over the abortion policy. But Mr. Austin did not get on the phone with the Alabama senator until March, Mr. Stafford said, adding that the two men have spoken twice since then.

Both Mr. Tuberville and Mr. Austin declined to comment for this article.

Sabrina Singh, a Pentagon spokeswoman, said that Mr. Austin and the Defense Department ''have and continue to engage Senator Tuberville and his office in good faith and directly relayed how his holds on our general and flag officers undermine our military readiness, threaten the retention of some of our very best officers and disrupt the lives of our military families.''

Privately, several military officials have complained that Mr. Austin could have done more before the senator put the holds in place. Part of the job of defense secretary is to talk to congressional leaders, if only to prevent political fires from starting. Mr. Austin's critics -- and even several of his allies -- say that while he may not have been able to change Mr. Tuberville's course of action, he should have at least tried.

Mr. Austin's aides say he has no intention of changing the abortion policy. ''A service member in Alabama deserves to have the same access to health care as a service member in California, as a service member stationed in Korea,'' Ms. Singh told reporters last month. ''If you are a service member stationed in a state that has rolled back or restricted health care access, you are often stationed there because you were assigned there -- it is not that you chose to go there.''

Earlier this summer, VoteVets, a progressive political action veterans group, launched ads across Alabama, and, more recently, Florida, that drew a direct line from Mr. Tuberville to American national security. ''Senator, you wouldn't take Auburn to the Iron Bowl without your offensive and defensive coordinators on the field,'' the actor, a veteran himself, says in one ad. ''So stop sacrificing our national security for your political gains.''

At his confirmation hearing in June, Gen. Eric Smith of the Marines, the would-be commandant, told senators that a one-star general, ''a fairly new one,'' would be in charge of a 48,000-person Marine expeditionary force. In a military where rank is everything, these situations will harm decision-making, military officials said.

National security has already been affected, according to the Pentagon. Consider the Navy's Fifth Fleet and Seventh Fleet, which handle the Middle East and the Pacific. Vice Adm. Brad Cooper and Vice Adm. Karl Thomas are being kept on as commanders because Navy officials say it is crucial to have three-stars in those positions for dealing with allies and adversaries alike. Admiral Thomas is supposed to be the next director of naval intelligence. But he cannot leave the Pacific until Mr. Tuberville removes his hold.

In July, Mr. Biden nominated Adm. Lisa Franchetti to the Navy's highest-ranking position after the retirement of Adm. Michael Gilday. She would be the first woman to lead the service.

Admiral Gilday's photo came down after he relinquished command on Aug. 14. But Admiral Franchetti's picture will not go up until she is confirmed by the Senate.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/13/us/politics/military-promotions-tuberville.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/13/us/politics/military-promotions-tuberville.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Senator Tommy Tuberville, Republican of Alabama, has held up military nominations in protest of an abortion-accessibility policy. (PHOTOGRAPH BY KENT NISHIMURA FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

Gen. David Berger, left, is stepping down as commandant of the Marines. His successor, Gen. Eric Smith, right, is being delayed. (PHOTOGRAPH BY MANUEL BALCE CENETA/ASSOCIATED PRESS)

Gen. Charles Q. Brown Jr.'s nomination to become the next chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff has been stalled by the blockade. (PHOTOGRAPH BY DOUG MILLS/THE NEW YORK TIMES)

An aide to Mr. Tuberville, left, said Defense Secretary Lloyd J. Austin III, right, ignored his entreaties. (PHOTOGRAPH BY BILL CLARK/CQ-ROLL CALL, VIA GETTY IMAGES) (A15) This article appeared in print on page A1, A15.

**Load-Date:** September 14, 2023

**End of Document**



[***United Auto Workers Hold Off on Backing Biden, for Now***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6852-CHH1-JBG3-63JY-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

May 3, 2023 Wednesday 23:38 EST

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**Section:** US; politics

**Length:** 952 words

**Byline:** Shane Goldmacher and Coral Davenport

**Highlight:** A memo by the union’s president underscores how some of President Biden’s moves to fight climate change could weaken some of his political support.

**Body**

A memo by the union’s president underscores how some of President Biden’s moves to fight climate change could weaken some of his political support.

The United Auto Workers, a politically potent labor union, is planning to withhold its endorsement of President Biden in the early stages of the 2024 race, according to an internal memo from its president to members on Tuesday.

The memo, written by Shawn Fain, the Detroit-based union’s president, said the leadership of the United Auto Workers had traveled to Washington last week to meet with Biden administration officials and had expressed “our concerns with the electric vehicle transition” that the president has pursued.

The memo underscores how some of Mr. Biden’s boldest moves to fight climate change, which animate his liberal base, could at the same time weaken his political support among another crucial constituency. The U.A.W. has shrunk in size in recent decades, but it still counts about 400,000 active members, with a robust presence in Michigan, a critical battleground state for Democrats.

In April, the Biden administration proposed [*the nation’s most ambitious climate regulations yet*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/04/12/climate/biden-electric-cars-epa.html), which would ensure that two-thirds of new passenger cars are all-electric by 2032 — up from just 5.8 percent today. The rules, if enacted, could sharply lower planet-warming pollution from vehicle tailpipes, the nation’s largest source of greenhouse emissions. But they come with costs for autoworkers, because it takes fewer than half the laborers to assemble an all-electric vehicle as it does to build a gasoline-powered car.

In the memo, Mr. Fain provided “talking points” for members about why the union was not immediately lining up behind Mr. Biden, writing that if companies received federal subsidies, then workers “must be compensated with top wages and benefits.”

“The EV transition is at serious risk of becoming a race to the bottom,” the memo reads, referring to electric vehicles. “We want to see national leadership have our back on this before we make any commitments.”

Mr. Fain won the U.A.W. presidency as an insurgent candidate this year, [*toppling the incumbent*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/25/business/uaw-autoworkers-union-election.html), Ray Curry. Mr. Fain promised a more confrontational path ahead of contract talks. In the memo, he notes that 150,000 autoworkers are fighting for a new contract with the so-called Big Three auto companies in September, writing, “We’ll stand with whoever stands with our members in that fight.”

Labor support is a key part of Mr. Biden’s political coalition and his portrayal of himself as a fighter for the middle class.

Within hours of Mr. Biden’s formal entry into the 2024 race, a number of top labor unions backed Mr. Biden, including the Amalgamated Transit Union, the Service Employees International Union and the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers.

“Several national unions were quick to endorse,” Mr. Fain wrote in his memo. “The United Auto Workers is not yet making an endorsement.”

Mr. Biden’s campaign trumpeted his support from other labor unions in a news release. Notably, Mr. Biden’s first public appearance after announcing his re-election campaign last week was addressing a labor conference in the nation’s capital.

“I’ve said many times: Wall Street didn’t build America,” he told the cheering union crowd last week. “The middle class built America, and unions built the middle class!”

The United Auto Workers, which has historically endorsed Democrats and supported Mr. Biden in 2020, makes clear in the memo that it has no intent of backing the Republican front-runner, former President Donald J. Trump. Withholding a formal endorsement for now instead appears to be a bid for leverage or concessions from the administration.

“Another Donald Trump presidency would be a disaster,” reads Mr. Fain’s memo, which was first [*reported by The Detroit News*](https://www.detroitnews.com/story/business/autos/2023/05/03/uaw-demands-biden-support-for-just-transition-to-evs-before-endorsing/70178597007/). “But our members need to see an alternative that delivers real results. We need to get our members organized behind a pro-worker, pro-climate, and pro-democracy political program that can deliver for the ***working class***.”

Mr. Biden has sought to accelerate the transition to all-electric vehicles as a centerpiece of his effort to tackle climate change. [*A 2021 report by the International Energy Agency*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/05/18/climate/climate-change-emissions-IEA.html) found that nations would have to stop sales of new gasoline-powered cars by 2035 to avert the deadliest effects of a warming planet.

To help reach that goal, Mr. Biden has pushed a fleet of policies designed to promote electric vehicles.

The Biden administration’s proposed climate regulations announced in April are designed to add legal teeth to consumer incentives, compelling automakers to manufacture and sell more electric vehicles. The Environmental Protection Agency rules, however, are not yet final: They are open for public comment, and could still be weakened or otherwise changed before being completed next year.

As the Biden administration prepared to unveil the new clean car rules last month, officials planned for Michael S. Regan, the head of the E.P.A., to announce the policies in Detroit, surrounded by American-made all-electric vehicles.

But as auto executives and the United Auto Workers learned the details of the proposed regulations, some grew uneasy about publicly supporting it, according to two people familiar with their thinking. No one from the United Auto Workers attended the unveiling, according to the organization’s spokesman, although representatives from Ford, General Motors and Mercedes-Benz were there.

And the setting was moved from Detroit to the E.P.A. headquarters in Washington.

PHOTO: Shawn Fain, the United Auto Workers president, sent members a memo on the stance. (PHOTOGRAPH BY CARLOS OSORIO/ASSOCIATED PRESS) This article appeared in print on page A14.

**Load-Date:** May 3, 2023

**End of Document**



[***On Trail in New Mexico, Biden Pitches Economy to a Skeptical Public***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:66SJ-VDR1-JBG3-63KN-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

November 3, 2022 Thursday 08:42 EST

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**Section:** US; politics

**Length:** 546 words

**Byline:** Peter Baker

**Highlight:** The president argued that low unemployment, new health care cost curbs and falling gas prices are benefiting Americans while Republicans would make the economy worse.

**Body**

The president argued that low unemployment, new health care cost curbs and falling gas prices are benefiting Americans while Republicans would make the economy worse.

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. — President Biden sought to persuade Americans on Thursday that the economy is doing better on his watch than many believe and warned that Republicans would make it harder for the middle class to afford education, health care and other necessities if they win Congress next week.

“The economy is up, price inflation is down, real incomes are up, gas prices are down and need to come down further,” Mr. Biden told a rally of supporters in New Mexico as he stumped for Democrats running for governor and Congress. “The American people are beginning to see the benefits of an economy that works for them,” he added, while conceding that “a lot of Americans are still in trouble.”

In a speech heavy on statistics, the president rattled off a series of indicators meant to bolster his argument, citing near-record-low unemployment, a burst of new manufacturing jobs, expanded access to health care, export growth, reduced federal deficits and rising gross national product. He pointed to policies he has championed to forgive student loan debt, curb the cost of prescription drugs for retirees and force large corporations that have paid little or no taxes to pay at least 15 percent.

“How many of you have any student debt?” he asked the crowd gathered at the Ted M. Gallegos Community Center. “Say goodbye! Say goodbye!”

Mr. Biden’s stop in New Mexico opened a five-day swing that will also take him to California, Illinois, Pennsylvania, Delaware, New York and Maryland by Election Day, mostly to blue states where a Democratic president with mediocre approval ratings is still welcome.

Some of his economic claims were incomplete or misleading — gasoline prices, for instance, have come down since peaking last summer but remain significantly higher than when Mr. Biden took office. Yet the president’s biggest challenge in the few days remaining before Tuesday is changing the minds of enough Americans who do not see the economy in such robust terms. While jobs are plentiful, inflation hit a 40-year-high this year, eating away at many household budgets and souring the public mood.

In [*a recent poll by The New York Times and Siena College*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2022/10/27/upshot/times-siena-toplines-house-polls.html), 47 percent identified economic issues as the most important factors in deciding their votes and [*a new survey by CNN*](https://www.cnn.com/2022/11/03/economy/cnn-poll-economy-sentiment) indicated that three-quarters of Americans believe the economy is in recession even though it grew at an annualized rate of 2.6 percent last quarter.

In a nod to public pessimism, Mr. Biden sought to make the case that it could be much worse if Republicans win next week and manage to reverse his policies, noting that they are already in court trying to invalidate his student loan forgiveness and have floated reductions in Social Security and Medicare.

He mocked Republicans who were “whining” about the minimum corporate tax rate he signed into law and want to eliminate it to cut taxes for the wealthy. And he said they would reverse his new law capping the cost of medicines like insulin.

“It’s reckless and irresponsible,” he said. “It would make inflation considerably worse” and “badly hurt ***working-class*** and middle-class Americans.”

**Load-Date:** November 4, 2022

**End of Document**



[***Senator’s Blockade of Military Promotions Begins to Cut Deep***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:695C-6741-DXY4-X00F-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

September 13, 2023 Wednesday 10:18 EST

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**Section:** US; politics

**Length:** 1817 words

**Byline:** Helene Cooper

**Highlight:** Tommy Tuberville of Alabama has refused to lift his hold unless the Pentagon cancels a policy ensuring that service members have access to abortion.

**Body**

Tommy Tuberville of Alabama has refused to lift his hold unless the Pentagon cancels a policy ensuring that service members have access to abortion.

Near the river entrance of the outermost ring of the Pentagon, where visiting dignitaries are greeted with full honors, the hallways that usually house photos of senior military leaders are more bare these days.

A section reserved for the country’s most senior military leaders will be missing four photos out of eight when Gen. Mark A. Milley, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, steps down on Oct. 1. And a space for a photo that would make history, of a woman on that wall for the first time, will be empty, too.

For more than six months, Senator Tommy Tuberville, Republican of Alabama, [*has held up military nominations*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/07/10/us/politics/tuberville-abortion-joint-chiefs.html) in protest of a Pentagon policy created to ensure that service members have access to abortions and other reproductive medical care. Hundreds of promotions have now been delayed in a battle that has it all.

It is a showdown between a white former football coach and the country’s first Black defense secretary, two Alabama men, both with deep roots at Auburn University. It is a preview of just how much of an albatross the Supreme Court’s overturning of Roe v. Wade might be on Republicans in elections next year. And it is a political game of chicken in which the country’s national security is at stake.

Caught in the middle is the Pentagon and the people picked by the military and the White House to fill top positions: the Army and Air Force chiefs of staff; the chief of naval operations and the Marine Corps commandant; the head of the Missile Defense Agency; the under secretary of defense — the Pentagon’s top policy post — who helps manage the American response to a surging Chinese military and the war in Ukraine and everything in between.

And many more.

The problem will be on sharp display in coming weeks when General Milley retires. In May, [*President Biden nominated Gen. Charles Q. Brown Jr.*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/25/us/politics/biden-joint-chiefs-nominee-charles-q-brown.html) of the Air Force to become the next chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. But the vice chairman, Adm. Christopher Grady of the Navy, will serve as acting chairman until the blockade is lifted.

Many of the other senior positions will also be filled on an “acting” basis. But acting officials are transition figures — like substitute teachers in grade school. They cannot hire people to staff their new positions. They cannot move into the quarters that come with the job. They cannot impose any long-term vision on the military.

The holds are cutting deep at a time when the military is struggling to meet recruiting goals that would keep the number of active-duty service members at 1.4 million, the strength that planners say is necessary to protect Americans at home and American national security interests abroad. The Pentagon had hoped to offset lackluster recruiting by retaining more people.

Mr. Tuberville’s holds make that almost impossible.

The U.S. military is an all-volunteer force. The officers most affected by the holds are top performers who could easily find more lucrative jobs in the private sector — captains, majors, colonels and generals who have already met the 20-year service requirement that allows them to retire with a full military pension. The military manages to keep many of these people by promoting them to more senior and challenging positions.

If promotions are denied, one frustrated senior officer said in an interview, what is the point of staying if you already qualify for your pension? The most talented will leave first, the officer said, speaking on the condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to discuss the issue publicly.

Moreover, the holds on senior jobs mean the junior jobs that accompany them will remain unfilled too, leaving thousands of military families in limbo, unsure when they will have to move or where they will live in the foreseeable future.

“These are middle-class, ***working-class*** families who are saying, ‘We can’t enroll our child in school because we don’t know when we’re going to move,’” said Kathy Roth-Douquet, the chief executive of Blue Star Families, a nonprofit organization founded in 2009 by military spouses.

Those families may be in purgatory for some time.

With a slew of military bases in red states that put new abortion restrictions in place after the Supreme Court decision, Defense Secretary Lloyd J. Austin III ordered the department to offer time off and travel reimbursement to service members who need to go out of state for abortions. The policy does not fund abortions — under federal law, the Defense Department can perform the procedure only when the life of the mother is at risk or in cases of rape and incest.

Even as criticism of the delays grows louder — including from the Republican Senate leader, Mitch McConnell, who on Tuesday called the holds a “mistake” — Mr. Tuberville has refused to back down. He denies that the holds are hurting the military and insists that Democrats could put each job to a vote on the Senate floor, a process that would take hours per nomination.

But with the abortion issue proving to be a loser for Republicans, Democrats in the Senate have little political incentive to negotiate. Democratic leaders say that making an exception, even for General Brown, would set a damaging precedent.

Unless Republican leaders somehow lean on the freshman senator to lift his hold, the fight could drag on for months, and perhaps all the way through the presidential election next year.

Peter D. Feaver, a professor at Duke University who has studied the armed forces, said that U.S. troops “are the noncombatants in the culture war, and they’re getting slaughtered.”

“We have to develop a new norm where we give the uniformed military noncombatant immunity in the culture wars, and that means we have to stop targeting them, which is what Senator Tuberville is doing over culture war issues,” said Professor Feaver, the author of “Thanks for Your Service: The Causes and Consequences of Public Confidence In The U.S. Military.”

General Brown, who would be only the second Black man to be chairman, after Colin Powell, was easily cleared by the Senate Armed Services Committee on July 20 on a voice vote. All that remains is a vote on the Senate floor.

Enter Mr. Tuberville, a former football coach at Auburn University and a first-term senator from Alabama.

Mr. Tuberville, his aides said, considered Mr. Austin a fellow Alabamian. After all, Mr. Austin got a master’s degree at Auburn and served on the school’s board of trustees, although not at the same time that Mr. Tuberville was football coach. Mr. Austin, a retired Army general, was one of the few Biden political nominees whom the Alabama senator voted for, according to one of Mr. Tuberville’s staff members.

But Mr. Austin “ignored letter after letter from Coach,” Steven Stafford, a spokesman for Mr. Tuberville, said in an interview. For months, he said, the senator warned that he would put a hold on nominations over the abortion policy. But Mr. Austin did not get on the phone with the Alabama senator until March, Mr. Stafford said, adding that the two men have spoken twice since then.

Both Mr. Tuberville and Mr. Austin declined to comment for this article.

Sabrina Singh, a Pentagon spokeswoman, said that Mr. Austin and the Defense Department “have and continue to engage Senator Tuberville and his office in good faith and directly relayed how his holds on our general and flag officers undermine our military readiness, threaten the retention of some of our very best officers and disrupt the lives of our military families.”

Privately, several military officials have complained that Mr. Austin could have done more before the senator put the holds in place. Part of the job of defense secretary is to talk to congressional leaders, if only to prevent political fires from starting. Mr. Austin’s critics — and even several of his allies — say that while he may not have been able to change Mr. Tuberville’s course of action, he should have at least tried.

Mr. Austin’s aides say he has no intention of changing the abortion policy. “A service member in Alabama deserves to have the same access to health care as a service member in California, as a service member stationed in Korea,” Ms. Singh told reporters last month. “If you are a service member stationed in a state that has rolled back or restricted health care access, you are often stationed there because you were assigned there — it is not that you chose to go there.”

Earlier this summer, VoteVets, a progressive political action veterans group, launched ads across Alabama, and, more recently, Florida, that drew a direct line from Mr. Tuberville to American national security. “Senator, you wouldn’t take Auburn to the Iron Bowl without your offensive and defensive coordinators on the field,” the actor, a veteran himself, says in one ad. “So stop sacrificing our national security for your political gains.”

At his confirmation hearing in June, Gen. Eric Smith of the Marines, the would-be commandant, told senators that a one-star general, “a fairly new one,” would be in charge of a 48,000-person Marine expeditionary force. In a military where rank is everything, these situations will harm decision-making, military officials said.

National security has already been affected, according to the Pentagon. Consider the Navy’s Fifth Fleet and Seventh Fleet, which handle the Middle East and the Pacific. Vice Adm. Brad Cooper and Vice Adm. Karl Thomas are being kept on as commanders because Navy officials say it is crucial to have three-stars in those positions for dealing with allies and adversaries alike. Admiral Thomas is supposed to be the next director of naval intelligence. But he cannot leave the Pacific until Mr. Tuberville removes his hold.

In July, [*Mr. Biden nominated Adm. Lisa Franchetti*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/07/21/us/politics/biden-admiral-lisa-franchetti-navy-chief.html) to the Navy’s highest-ranking position after the retirement of Adm. Michael Gilday. She would be the first woman to lead the service.

Admiral Gilday’s photo came down after he relinquished command on Aug. 14. But Admiral Franchetti’s picture will not go up until she is confirmed by the Senate.

PHOTOS: Senator Tommy Tuberville, Republican of Alabama, has held up military nominations in protest of an abortion-accessibility policy. (PHOTOGRAPH BY KENT NISHIMURA FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES); Gen. David Berger, left, is stepping down as commandant of the Marines. His successor, Gen. Eric Smith, right, is being delayed. (PHOTOGRAPH BY MANUEL BALCE CENETA/ASSOCIATED PRESS); Gen. Charles Q. Brown Jr.’s nomination to become the next chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff has been stalled by the blockade. (PHOTOGRAPH BY DOUG MILLS/THE NEW YORK TIMES); An aide to Mr. Tuberville, left, said Defense Secretary Lloyd J. Austin III, right, ignored his entreaties. (PHOTOGRAPH BY BILL CLARK/CQ-ROLL CALL, VIA GETTY IMAGES) (A15) This article appeared in print on page A1, A15.

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[***A Missing Ingredient of 'Flamin' Hot': Truth***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68FY-G5F1-DXY4-X3H0-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** Section D; Column 0; Dining In, Dining Out / Style Desk; Pg. 16; CRITIC'S NOTEBOOK

**Length:** 1053 words

**Byline:** By Tejal Rao

**Body**

The film, now streaming on Hulu and Disney Plus, was adapted from a debunked memoir, but it does reveal how food brands want to be seen.

Like Oscar Isaac, I occasionally use chopsticks to eat hot Cheetos, a technique that keeps their red dust from sticking to my fingers. It's the neatest way to keep pace with a perfectly engineered snack, designed both to satisfy the desire for its prickly heat and violent crunch, its convincing tang and mellow sweetness, and to fuel an immediate need to revisit it.

There are films this year celebrating (and satirizing) the invention of all kinds of consumer products, including the BlackBerry, Air Jordans and Tetris, but I never imagined that this spicy little snack produced by a multinational corporation could be the hero of a late-capitalist uplift saga.

''Flamin' Hot,'' directed by Eva Longoria and streaming now on Hulu and Disney Plus, is a frothy, optimistic, very American film about Richard Montañez, a Mexican American kid from San Bernardino County who grows up to work at a Frito-Lay plant and dreams up a billion-dollar idea: Flamin' Hot Cheetos.

Through Montañez, the rise of the fingertip-staining, habit-forming, spicy corn-based snack becomes a story of the American dream -- a '90s-style janitor-to-executive tale fueled by pure grit and guts.

Is it Montañez's biopic, or the snack's? In the film, there's no difference, and success is a blurry, feverish longing. Montañez imagines his personal triumph as tangled up with the product's, and seems convinced that corporate approval of hot Cheetos will somehow translate to respect and representation for ***working-class*** Mexican Americans. If that all seems a bit too tidy, a bit too good to be true, well, it's because it is.

''Flamin' Hot'' was adapted from the memoir-ish self-help book of the real-life Richard Montañez. (One example of its guidance: ''You can start your journey by putting your hunger to work for you so you can move past your fears.''). Though Mr. Montañez did work his way up from janitor to marketing executive at Frito-Lay, a Los Angeles Times investigation in 2021 thoroughly debunked the story of his inventing hot Cheetos.

In fact, in the late 1980s, Frito-Lay was losing on small-bag snack sales and getting desperate. Testing a spicy flavor line was a coordinated corporate strategy, and hot Cheetos were first released to the company's test markets in Chicago, Detroit, Cleveland and Houston, not Southern California, where the film is set.

Mr. Montañez's version was admittedly way more fun than the truth, but adapting it was also an opportunity to revise, reshape and ultimately align the story of hot Cheetos with consumers.

In the film, getting ready for his pitch to the executives, he practices his lines with a co-worker at the factory: ''The Hispanic market will not be ignored!'' But in the big meeting, he softens, admitting both his strategy and his vulnerability: ''I want to know that I matter to you, to this company, to the world.''

Hot Cheetos are great, but I don't know -- does anyone think a snack can do all that? Gushers can tweet about #BlackLivesMatter, M&M's green mascot can switch from heels to flats and Skittles can print new packaging for Pride, but we all know that gestures from food brands tend to be hollow.

In ''Flamin' Hot,'' the PepsiCo chief executive Roger Enrico gives away the game: ''You still think I'm investing in a janitor?'' he says. ''The Hispanic market is the future and this man is going to lead us there.''

It sounds like a betrayal, but it's not. It's exactly what Montañez, who would later become known as the ''godfather of Hispanic marketing'' has been fighting for from the start -- not for people, but for consumers -- and the film exalts it.

A murky and heartbreaking impulse drives Montañez from the start of the film, when he realizes that the elementary school bullies making fun of his lunch actually kind of like it. He starts charging them 25 cents per foil-wrapped bean burrito, converting his humiliation into cold, hard cash. Maybe he can't get his haters to like him, but at least they like his food.

Later, at the Frito-Lay factory, Montañez and his co-workers ''fight'' corporate, which refuses to invest in marketing hot Cheetos properly, setting up the product -- and by extension, Montañez and his crew -- to fail. They find their own ingenious, dodgy ways to get the product off the shelves in Rancho Cucamonga. And Enrico, ultimately impressed by the numbers, calls Montañez to say he'd like the factory to produce five million cases.

The demand for more hot Cheetos is framed as our hero's great victory, but the terms of the battle are a little flimsy, and its setup is insincere. Let's rewind: Factory workers faced up against corporate suits to ... do what exactly? To help those suits. To help Frito-Lay claim the Hispanic market in Southern California and to make the company more money.

Though that isn't how things went down, the Flamin' Hot flavor line is in fact a wild success story tied to its fans, who constantly expand on the brand's reach with viral recipes like hot Cheetos salads, elotes and fried chicken, until the dishes become canon. In an interview, Ms. Longoria emphasized the sense of collective ownership over the snack: ''I like to say, this isn't PepsiCo's product, this is our product. The Hispanic community made this product popular, we made it a pop-culture phenomenon.''

Much like the ''Flamin' Hot'' origin story, that's not entirely true. Though the film romanticizes labor on the production line, factories that produce hot Cheetos also employ underage migrant workers, mostly from Central America, whose lungs sting from all the spicy dust in the air. The billion-dollar brand belongs totally and patently to PepsiCo, not the people who buy or make the snacks.

What ''Flamin' Hot'' does get right, in a glossy fictional origin story, is showing us exactly how food brands wish we would see them -- wholesome and harmless and completely essential to our lives, their wins and successes so tangled up with our own, it's impossible to tell the difference.

Follow New York Times Cooking on Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, TikTok and Pinterest. Get regular updates from New York Times Cooking, with recipe suggestions, cooking tips and shopping advice.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/09/dining/flamin-hot-cheetos-movie.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/09/dining/flamin-hot-cheetos-movie.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: ''Flamin' Hot'' tells the not-actually-true story of Flamin' Hot Cheetos through the life of Richard Montañez, a janitor who claimed to have invented the spicy snack. Center, Jesse Garcia, left with Dennis Haysbert, plays Mr. Montañez as a charming and somewhat unreliable narrator of his own story. Bottom, Eva Longoria, with Mr. Garcia, is the director. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY DANIEL DORSA FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

ANNA KOORIS/SEARCHLIGHT PICTURES/20TH CENTURY STUDIOS

SEARCHLIGHT PICTURES/20TH CENTURY STUDIOS) This article appeared in print on page D16.

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[***The Politics of Grievance***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:66JF-C5X1-DXY4-X097-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** BRIEFING

**Length:** 1797 words

**Byline:** David Leonhardt

**Highlight:** We look at Italy, the largest country in western Europe to elect a far-right government in decades.

**Body**

We look at Italy, the largest country in western Europe to elect a far-right government in decades.

Italy, the world’s eighth-largest economy, [*elected a far-right government*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/25/world/europe/italy-meloni-prime-minister.html) last week, with Giorgia Meloni as the likely next prime minister. It’s part of a trend: Her victory came shortly after Swedish elections that led to a far-right party becoming the second-largest in Parliament there.

To help you understand why Meloni won and what may lie ahead, I spoke with Jason Horowitz, The Times’s Rome bureau chief.

David: What was the main reason for Meloni’s victory?

Jason: The real secret to Meloni’s appeal was not any particular policy or vision. In Italy, every election is a change election, and being the candidate of the protest vote is a powerful thing. [*Meloni was that*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/24/world/europe/italy-election-fascism-meloni.html). The other major candidates had all been part of Mario Draghi’s national unity government. She stayed in the opposition and vacuumed up the protest vote. She won with about 26 percent.

Meloni’s appeal is also based heavily on grievance — the grievance of workers left behind by the globalization of which she is ideologically suspicious.

David: How would you compare Meloni with Donald Trump?

Jason: Despite her past admiration of Trump, and her closeness to the Republican Party — she [*has spoken at CPAC*](https://www.politico.com/news/2022/09/29/italys-meloni-trump-gop-00059363) — she is different. Whereas Trump was the scion of a real-estate mogul, Meloni grew up in the leftist ***working-class*** neighborhood of Garbatella — and made it as a right-wing post-Fascist youth activist. She has a rough Roman accent, which could be compared to an old Brooklyn accent. And as a woman she had to overcome a lot. It all screams tough.

David: Meloni’s agenda also seems different from Trump’s. She has proposed specific economic policies to help the ***working class***, right?

Jason: Her party’s main proposals are deep tax cuts, including for lower earners. On top of that, she wants to increase pension payouts and cut taxes for working mothers. She talks about [*increasing the low birthrate*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/23/world/europe/giorgia-meloni-italy-women.html) as a way to talk about Italians being proud again — being patriots who prosper and multiply. To help them multiply, she believes the government needs to help.

Still, Meloni’s platform is not anti-rich. She won the ***working-class*** vote — and also the rich vote. She is in a coalition with Silvio Berlusconi, the former prime minister, who has been talking about tax cuts for 30 years, and other allies of businessmen from northern Italy. In all, Meloni’s proposals would blow a big hole in the budget.

David: Meaning that she has not also proposed spending cuts?

Jason: She has targeted [*one big economic benefit*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2022/09/25/world/italy-elections/a-welfare-benefit-more-widespread-in-the-south-breeds-bitterness-in-the-north) for cuts — “reddito di cittadinanza,” or citizenship income. It is a welfare benefit, enacted a few years ago, that pays hundreds of euros a month to people who don’t work. It has proved enormously popular in Italy’s disadvantaged southern regions, but its critics, including Meloni, see it as a handout that promotes laziness and crime.

Her opposition to the benefit probably cost her votes in the south. By contrast, the Five Star Movement, another anti-establishment party that seemed to be fading, defended the benefit and did well in the south.

David: In Italy, the foreign-born share of the population has surged over the past couple of decades. Was that subject part of Meloni’s message?

Jason: Even though there has not been an uptick in migrant arrivals of late, immigration is now a talking point of the Italian right. Meloni has talked about replacement of native Italians by illegal migrants. She has talked about invasion. I heard her tell workers that international bankers are driving mass migration to weaken their rights by replacing them with cheap migrant labor.

Immigration has been in the populist ether here since 2014 or so, when Italy had [*a wave of illegal migration land on its shores*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2015/04/20/world/europe/surge-in-refugees-crossing-the-mediterranean-sea-maps.html). Italy’s center-left leader at the time appealed to the European Union for help and didn’t get it. So it could be argued that Brussels had a hand in creating the populist wave that it so fears.

The left has failed to come up with a response on the issue, and even the more moderate or liberal governments in France and Spain are emphasizing enforcement. Left-wing parties are in a tough position, in which they can’t give up on integration, because it is central to their values. But emphasizing it may hurt their electoral chances.

David: How much reason is there to worry that Meloni might govern in an anti-democratic way and trample on human rights?

Jason: There is a feeling that even if she wanted to go the way of Viktor Orban in Hungary, she could not because Italy is [*so integrated into the European Union*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/26/opinion/italy-giorgia-meloni-election.html), and so dependent on hundreds of billions of euros in funds. She has also been a consistent voice for democratic elections. ([*The Times’s Steven Erlanger explains the E.U.’s fears*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/26/world/europe/european-union-italy-meloni.html).)

People are concerned about gay rights and perhaps abortion rights. She is against gay marriage and [*opposes adoption by gay couples*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/25/world/europe/lgbt-adoption-giorgia-meloni.html), arguing that only a married man and woman can give a child its best shot. She herself is an unwed mother with a longtime boyfriend and says she should not be allowed to adopt either.

On abortion, Meloni has told me she believes abortion should remain safe, accessible and legal, but she wants to increase prevention. That has raised concerns that Meloni would make it more difficult to have abortions in a country where it can already be hard, because so many doctors conscientiously object to it.

For more: Meloni has been a full-throated supporter of Ukraine, but her coalition partners have sounded like Russia apologists. [*What happens now*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/26/world/europe/meloni-italy-russia-ukraine.html)

A programming note from David: This is my last week before a book leave. Starting this weekend, other Times journalists will be writing The Morning, and I’ll be back in your inboxes in late January.

THE LATEST NEWS

Business

* Oil-exporting countries, led by Saudi Arabia and Russia, agreed to [*cut their supply sharply*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/05/business/opec-russia-oil-output.html) to raise global energy prices.

1. The move undercut President Biden’s push to [*choke off the oil revenue*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/05/us/politics/opec-biden-saudi-arabia.html) that Russia is using to pay for its invasion of Ukraine.
2. In response, the Biden administration said it [*would release*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2022/10/05/business/economy-news-inflation-stocks#biden-oil-opec) additional oil from U.S. strategic reserves.

Politics

* Biden and Gov. Ron DeSantis toured hurricane-ravaged Florida, flashing [*only occasional signs of their political rivalry*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/05/us/politics/biden-desantis-florida-hurricane-ian.html).

1. Online references to “civil war” by the American right [*have spiked*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/05/us/politics/civil-war-social-media-trump.html) during recent major news events such as the Mar-a-Lago search.
2. U.S. officials are trying to [*build a stockpile of weapons*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/05/us/politics/taiwan-biden-weapons-china.html) in Taiwan to prevent a potential Chinese invasion.
3. The woman who said that Herschel Walker had urged her to have an abortion is also the mother of one of his children, [*The Daily Beast reports*](https://www.thedailybeast.com/she-had-an-abortion-with-herschel-walker-she-also-had-a-child-with-him).

War in Ukraine

* U.S. intelligence agencies say [*Ukraine authorized*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/05/us/politics/ukraine-russia-dugina-assassination.html) the car bomb attack that killed the daughter of a Russian nationalist in August.

1. The Russian military [*flew self-destructing drones*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2022/10/05/world/russia-ukraine-war-news/a-kyiv-suburb-was-hit-by-iranian-made-drones-a-local-official-says) hundreds of miles from the front.

Other Big Stories

* A gunman [*killed more than 30 people, including children*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2022/10/06/world/thailand-shooting), at a child-care center in Thailand.

1. Emmanuel Macron, France’s president, [*is debuting the 44-nation European Political Community*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/06/world/europe/macron-european-political-community.html) today, a provocation to Russia.
2. Alec Baldwin [*settled a wrongful-death lawsuit*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/05/arts/alec-baldwin-halyna-hutchins-rust-settlement.html) by the family of the cinematographer he fatally shot on a movie set last year.
3. As Alex Jones stands trial, Newtown residents would [*prefer to forget him*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/05/nyregion/newtown-alex-jones-trial.html).

Opinions

Republicans would be running away with Senate races in Arizona, New Hampshire and elsewhere [*were it not for their candidates*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/05/opinion/senate-election-republican.html), Gail Collins argues.

Grass-roots fund-raising [*has become a racket*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/06/opinion/small-dollar-donations-online.html), Tim Miller writes.

MORNING READS

Decades of fan speculation: Velma of “Scooby-Doo” fame is [*canonically a lesbian*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/05/arts/television/scooby-doo-velma-lesbian.html).

Royal strife: Denmark’s queen stripped four of her grandchildren of their titles. She apologized, [*but won’t change her mind*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/05/world/europe/denmark-queen-royal-titles-apology.html).

A building’s afterlife: [*Recycling a 14-story office tower*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/06/headway/office-tower-carbon-emissions-amsterdam.html).

A Times classic: Wolf puppies are adorable. [*Then the wild calls*](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/10/13/science/wolves-dogs-genetics.html).

Advice from Wirecutter: Set up a TV [*at a tailgate*](https://www.nytimes.com/wirecutter/blog/how-to-watch-tv-tailgate/).

Lives Lived: Kitten Natividad had little film experience when the director Russ Meyer, known for outlandish films with absurd plots, cast her. He later made her the star of “Beneath the Valley of the Ultra-Vixens.” She [*died at 74*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/05/movies/kitten-natividad-dead.html).

SPORTS NEWS FROM THE ATHLETIC

N.W.S.L. execs dismissed: The Portland Thorns [*fired two top executives*](https://theathletic.com/3660347/2022/10/05/timbers-thorns-gavin-wilkinson-mike-golub-fired/) after a report about abuse in the National Women’s Soccer League. The Chicago Red Stars also [*removed their owner as board chairman*](https://theathletic.com/3662332/2022/10/05/chicago-red-stars-remove-arnim-whisler-yates/).

N.B.A. fight: The Golden State Warriors [*are considering punishment*](https://theathletic.com/3662358/2022/10/05/warriors-draymond-green-jordan-poole-altercation/) for Draymond Green, who struck teammate Jordan Poole in practice yesterday, The Athletic’s Shams Charania and Anthony Slater write.

National League batting title: The Mets utility man Jeff McNeil [*won the N.L. batting title*](https://theathletic.com/3662167/2022/10/05/mets-jeff-mcneil-nl-batting-title/) on the last day of the regular season yesterday, edging the Dodgers first baseman Freddie Freeman by one percentage point.

ARTS AND IDEAS

36 hours in New York City

How do you make the most out of a weekend in New York City? [*The Times’s 36 Hours feature is back*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2022/10/06/travel/things-to-do-nyc.html) with recommendations: Start on Friday with 400 years of history at the Museum of the City of New York in East Harlem, stop at Marie’s Crisis Café in the West Village on Saturday evening for drinks and singalongs, and end with a Sunday lunch at Chinatown’s renowned Golden Unicorn.

It’s the first weekly 36 Hours feature in more than two years, since the pandemic shut down nearly all travel. Why New York? “It’s The New York Times!” said Tacey Rychter, a Times travel section editor. “Why not kick off in The Times’s hometown, and in a place that has seen so much adversity and change in the past couple of years?”

PLAY, WATCH, EAT

What to Cook

[*Mapo ragù*](https://cooking.nytimes.com/recipes/1018404-mapo-ragu) is kind of Korean, kind of Chinese and kind of Italian.

What to Read

In “Looking for the Hidden Folk,” Nancy Marie Brown [*makes a case*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/04/books/review/looking-for-the-hidden-folk-nancy-marie-brown.html) for everyday wonder.

What to Watch

Stream the [*50 best movies*](https://www.nytimes.com/article/best-movies-netflix.html) on Netflix right now.

Late Night

The hosts joked about DeSantis’s [*white “go-go” boots*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/06/arts/television/late-night-ron-desantis-boots.html).

Now Time to Play

The pangram from yesterday’s Spelling Bee was birdbath. Here is [*today’s puzzle*](https://www.nytimes.com/puzzles/spelling-bee).

Here’s [*today’s Mini Crossword*](https://www.nytimes.com/crosswords/game/mini), and a clue: Night bird (three letters).

And here’s [*today’s Wordle*](https://www.nytimes.com/games/wordle/index.html). After, [*use our bot*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2022/upshot/wordle-bot.html) to get better.

Thanks for spending part of your morning with The Times. See you tomorrow. — David

P.S. A [*hidden haiku*](https://twitter.com/nythaikus/status/1574800810336260098) from a Times story [*about Little Amal*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/23/theater/little-amal-new-york.html), a 12-foot-tall puppet of a Syrian refugee: “Looking up, all you / see is her huge face, with those / big, brown, blinking eyes.”

Here’s [*today’s front page*](https://static01.nyt.com/images/2022/10/06/nytfrontpage/scan.pdf).

“[*The Daily*](https://www.nytimes.com/thedaily)” is about inflation. On [*the Modern Love podcast*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/05/podcasts/modern-love-sign-language.html), a Deaf man’s love language.

Matthew Cullen, Lauren Hard, Lauren Jackson, Claire Moses, Ian Prasad Philbrick and Ashley Wu contributed to The Morning. You can reach the team at [*themorning@nytimes.com*](mailto:themorning@nytimes.com).

[*Sign up here to get this newsletter in your inbox*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing).

PHOTO: Giorgia Meloni in Rome last week. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Gianni Cipriano for The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** October 10, 2022

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[***Has No Labels Become a Stalking Horse for Trump?; Guest Essay***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69RT-3YS1-DXY4-X0NR-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

November 29, 2023 Wednesday 10:31 EST

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 3066 words

**Byline:** Thomas B. Edsall

**Highlight:** Whatever its intentions, there is a reason the organization is supported by major Republican donors like Harlan Crow.

**Body**

[*No Labels*](https://www.nolabels.org/), a Washington-based organization run by political and corporate insiders, finds itself in an awkward situation.

After its founding in 2010, the group was praised by moderates in both parties as a force for cooperation and consensus. Now, however, No Labels is a target of criticism because of its plan to place presidential and vice-presidential nominees of its choosing on the 2024 ballot — a step that could tip the outcome in favor of Donald Trump if he once again wins the Republican nomination.

No Labels officials contend that their polling suggests that their ticket could win.

Numerous factors exacerbate the suspicion that whatever its intentions are (or were), the organization has functionally become an asset to the Trump campaign and a threat to the re-election of Joe Biden.

Leaks to the media that prominent Republican donors, including [*Harlan Crow*](https://www.opensecrets.org/donor-lookup/results?name=harlan+crow&amp;page=2), Justice Clarence Thomas’s benefactor, are contributing to No Labels — which is well on its way to raising $70 million — suggest that some major donors to No Labels see the organization as a means to promote Republican goals.

No Labels, in turn, has declined to disclose its donors, and the secrecy has served to intensify the concern that some of its contributors are using the organization’s plan to run a third-party ticket to weaken the Biden campaign.

A founder and the chief executive of No Labels, Nancy Jacobson, was previously a prominent Democratic fund-raiser. She is married to Mark Penn, a [*consultant and pollster*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/03/01/us/politics/mark-penn-trump-clinton.html) for Bill and Hillary Clinton; Penn eventually became alienated from both of them.

During the Trump presidency, Penn publicly voiced support for Trump’s policies on a number of key issues, in newspaper columns and during appearances on Fox News. Penn is the chief executive and chairman of [*Stagwell Inc*](https://www.stagwellglobal.com/people/mark-penn/)., which owns a polling firm, HarrisX, that [*conducts surveys*](https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/no-labels-poll-finds-most-voters-want-another-choice-in-2024-301787759.html) for No Labels. He says he has “no role, real or imagined, in this No Labels effort.”

The fear in many quarters — from Republican consultants who are members of the anti-Trump [*Lincoln Project*](https://lincolnproject.us/) to Democrats of all ideological stripes — is that if the No Labels third-party campaign is carried out, it will help elect Trump.

On April 2, Stuart Stevens, a strategist for the 2012 Mitt Romney campaign and a senior adviser to the Lincoln Project, wrote on X (formerly Twitter):

A 3rd party candidate like @NoLabelsOrg is shopping for will all but guarantee a Trump victory. If you are supporting that candidate, you are helping elect Trump. If that’s your goal, just be honest. With a 3rd party candidate, @NoLabelsOrg is operating as arm of Trump campaign.

Members of the bipartisan House [*Problem Solvers Caucus*](https://problemsolverscaucus.house.gov/), which No Labels helped found in 2017, now accuse No Labels of covertly backing Trump.

“No Labels,” Representative Abigail Spanberger, Democrat of Virginia, declared, “is wasting time, energy and money on a bizarre effort that confuses and divides voters and has one obvious outcome — re-electing Donald Trump as president.”

Last summer, Jacobson [*told NBC*](https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/2024-election/no-labels-ceo-defends-2024-ticket-spoiler-charges-rcna94378) that the group would abandon its plans to run an independent presidential ticket if she and others in the organization became convinced that such a bid would help Trump.

“As a Democrat? Categorically, that will not happen,” Jacobson said. “This effort will never — we’ll pull it down.” She added: “We will not spoil for either side. The only reason to do this is to win.”

In many quarters, the response to Jacobson’s claim has been incredulity.

“Where’s the money — and there are significant bucks involved here — coming from?” asked Joe Klein, a former Time magazine columnist, in a June 21 Substack essay, “[*Mislabeled*](https://josephklein.substack.com/p/mislabeled): No Labels Has Become a False Flag Trumpist Operation.”

The answers, Klein noted, “are murky,” but:

we do know one name: Harlan Crow, the sugar daddy who has funded the leisure adventures of Clarence Thomas and the campaigns of other Republicans. Indeed, Crow told The New Republic in April:

“I support No Labels because our government should be about what’s best for America, not what’s best for either political party. That’s also why I’ve supported candidates from both sides of the aisle who are willing to engage in civil discussions to move our country forward.” Ohh-kayyy. Not sure I believe that.

An NBC survey in September found that the presence of third-party candidates on the ballot would shift the outcome from a 46-to-46 tie to a 39-to-36 Trump advantage over Biden.

Equally important, NBC also found that the strongest appeal of third-party candidates is among constituencies Biden must carry, including voters pollsters call persuadable; low-income, ***working-class*** and middle-class voters of color; and voters who said they “somewhat” disapproved of Biden.

In the media, the potential No Labels candidates most commonly mentioned are Senator Joe Manchin, Democrat of West Virginia, who is 76 and recently announced his retirement from the Senate, and Larry Hogan, who is 67 and a former Republican governor of Maryland. The organization could also pick someone outside politics, including a military or corporate leader.

Many Democratic leaders and organizations — including Nancy Pelosi, a former House speaker; [*state Democratic chairs*](https://www.cbsnews.com/news/democratic-party-denounce-no-labels-internal-email/); Third Way, a Democratic think tank; and advisers to President Biden — contend that a No Labels candidate in the race would probably doom Biden’s chances of re-election.

Critics of No Labels also argue, crucially, that a third-party candidate who was victorious in just one or two states could prevent both Trump and Biden from reaching the 270 Electoral College votes required to win the presidency.

An outcome like this would throw the election into the House of Representatives for what is known as a contingent election. If no candidate achieves an Electoral College majority, the Constitution provides that “the House of Representatives shall choose immediately, by ballot, the president. But in choosing the president, the votes shall be taken by states, the representation from each state having one vote.”

At present, Republicans [*outnumber Democrats in a majority*](https://ballotpedia.org/Election_results,_2022:_Comparison_of_state_delegations_to_the_117th_and_118th_Congresses) of state delegations. In a contingent election in the 2025 House, even if Democrats win it back, the state-by-state voting would still be very likely to favor the Republican nominee.

My Times colleague Peter Baker summed up Penn’s pro-Trump activities in a 2018 [*article*](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/05/21/us/politics/mark-penn-clinton-aide-mueller-investigation.html), “Mark Penn, Ex-Clinton Aide, Dismisses Mueller Inquiry, and the Clintons Along With It”:

In a series of recent newspaper columns and appearances on Fox News, Mr. Penn has endorsed Mr. Trump’s argument that the investigation by the special counsel, Robert S. Mueller III, was instigated by secret Democratic intriguing. The inquiry, Mr. Penn said, has resorted “to storm trooper tactics” and has become a “scorched-earth effort” to “bring down Donald Trump.”

Penn, Baker wrote, “suggested that ‘Clinton Foundation operatives’ got the F.B.I. to investigate Mr. Trump.”

From a different angle, No Labels’ plan to nominate a “unity” presidential ticket of its choosing would undercut the open nomination process reformers adopted more than a half-century ago.

After the chaotic 1968 Democratic convention, insurgents forced the adoption of rules requiring that almost all delegates to presidential conventions be chosen through primaries or caucuses, effectively eviscerating the ability of party power brokers to pick nominees behind closed doors.

Since then, the candidates of both major parties have been selected through an arduous process of state contests, in which the candidates seek majority or plurality support in an open competition with relatively full disclosure of contributions and expenditures.

No Labels is gearing up to pick a third-party presidential ticket without the constraints and safeguards of primary elections and caucus contests.

William Galston, a Brookings Institution senior fellow and one of the 2010 founders of No Labels, resigned from the group this year in protest over the group’s plan to run presidential candidates.

Over Galston’s objections, No Labels began “in 2022 to explore the possibility of an independent bipartisan ticket,” he wrote in an email to me. He objected, he said, “not only because I thought this plan had no chance of succeeding but also because I believed that anything that could divide the anti-Trump coalition was too risky to undertake.”

Ultimately, Galston continued, he decided he “did not want to be associated with a venture that I believed (and continue to believe) will increase Donald Trump’s chances of re-entering the Oval Office.”

No Labels’ core message is ostensibly a call for bipartisan cooperation so that government can end gridlock and address the problems facing the nation.

In an interview with me conducted on Zoom, Ryan Clancy, No Labels’ chief strategist, contended that No Labels’ in-house polling shows that an independent ticket would have a good chance of winning a majority of Electoral College votes.

According to Clancy, when voters were asked to choose among Biden, Trump and “an independent, moderate alternative,” 60 percent chose the independent alternative. “We could afford to lose 20 percent and still win the Electoral College,” he said.

Clancy defended No Labels’ decision to keep donors’ names secret, arguing that Democratic groups “have explicitly said they want to lean on our supporters” to pressure them to jump ship. “These groups are coming after us.”

Jacobson, who was also present on the Zoom interview, said that no final decision on running a third-party candidate will be made until after the Super Tuesday primaries on March 5, 2024. Sixteen states will hold primaries or caucuses that day, along with American Samoa, and the eventual nominees of both major parties will presumably become apparent.

Jacobson said that all bets are off in the event that either Trump or Biden is defeated in the primaries or withdraws. Clancy said No Labels has acquired ballot access in 12 states, with a goal of 34 to be achieved before any nominees are picked. Ballot access in the remaining states and other jurisdictions would be up to the actual candidates to obtain.

One of the many questions facing No Labels is how the organization can select nominees without looking as if the candidates have been chosen in a less-than-democratic process by a small group of No Labels leaders.

“We have not solidified that process,” Jacobson said in the Zoom interview.

I asked Galston how decisions were made at No Labels during the years he was associated with the group. He replied:

The decision-making structure was always a bit of a mystery to me. There were several advisory committees and a board, but Nancy Jacobson, the C.E.O., always seemed to be the ultimate authority. My hunch is that a handful of people — the co-chairs, the lawyers, the largest funders, perhaps others — had an informal veto in key decisions, but Nancy was always focused and persuasive, adept at building internal coalitions and marginalizing dissent.

“In my experience,” he added, “she almost always got her way.”

I asked officials of No Labels a series of questions about decision making, finances and organizational structure. Clancy replied by email.

I asked whether No Labels is a political party. A political party, Clancy replied, “fields candidates up and down the ballot, engages in election activity year after year and spends resources during the general election to help their nominees win. No Labels, Inc., which is a 501(c)(4) social welfare organization, does not do any of this.”

No Labels Inc., he continued, “is only doing ballot access work for one office and for one election. And if No Labels Inc. does end up offering its ballot line to an independent unity ticket, it will not help fund or run that campaign.”

A few more questions and Clancy’s answers:

Why don’t you disclose the names and amounts given by donors? You say you want to prevent harassment, but all political parties reveal their donors. Shouldn’t the financial supporters of a movement that could elect a president or significantly influence the outcome of the next election be a matter of public record?

No Labels Inc. was launched as a 501(c)(4) 14 years ago, and we have never disclosed the individual names of our supporters because they have a right to privacy. Again, No Labels Inc. is not a political party, and we do not participate in elections, so therefore do not have a responsibility to report our funding.

How likely is it that a No Labels ticket would prevent any candidate from getting 270 Electoral College voters, thus making it a contingent election thrown to the House?

No Labels will only offer our ballot line to a unity ticket if we believe it has the chance to win outright in the Electoral College. We believe this is possible, as we have done extensive polling and modeling in all 50 states featuring surveys of tens of thousands of voters, with representative samples from every state. This shows a potential path to victory for a unity ticket in 25 states, representing 286 electoral votes.

How will the No Labels presidential candidate be chosen?

We are still determining the process for how we would select a unity ticket.

How many members does No Labels have? How many members pay dues, and what are the dues?

No Labels Inc. has nearly 100,000 members who either pay dues or take various actions on behalf of the organization, and we have 836,504 email subscribers.

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[*Third Way*](https://www.thirdway.org/), a Democratic centrist group, is one of the leading critics of No Labels’ plans to pick a third-party presidential ticket. Matt Bennett, a vice president at Third Way, disputed No Labels’ fundamental claim that its ticket could beat both Biden and Trump:

No one — absolutely not a soul — outside of No Labels thinks they can actually win the election. And that — not the question of which side they’d hurt more as a spoiler — is at the heart of this issue. They’ve said they will pull the plug on this endeavor if they can’t win. So the real question is why they cannot see the overwhelming evidence of the hopelessness of their cause when it’s so blindingly obvious.

Third Way has published at least 15 reports, commentaries and memos faulting No Labels, including an analysis of No Labels’ own polling showing that, Third Way contended, “Biden wins the necessary battlegrounds in a two-way race, but No Labels spoils for Trump in a three-way contest.”

In recent weeks, Democrats have escalated their attacks on the No Labels plan.

On Nov. 2, Pelosi told reporters, “No Labels is perilous to our democracy.”

I asked a number of election experts to assess the No Labels initiative, its financing and its procedures for selecting nominees.

Didi Kuo, the manager of Stanford University’s Program on American Democracy in Comparative Perspective, replied to my queries by email.

“While there is precedent for third-party candidates in presidential elections,” she wrote, “there is little precedent for an organization backwards-engineering a presidential ticket and agenda.”

Asked whether No Labels should be required to register as a political party, she responded:

If No Labels fields candidates, it should register as a political party. It has the basic structure of a modern electoral organization, with leaders, data and campaign analysts, fund-raisers and volunteers. If it is going to use this organization to support candidates running with its label, it is functionally a party — and needs to be subject to the same rules and regulations as the other parties.

A No Labels candidate, Kuo continued,

will likely serve as a spoiler in what is shaping up to be a very tight race between President Biden and former President Trump. Given where No Labels is trying to position itself on the partisan spectrum, it is very likely that its candidate would draw votes from President Biden, rather than Donald Trump — with grave consequences for American democracy.

Seth Masket, a political scientist at the University of Denver, argued that

as long as this ticket is on the ballot in some competitive states, it can still have a substantial impact. Even if it only pulls 1 percent of the vote or so, it matters a great deal whether it pulls more from the Democrats or the Republicans in states like Arizona, Wisconsin and Georgia. It could end up changing the outcome of the election even without winning very many votes.

The failure to disclose donors has been a sticking point. I asked Fred Wertheimer, the founder and president of Democracy 21, a campaign-finance-reform organization, for his assessment. “In my view,” he replied, “when No Labels started qualifying in various states to be on the ballot to run a presidential candidate, they were functioning as a political organization under I.R.S. law and should have registered as such under section 527 of the I.R.S. code and disclosed their donors.”

It is, Wertheimer continued, “an oxymoron to be a nonprofit group operating under section 501(c)(4) and at the same time operate as a political party to run a candidate for president.”

None of the experts I contacted voiced support for the No Labels endeavor, and some were harsh in their criticism. Gary Jacobson (no relation to Nancy Jacobson), a political scientist at the University of California, San Diego, said:

I don’t anticipate anything positive coming out of their efforts. If they nominate someone plausibly characterized as a centrist, I think he or she would take more votes from Biden than from Trump, for their positions would overlap more with Biden’s than with Trump’s.

He went on:

The whole idea of No Labels is weird. The value of the party label for most voters is to give them a pretty clear sign of where they stand on a range of issues. No Labels seems to have an agenda consisting of ideas for policy compromises in the areas of immigration, the economy, medical care and Social Security, avoiding social issues such as abortion or L.G.B.T.Q. rights. Presumably, that’s what the No Labels label would tell voters about the positions of any candidate the organization supported. If so, it would be a label. Otherwise, it just means “none of the above.”

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**Load-Date:** November 30, 2023

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[***How Biden Blew It on the Debt Ceiling; Paul Krugman***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:687V-8YB1-DXY4-X13P-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 1017 words

**Byline:** Paul Krugman

**Highlight:** Doesn’t anyone here know how to play this game?

**Body**

As soon as Republicans took control of the House last November, it was obvious that they would try to take the economy hostage by refusing to raise the federal debt limit. After all, that’s what they did in 2011 — and hard as it may be to believe, the Tea Party Republicans were sober and sane compared to the MAGA crew. So it was also obvious that the Biden administration needed a strategy to head off the looming crisis.

More and more, however, it looks as if there never was a strategy beyond wishful thinking. I hope that I’m wrong about this — that President Biden will, at the last minute, unveil an effective counter to G.O.P. blackmail. He may even be forced to do so, as I’ll explain in a bit. But right now I have a sick feeling about all of this. What were they thinking? How can they have been caught so off-guard by something that everyone who’s paying attention saw coming?

For those somehow new to this, the United States has a weird and dysfunctional system in which Congress enacts legislation that determines federal spending and revenue, but then, if this legislation leads to a budget deficit, must vote a second time to authorize borrowing to cover the deficit. If even one house of Congress refuses to raise the debt limit, the U.S. government will go into default, with possibly catastrophic financial and economic effects.

This weird aspect of budgeting allows a party that is sufficiently ruthless, sufficiently indifferent to the havoc it might wreak, to attempt to impose through extortion policies it would never be able to enact through the normal legislative process.

What, then, should Biden &amp; Co. have done once Republicans took the House? They could have tried to raise the debt ceiling during the lame-duck session. This would have been hard given an evenly divided Senate. If it was possible at all, it probably would have required making big concessions to those Democratic senators least supportive of Biden’s agenda. Still, better to have a hostage negotiation with Joe Manchin than with Marjorie Taylor Greene.

So unless there was a plan to deal with the coming confrontation, there should have been a major effort to raise the debt ceiling. The fact that there was no such effort suggested that maybe there was such a plan.

But all we’ve seen from Biden officials since the House changed hands has been a combination of assertions that a U.S. default would be catastrophic — which may well be true — and denigration of any and all possible end runs around the debt ceiling. My heart sank, for example, when Janet Yellen, the Treasury secretary, repeatedly rejected the idea of minting a platinum coin — one of several possible ways to bypass the debt limit — as a “[*gimmick*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/02/02/business/trillion-dollar-coin-debt-ceiling.html).” Yes, it would be a gimmick, but it would also be harmless. As I [*explained the other day*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/07/opinion/debt-ceiling-platinum-coin-premium-bonds.html), it would not mean printing money to cover the deficit; in practice, it would amount to carrying out normal borrowing through a back door.

The problem is that Yellen was in effect saying that the administration wasn’t open to any strategies that sounded silly or unorthodox; yet every strategy that avoids the debt limit must, in fact, be unorthodox, and will probably sound silly if taken out of context.

The economic merits of various unconventional financing strategies aside, think about how the White House was positioning itself politically. On one side, it signaled that it was terrified of the consequences of default; on the other, it made it clear that it was unwilling even to consider any alternatives to an increase in the debt limit. The administration might as well have put a sign on its back saying “Kick Me.”

Maybe the administration expected moderate Republicans or business groups or supposedly nonpartisan advocacy groups to somehow step in and pressure the G.O.P. to produce a clean debt ceiling bill. But I don’t see how anyone who has been awake for the past 15 years could have believed that was a real possibility.

And sure enough, after months of asserting that it would never engage in negotiations over the debt ceiling, that it would accept nothing less than a clean increase, the administration is now … [*negotiating over the debt ceiling*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/16/us/politics/biden-mccarthy-debt-ceiling.html).

Many people have pointed out that this sets a terrible precedent, that having seen that extortion works, Republicans will engage in it again and again. Even these concerns, however, seem to me to be taking too long a view. Now that Republicans see what seems to be an administration on the run, there’s every reason to expect them to keep escalating their immediate demands — quite possibly to the point where no deal is possible.

There’s a precedent from the Obama years. Back in 2011, President Obama and John Boehner, who was then the speaker of the House, came very close to a so-called [*Grand Bargain*](https://www.nytimes.com/2012/04/01/magazine/obama-vs-boehner-who-killed-the-debt-deal.html) on debt that would have been objectively terrible — it would, for example, have raised the age of eligibility for Medicare, even though life expectancy for ***working-class*** Americans had [*risen very little*](https://sgp.fas.org/crs/misc/R44846.pdf) — and would probably have been politically disastrous for Democrats. But the deal fell through because Republicans were unwilling to accept even small tax increases as part of a deficit-reduction plan.

Sure enough, Republicans have reportedly [*rejected every proposal*](https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/2023/05/15/debt-ceiling-negotiations-deadline-default/) to make a debt ceiling deal more acceptable to the Democratic base by closing tax loopholes.

I have no idea what happens next. I think there’s a real possibility that Biden officials will in the end be forced by sheer Republican intransigence to adopt unconventional methods after all — a task that will be made much harder by the fact that those same officials have spent months trash-talking the approaches they may need to follow.

But I don’t see any way to regard this whole episode as anything but a disastrous failure to face up to the reality of an opposition party controlled by extremists.

Quick Hits

Raising the debt ceiling [*would have been hard*](https://talkingpointsmemo.com/edblog/no-revisionist-history-on-a-lame-duck-debt-ceiling-vote).

Is underlying inflation [*cooling*](https://www.apricitas.io/p/core-inflation-is-finally-cooling)

When prophecy fails, [*crypto edition*](https://www.bloomberg.com/features/2023-crypto-winter/?srnd=premium&amp;sref=qzusa8bC).

[*Crypto runs*](https://www.chicagofed.org/publications/chicago-fed-letter/2023/479).

PHOTO: (PHOTOGRAPH BY Illustration by Sam Whitney/The New York Times; photograph by Jim Watson/Getty Images FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** May 17, 2023

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[***The Annual Holy Pilgrimage to Cannes***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:687T-RCX1-JBG3-60SG-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

May 16, 2023 Tuesday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section C; Column 0; The Arts/Cultural Desk; Pg. 2

**Length:** 1031 words

**Byline:** By Kyle Buchanan

**Body**

Wes Anderson, Martin Scorsese and Todd Haynes have works premiering this year at the festival on the French Riviera.

Wes Anderson's films have premiered at a wide variety of festivals, but after ''Moonrise Kingdom'' (2012), ''The French Dispatch'' (2021) and his upcoming ensemble comedy ''Asteroid City,'' Cannes is the fest he keeps coming back to. Last week, I asked Anderson what he finds so compelling about a debut on the Croisette.

''The reason to go to Cannes, I think, is because they said yes,'' he deadpanned. ''After that, there isn't really much to contemplate.''

Well, there's a little more to it than that, Anderson admitted: For cinema lovers, there is no holier pilgrimage to make than to the Cannes Film Festival, where movies are treated with the utmost reverence and routinely given marathon standing ovations.

It is a place where great auteurs have been canonized, like Martin Scorsese, who won the Palme d'Or in 1976 for ''Taxi Driver'' and will return this year with his new feature ''Killers of the Flower Moon,'' and Quentin Tarantino, a Palme winner (for ''Pulp Fiction'' in 1994) and Cannes habitué who'll be back at the fest this year for a wide-ranging conversation that may touch on his upcoming final film.

''I look at Cannes in relation to the other movies I know showed there, and I feel lucky enough to be included in the program that debuted those films,'' Anderson said. ''For me, it's a chance to be involved in this movie history, which I love.''

A Cannes launch can be awfully expensive for a studio to bankroll, since the airfare, star entourages and five-star hotels alone all add up. Still, the return on investment can be major. Last year, ''Top Gun: Maverick'' launched with a fawning Tom Cruise summit and sent fighter jets flying over the south of France, while Baz Luhrmann's ''Elvis'' threw a rock concert on the beach where drones traced Elvis Presley's silhouette in the sky. Both films leveraged their splashy debuts to become some of the best-performing global hits of the year, and were nominated for the best-picture Oscar, to boot.

This year, several star-driven films will attempt to capitalize on a Cannes bow, including ''Indiana Jones and the Dial of Destiny,'' which is being billed as Harrison Ford's final appearance in his most iconic role. Can it overcome the tepid response to the last sequel, ''Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull,'' and the substitution of James Mangold (''Ford v Ferrari'') for Steven Spielberg as director of the series? At least the addition of Phoebe Waller-Bridge, in her most high-profile role since ''Fleabag,'' will add a welcome jolt to the franchise.

The director Todd Haynes, who premiered ''Carol'' at Cannes, returns to the festival with another female-driven two-hander: ''May December,'' which stars Julianne Moore as a teacher whose scandalous relationship with a former student is scrutinized by a movie star (Natalie Portman) preparing to play the teacher in a film. Other star-heavy films include ''The New Boy,'' featuring Cate Blanchett as a nun in her first role since ''Tár,'' and ''Firebrand,'' with Jude Law as Henry VIII and Alicia Vikander as his last wife, Katherine Parr.

And then there are ''Asteroid City'' and ''Killers of the Flower Moon,'' the fest's two most anticipated premieres. The former takes place at a 1950s retreat for space-obsessed youngsters and stars Anderson staples like Jason Schwartzman, Scarlett Johansson and Tilda Swinton, as well as new recruit Tom Hanks, about whom Anderson said, ''I couldn't have had a better time working with anybody.'' Scorsese's Apple-backed film charts the mysterious murders of the Osage tribe in the 1920s and will bring stars like Leonardo DiCaprio and Robert De Niro to the red carpet.

(Still, weep for what might have been: Greta Gerwig's candy-colored July release ''Barbie'' will skip an early premiere at Cannes, depriving us of a red-carpet fantasy to trump all others.)

In recent years, the winner of the prestigious Palme d'Or award has often gone to a film with breakout-hit potential, like ''Parasite'' and ''Triangle of Sadness.'' The director of the latter film, Ruben Ostlund, will preside over this year's competition jury, a group that includes Brie Larson and Paul Dano, and they'll be picking their favorite from an auteur-heavy lineup that includes several former Palme winners.

Among them are Wim Wenders, who took the Palme for ''Paris, Texas'' and returns with ''Perfect Days,'' about a Tokyo toilet cleaner, and Hirokazu Kore-eda, whose new film ''Monster'' is the first film he has shot in Japan since his Palme winner ''Shoplifters.'' No director has ever taken the Palme three times, though Ken Loach could this year, if his new ***working-class*** drama ''The Old Oak'' proves as acclaimed as ''The Wind That Shakes the Barley'' and ''I, Daniel Blake.''

This year's Cannes has its fair share of long films -- ''Occupied City,'' Steve McQueen's documentary about Nazi-occupied Amsterdam, runs four hours and six minutes -- but not every buzzy premiere will be feature-length. The fest will also premiere shorts directed by Pedro Almodóvar (''A Strange Way of Life'') and the late Jean-Luc Godard (''Phony Wars''), while launching ''The Idol,'' an already-controversial HBO series from the ''Euphoria'' mastermind Sam Levinson starring Abel ''the Weeknd'' Tesfaye.

And though the festival will offer G-rated pleasures in the form of Pixar's new film ''Elemental,'' it wouldn't be Cannes without a few envelope-pushers. Keep an eye on Catherine Breillat, whose sexually explicit filmography (''Fat Girl,'' ''Romance'') gets a new entry with ''Last Summer,'' about a lawyer who falls for her teenage stepson.

Then there's the film I'm most curious about: ''The Zone of Interest,'' an Auschwitz-set drama from the director Jonathan Glazer. Rumor has it that Cannes passed on Glazer's audacious ''Under the Skin'' back in 2013 and was eager to make up for that mistake. Since Glazer's films (''Birth'' and ''Sexy Beast'') are infrequent but stunning, a new project from the director is reason enough to say yes to Cannes -- and after that, there isn't really much to contemplate.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/15/movies/cannes-film-festival-what-to-see.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/15/movies/cannes-film-festival-what-to-see.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Top from left, Jake Ryan, Jason Schwartzman and Tom Hanks in Wes Anderson's ''Asteroid City.'' Clockwise from above left: Ember, voiced by Leah Lewis, in Pixar's ''Elemental''

Lily Gladstone and Leonardo DiCaprio in ''Killers of the Flower Moon''

and a scene from Jonathan Glazer's ''The Zone of Interest.'' (PHOTOGRAPHS BY FOCUS FEATURES

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A24) This article appeared in print on page C2.

**Load-Date:** May 16, 2023

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[***‘Unfussy and Plain-Spoken’***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65GC-HCR1-DXY4-X01W-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Section:** BRIEFING

**Length:** 1860 words

**Byline:** David Leonhardt

**Highlight:** John Fetterman, the Democratic Senate nominee in Pennsylvania, isn’t like most politicians in his party.

**Body**

John Fetterman, the Democratic Senate nominee in Pennsylvania, isn’t like most politicians in his party.

Only 38 percent of American adults have a bachelor’s degree. Yet college graduates have come to dominate the Democratic Party’s leadership and message in recent years.

The shift has helped the party to [*win over*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/04/briefing/democrats-election-working-class-voters.html) many suburban professionals — and also helps explain its struggles with ***working-class*** voters, [*including*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/12/07/briefing/democratic-party-covid-georgia.html) some voters of color. On many social issues, today’s Democratic Party is more liberal than most Americans without a bachelor’s degree. The party also tends to nominate candidates who seem more comfortable at, say, Whole Foods than Wal-Mart.

All of which makes John Fetterman such an intriguing politician.

Last night, Fetterman — Pennsylvania’s lieutenant governor — [*comfortably won the state’s Democratic Senate primary*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2022/05/17/us/pa-primary-elections-nc/john-fetterman-wins-pa-democratic-primary-senate?smid=url-share), with 59 percent of the vote. Conor Lamb, a more traditional Democratic moderate, finished second.

In the general election this fall, Fetterman will face either Mehmet Oz, a celebrity doctor endorsed by Donald Trump, or David McCormick, a former business executive. Their primary [*remains too close to call*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2022/05/17/us/pa-primary-elections-nc).

The basic theory of Fetterman’s candidacy is that personality and authenticity matter at least as much as policy positions. On many issues, his stances are quite liberal. He has supported Bernie Sanders and taken progressive positions on Medicare, marijuana, criminal justice reform and L.G.B.T. rights. “If you get your jollies or you get your voters excited by bullying gay and trans kids, you know, it’s time for a new line of work,” Fetterman said at a recent campaign stop.

He is also 6-foot-8, bearded and tattooed, and he doesn’t like to wear suits. “I think he is a visual representation of Pennsylvania,” one voter recently said.

Fetterman is the former mayor of Braddock, a blue-collar town in western Pennsylvania where about 70 percent of residents are Black. He declined to move into the lieutenant governor’s mansion near Harrisburg and spends many nights at his home in Braddock. He talks about [*having been around guns*](https://john-fetterman.medium.com/gun-control-can-t-wait-8c8de85f339b) for most of his life. And he does take some positions that clash with progressive orthodoxy, like his opposition to a fracking ban.

Fetterman “does not sound like any other leading politician in recent memory,” my colleague Katie Glueck [*wrote*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/14/us/politics/fetterman-pennsylvania-democratic-primary.html) from the campaign trail. Holly Otterbein of Politico [*called him*](https://www.politico.com/news/magazine/2021/04/16/john-fetterman-profile-2022-senate-politics-pennsylvania-481259) “unfussy and plain-spoken” in contrast to “a party often seen as too elite.” One suburban voter in Pennsylvania — making the same point in a more skeptical way — told The Times, “I think sometimes he might come off as not a polished person.”

To be clear, Fetterman may lose the general election. This year is shaping up as a difficult one for Democrats, and the Republican campaign will no doubt use his progressive positions to claim he is a leftist out of step with Pennsylvania’s voters. Republicans may also point out that Fetterman has a graduate degree from Harvard and that he pulled a gun on a jogger in Braddock during [*a disputed 2013 encounter*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/02/09/us/politics/john-fetterman-gun-black-jogger.html).

Still, I find Fetterman to be notable because Democrats have nominated so few candidates like him in recent years. The party is more likely to choose ideologically consistent candidates whose presentation resembles that of a law professor or think-tank employee. Fetterman, like many ***working-class*** voters, has a mix of political beliefs. On the campaign trail, he wears shorts and a hoodie.

[*Describing his appeal to voters*](https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/the-focus-group-with-sarah-longwell/id1586423406?i=1000561307487), Sarah Longwell, a Republican political strategist, said: “It’s not that he’s progressive that they like or don’t like. They like that he’s authentic.”

Although the specifics are different, he shares some traits with Eric Adams, the mayor of New York, who comes off as “simultaneously progressive, moderate and conservative,” as the political scientist Christina Greer [*wrote*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/02/03/opinion/eric-adams-biden.html) in The Times. Adams [*won his election*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/06/29/briefing/new-york-mayors-race-ranked-choice-democrats.html) despite losing Manhattan, New York’s most highly educated, affluent borough.

Fetterman also has some similarities with Senator Sherrod Brown, a populist Democrat who has managed to win in Ohio and who revels in [*“his less than glamorous image*](https://www.cleveland.com/open/2018/09/sherrod_brown_embraces_rumpled.html),” as Andrew J. Tobias of Cleveland.com has written.

For years, most Democrats trying to figure out how to win over swing voters have taken a more technocratic approach than either Adams or Fetterman. Centrist Democrats have often urged the party to move to the center on almost every issue — even though most voters support a progressive economic agenda, such as higher taxes on the rich.

Liberal Democrats have made the opposite mistake, confusing the progressive politics of college campuses and affluent suburbs with [*the actual politics of the country*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/02/17/briefing/san-francisco-losing-liberal.html). Some liberals make the specific mistake of imagining that most Asian, Black and Latino voters are more liberal than they are. As a shorthand, the mistake is sometimes known as the Latinx problem (named for a term [*that most Latinos do not use*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/06/15/learning/for-most-latinos-latinx-does-not-mark-the-spot.html)).

It remains unclear whether Fetterman represents a solution to the Democrats’ ***working-class*** problem. But the problem is real: It is a central reason that Democrats struggle so much outside the country’s large metro areas. And if Democrats hope to solve it, they will probably have a better chance if more of their candidates feel familiar to ***working-class*** voters.

Politics isn’t only about policy positions. People also vote based on instinct and comfort.

For more: In Times Opinion, Michael Sokolove asks whether Fetterman is [*the future of the Democratic Party*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/18/opinion/john-fetterman-pennsylvania-democratic-party.html).

The latest results

* [*In the primaries for Pennsylvania governor*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/17/us/politics/doug-mastriano-pa-governor-gop.html), Doug Mastriano — a far-right state senator endorsed by Trump — won the Republican nomination, while Josh Shapiro, the state attorney general, won the Democratic race. Mastriano’s victory caused The Cook Political Report to say that the general election was no longer a toss-up and Shapiro was favored to win.

1. In North Carolina, [*Madison Cawthorn lost the Republican primary*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/17/us/politics/madison-cawthorn-concedes-nc-primary-gop.html?smid=url-share) for his House seat. Cawthorn was endorsed by Trump, but had feuded with others in his party after a series of scandals.
2. Representative Ted Budd, also backed by Trump, [*won North Carolina’s Republican Senate primary*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/18/us/politics/winners-losers-nc-pa-elections-primaries.html). He will face the Democrat Cheri Beasley.
3. Brad Little, Idaho’s Republican governor, [*beat back a primary challenge*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2022/05/17/us/pa-primary-elections-nc/brad-little-idahos-governor-defeats-the-trump-backed-lieutenant-governor-to-win-his-gop-primary?smid=url-share) by Janice McGeachin, the Trump-endorsed lieutenant governor.

THE LATEST NEWS

War in Ukraine

* Hundreds of Ukrainian soldiers who defended the steel mill in Mariupol [*are in Russian custody*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2022/05/17/world/russia-ukraine-war-news/here-are-the-latest-developments-in-the-war?smid=url-share).

1. Negotiators on both sides say [*peace talks have collapsed*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/17/world/europe/ukraine-russia-peace-talks.html).
2. On a Russian talk show, a retired colonel stunned his colleagues by saying [*that the invasion wasn’t going well*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/17/world/europe/russian-state-tv-ukraine-invasion.html).

The Virus

* Public schools in the U.S. have [*lost at least 1.2 million students*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/17/us/public-schools-falling-enrollment.html) since 2020, with some switching to home-schooling and others dropping out.

1. The F.D.A. authorized Pfizer’s booster for [*children 5 to 11*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/17/us/politics/fda-pfizer-booster-children.html).

* Hospitalizations are rising in New York City, [*nearing the threshold*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/17/nyregion/nyc-covid-high-alert.html) to reinstate an indoor mask mandate.

1. The White House will send Americans eight more at-home tests, through [*covidtests.gov*](https://www.covid.gov/tests).

Politics

* President Biden visited the site in Buffalo where a gunman killed 10 people. “[*White supremacy is a poison*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/17/us/politics/biden-buffalo-ny-visit.html),” he said.

1. A Pentagon investigation found no wrongdoing in a [*2019 airstrike in Syria*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/17/us/politics/us-airstrike-civilian-deaths.html) that killed dozens of people, including women and children.
2. The Justice Department [*requested transcripts from the Jan. 6 committee*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/17/us/politics/jan-6-committee-transcripts.html), potentially as evidence in future cases.
3. In a hearing on U.F.O.s, Pentagon officials [*revealed video*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/17/us/politics/congress-ufo-hearing.html) of an unidentified craft flying past a fighter jet.
4. The Justice Department sued the casino mogul Steve Wynn, [*saying he lobbied Trump on China’s behalf*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/17/business/doj-steve-wynn-trump-china.html).

Other Big Stories

* The suspect in the Buffalo massacre invited a small group of people to [*review his plan on the chat app Discord*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/17/nyregion/buffalo-shooting-discord-chat-plans.html). None of them alerted law enforcement.

1. The shortage of baby formula has [*hospitalized two children*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/17/us/baby-formula-shortage-tennessee-hospitalized.html) who can’t absorb nutrients properly.
2. Gun manufacturing [*has nearly tripled in the U.S.*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/17/us/politics/gun-manufacturing-atf.html) since 2000, fueled by sales of handguns.
3. Johnny Depp’s lawyer [*challenged Amber Heard’s account of abuse*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/17/arts/amber-heard-johnny-depp-abuse.html), asking her why she had not presented medical records to back up her story.

Opinions

We want to call heat waves, wildfires and other deadly weather events “extreme,” but climate change [*has made them increasingly common*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/17/opinion/india-heat-wave-pakistan-climate-change.html), David Wallace-Wells writes.

The baby formula shortage is more proof that new mothers, venerated in theory, [*are unsupported in practice*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/18/opinion/formula-shortage-breastfeeding-mothers.html), Elizabeth Spiers says.

MORNING READS

Life hacks: How to [*become an early bird*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/17/well/live/how-to-wake-up-earlier.html).

Hype man: A trash-talking crypto bro [*caused a $40 billion crash*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/18/technology/terra-luna-cryptocurrency-do-kwon.html).

Stanley tumbler: The sisterhood of [*social media’s favorite water bottle*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/17/style/stanley-tumbler.html).

A Times classic: How to talk to [*someone who’s sick*](https://www.nytimes.com/2011/06/12/fashion/what-to-say-to-someone-whos-sick-this-life.html).

Advice from Wirecutter: [*Freeze your food*](https://www.nytimes.com/wirecutter/blog/freezing-food-tips-tools/) — without freezer burn.

Lives Lived: Urvashi Vaid, a lawyer and activist, was a leading figure in the fight for L.G.B.T.Q. equality for more than four decades. She [*died at 63*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/17/us/urvashi-vaid-pioneering-lgbtq-activist-is-dead-at-63.html).

ARTS AND IDEAS

A boxed set for birds

Randall Poster had never appreciated the songbirds of the Bronx, where he has lived for most of his life, until the quiet the pandemic brought in 2020. After speaking with an environmentalist friend, Poster — a music supervisor for filmmakers — was inspired. What if he harnessed his industry connections into a fund-raiser for bird conservation?

This week, Poster will [*release the first volume of “For the Birds,”*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/17/arts/music/for-the-birds-birdsong.html) a star-studded, 242-track collection of original songs and readings based on birdsong. It benefits the National Audubon Society.

“For the Birds” features electronic trance, fiddle tunes and field recordings. Alice Coltrane and Yoko Ono make appearances, and a song from Elvis Costello shares space with a Jonathan Franzen reading.

“Of all the things we need to work harder to protect, birds, like music, speak to everyone,” said Anthony Albrecht, an Australian cellist who has led similar conservation efforts. “They’re such a visible — and audible — indicator of what we stand to lose.”

PLAY, WATCH, EAT

What to Cook

Use up seasonal produce by [*adding tangy rhubarb to sheet-pan chicken*](https://cooking.nytimes.com/recipes/1023186-sheet-pan-chicken-with-rhubarb-and-red-onion).

What to Watch

Manuel Garcia-Rulfo plays [*the lead in Netflix’s “The Lincoln Lawyer.”*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/17/arts/television/lincoln-lawyer-manuel-garcia-rulfo.html) It’s a tricky job when your first language isn’t English.

What to Read

[*Nell Zink’s “Avalon”*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/17/books/review-avalon-nell-zink.html) is about a girl who has a menacing stepfamily and a great ambition.

Late Night

The hosts celebrated [*Sweden and Finland’s NATO applications*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/18/arts/television/stephen-colbert-celebrates-sweden-and-finland-joining-nato.html).

Now Time to Play

The pangram from yesterday’s Spelling Bee was backfill. Here is today’s puzzle — or you can [*play online*](https://www.nytimes.com/puzzles/spelling-bee).

Here’s [*today’s Wordle*](https://www.nytimes.com/games/wordle/index.html). Here’s [*today’s Mini Crossword*](https://www.nytimes.com/crosswords/game/mini), and a clue: Blue hue (four letters).

If you’re in the mood to play more, find [*all our games here*](https://www.nytimes.com/crosswords).

Thanks for spending part of your morning with The Times. See you tomorrow. — David

P.S. The Times covered the first same-sex marriages in Massachusetts on the front page [*18 years ago today*](https://www.nytimes.com/2004/05/18/us/same-sex-marriage-the-overview-hundreds-of-same-sex-couples-wed-in-massachusetts.html).

Here’s [*today’s front page*](https://static01.nyt.com/images/2022/05/18/nytfrontpage/scan.pdf).

“[*The Daily*](https://www.nytimes.com/thedaily)” is about a Ukrainian soldier. On “[*The Argument*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/18/opinion/us-economy-inflation-the-argument.html),” a debate about inflation.

Claire Moses, Ian Prasad Philbrick, Tom Wright-Piersanti, Ashley Wu and Sanam Yar contributed to The Morning. You can reach the team at [*themorning@nytimes.com*](mailto:themorning@nytimes.com).

[*Sign up here to get this newsletter in your inbox*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/morning-briefing).

PHOTO: John Fetterman in Pennsylvania this month. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Maddie McGarvey for The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** May 18, 2022

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[***Intimate Acts***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67GG-92D1-DXY4-X0ST-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

February 5, 2023 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section BR; Column 0; Book Review Desk; Pg. 17; FICTION

**Length:** 673 words

**Byline:** By Jennifer Wilson

**Body**

BIG SWISS, by Jen Beagin

Like a lot of women I know who've only dated men, Flavia -- the titular neurotic blonde in Jen Beagin's new novel, ''Big Swiss'' -- would make an exception for Detective Olivia Benson. Luckily, but also unluckily (Flavia is married, after all), there is a Mariska Hargitay look-alike at her local dog park, and like the ''Law & Order: S.V.U.'' siren, this stranger is not the type to beat around the bush. No, Greta goes straight to the bush. ''You must get this a lot,'' she says, ''but would you mind taking a quick look at this thing on my labia?''

Flavia is a gynecologist who harbors a dark past. Eight years ago, she was brutally attacked by a man now set to be released from prison. But Flavia's ''not one of these trauma people,'' she assures her sex therapist, coolly, Swiss-ly. ''I'm not attached to my suffering.'' So what's she doing in therapy at all? Well -- she can't have an orgasm, and when asked to describe sex with her husband, she replies: ''like driving home from work and not remembering the ride.'' The woman is as cold as forceps.

These admissions are typed out in the novel as transcripts of her therapy sessions. The transcriber listening in is none other than the dog park seductress herself, Greta, who had already fallen in love with Flavia's voice long before they met IRL: ''a voice you could snag your sweater on,'' she thinks, but also one ''sweet enough to suck on.'' And suck Flavia she will, like a Swiss cough drop. ''Ricola!'' Greta imagines her yodeling upon orgasm. Theirs is a passionate affair, but Greta opts for a more irreverent label: a fest of the explicit sort. What to call things comes up not very often; their mouths are otherwise occupied. Flavia calls them ''bisexual,'' but Greta, who ''couldn't imagine settling on anything,'' leaves it at ''gayish.''

Greta has one of the many poorly paid health care jobs that now dominate the industry, part of a transformation in ***working-class*** labor away from manufacturing that the historian Gabriel Winant documented in ''The Next Shift'' (2021). In all her fiction Beagin likes to use class not just as a theme, but as a literary device, one that the rich can't easily co-opt. Her characters collect secrets to collect their checks, like Mona, the housecleaner protagonist of her first two novels, ''Pretend I'm Dead'' (2018) and ''Vacuum in the Dark'' (2019); as readers we feast on the dirty laundry she finds under mattresses and inside cushions. Now Greta, an eavesdropper by trade, spills the sex secrets of the privileged bohemians of Hudson, N.Y. While waiting for her coffee at a cafe, she hears the voice of ''A.A.G.,'' a patient who likes to perform oral sex on his sister-in-law like a French foodie -- that is to say, with a napkin over his head.

My mother is a medical transcriptionist, and I confess it brought me great pride to see her job -- confusingly unprestigious to a lot of the people I interact with now (''Can't that be done by computers?'' they ask) -- appreciated as one of the most intimate acts of literary interpretation there is. Whereas the therapist barely registers his patients' pauses, Greta obsesses over them, feeling their omission from the record as unbearable, even malpractice.

But here I go getting sentimental and blabbering on about my upbringing -- precisely the kind of inner-child healing crap Flavia and Greta swear to hate. Greta is also ''not one of those trauma people'' -- despite dealing with the aftereffects of a family suicide and having been held up at gunpoint at the pharmacy where she used to work by a man demanding oxy 30s. Greta and Flavia say they aren't wounded, that they don't care about getting to the bottom of things, and yet -- tellingly -- they each vie to bottom whenever they make love. They are betrayed, as we all are, by their desires. Lube is also a salve.

Jennifer Wilson is a contributing essayist at the Book Review.

BIG SWISS | By Jen Beagin | 325 pp. | Scribner | $27Jennifer Wilson is a contributing essayist at the Book Review.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/02/03/books/review/jen-beagin-big-swiss.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/02/03/books/review/jen-beagin-big-swiss.html)

**Graphic**

This article appeared in print on page BR17.

**Load-Date:** February 5, 2023

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[***The Trump Case and the Bathroom Files***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68FR-H1J1-JBG3-612S-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

June 13, 2023 Tuesday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; Editorial Desk; Pg. 23; LETTERS

**Length:** 1158 words

**Body**

To the Editor:

Re ''U.S. Justice System Put on Trial as Trump Denounces the Rule of Law'' (news analysis, front page, June 11):

Contrary to this analysis of the documents case against former President Donald Trump, what is being tested is not the credibility of the justice system. Mr. Trump's completely predictable efforts to undermine confidence in the legal process are pure bluster.

What is actually at stake is the credibility of the political system. At any other time in United States history, a candidate for president charged with serious federal crimes that led to profound questions about his judgment and commitment to protecting the nation's secrets would be decisively rejected by the voters.

Instead, early indications are that Mr. Trump's base remains staunchly loyal to him. American democracy is imperiled if a significant segment of the voting public cannot see through dangerous, self-serving posturing.

In Abraham Lincoln's first great speech, the Lyceum Address in 1838, he predicted that an aspiring tyrant would someday seek power, and he warned, ''It will require the people to be united with each other, attached to the government and laws, and generally intelligent, to successfully frustrate his designs.''

Nearly 190 years later, Lincoln's wisdom is truer than ever.

Steven S. BerizziNorwalk, Conn.

To the Editor:

Re ''Trump Put U.S. at Risk, Indictment Says'' (front page, June 10):

As the mother of a U.S. Marine reservist, I am sickened beyond belief to read that U.S. government top-secret information was stored in a bathroom at Mar-a-Lago.

Our son and tens of thousands of other servicemen and women put their lives on the line in service and sacrifice to this country. To think that a man who was elected president could be so malevolent as to break the law for his own selfish reasons is incomprehensible.

Kathryn KleekampSandwich, Mass.

To the Editor:

It is at once not surprising and mind-boggling to read the indictment of Donald Trump for his mishandling of classified documents (''The Trump Classified Document Indictment, Annotated,'' June 10).

It is not surprising because his alleged misconduct is consistent with his arrogant quip years ago that he could shoot someone on Fifth Avenue and not lose any voters. And it is mind-boggling because so many Republicans -- no doubt celebrating in private -- continue to publicly support Mr. Trump in order to not alienate his base.

There are certain moments that are, or should be, above politics. This is one of them. This is a time for somber reflection and a commitment to, and respect for, the rule of law.

Larry S. SandbergNew York

To the Editor:

Re ''The Greater Trump's Opposition, the Greater His Support as a Martyr,'' by Damon Linker (Opinion guest essay, June 10):

I consider myself a liberal, but I am not feeling ''giddy,'' as Mr. Linker puts it, over the former president's indictment. I am not gloating or smacking my lips but feeling sad, because the Republican Party has let it come to this low point.

I'm sad because Republicans have let themselves be guided by political polls rather than common sense and a regard for ethics and patriotism. They have followed Donald Trump down this dismal road, which has sullied the office of the presidency, and there seems to be no end in sight.

Chase WebbPortland, Ore.

To the Editor:

Re ''Trump Appointee Was Randomly Assigned to Case, Clerk Says'' (news article, June 11):

The supposedly random assignment of Judge Aileen Cannon to the Trump criminal case will be another test of the frequent pronouncements by members of the federal judiciary, including several Supreme Court justices, that politics never crosses the courtroom threshold.

Will Judge Cannon have learned nothing from the surprisingly strident appeals court slap-down of her troubling and seemingly politically based previous rulings, or will she proceed as the fair and impartial judge she swore to be?

It is not only the public's perception of the judiciary but also the future direction of the country that may hang in the balance.

Stephen F. GladstoneShaker Heights, OhioThe writer is a lawyer.

Affirmative Action in College Admissions: Race or Class?

To the Editor:

Re ''I'm in High School. I Hope Affirmative Action Is Rejected and Replaced With Something Stronger,'' by Sophia Lam (Opinion guest essay, nytimes.com, June 5):

The facts are clear: The vast majority of Asian Americans support affirmative action. Amplifying the voices of the Asian American minority that oppose affirmative action without this essential context privileges their position at the expense of the 69 percent of Asian Americans who believe that affirmative action offers communities of color better access to higher education.

Regardless of the Supreme Court's ruling, we will continue to stand in solidarity with communities of color and fight for policies that increase equal access to educational opportunities for all, particularly the underrepresented children of our multiracial society.

Michelle BoykinsNiyati ShahWashingtonMs. Boykins is the senior director of strategic communications at Asian Americans Advancing Justice-AAJC. Ms. Shah is its director of litigation.

To the Editor:

Sophia Lam is entirely right. What is most puzzling about college admissions is that no colleges, including the most prestigious, are focused on diversity in such a socioeconomic-based way. ''Underprivileged'' includes many immigrants, people of color and all Americans from ***working-class*** backgrounds.

If a socioeconomic standard were applied, clearly African Americans and other students of color would benefit, but it would not be solely for their skin color.

Soft or hard quotas make Americans (and the Supreme Court for more than 40 years) uncomfortable. Why doesn't Harvard, Princeton or Yale take this common-sense step?

Howard FishmanHaddon Township, N.J.

The Slow Runner

To the Editor:

Re ''For This Runner, There Is No Shame in Bringing Up the Rear'' (front page, June 3):

I enjoyed reading about Martinus Evans, the founder of Slow AF Run Club. I am now 71 and have been running since 1980 and used to be near the front in races. But now I've slowed to be near the back of the pack.

I too have been taunted by people in the crowds during the New York City Marathon about going too slow. His encouragement to all runners is excellent.

I too tell every slow runner in my club (New Hyde Park/Mineola Runners) to just get out there. I will stay with any runner, even if they have to walk. I've competed in marathons, half-marathons and triathlons and believe that no runner is too slow.

Some people in clubs have become elitist and don't want to be bothered with slower runners. Shame on them. Once they were very slow too. How soon they forget.

This article is very important to show that there is support for all types and shapes of runners. Running is life-changing and lifesaving.

Jeffrey SalgoQueens

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/12/opinion/letters/trump-indictment.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/12/opinion/letters/trump-indictment.html)

**Graphic**

This article appeared in print on page A23.

**Load-Date:** June 13, 2023

**End of Document**



[***Why Do Trump Supporters Support Trump?; nonfiction***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5Y0W-CDT1-JBG3-613C-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Section:** BOOKS; review

**Length:** 2234 words

**Byline:** Anand Giridharadas

**Highlight:** Michael Lind’s “The New Class War” sees class divisions at the heart of America’s current political divide.

**Body**

THE NEW CLASS WAR

Saving Democracy From the Managerial Elite

By Michael Lind

With 114 percent of Americans now having their own podcast, it is not easy to choose the one with the best title. But I’d go with the journalist [*Chris Hayes’s “Why Is This Happening?”*](https://www.nbcnews.com/think/why-is-this-happening-chris-hayes-podcast) Were there a German word for emotion-question (and it turns out there is), that title may be our era’s Gefühlsfrage. As people reel from crisis to crisis, outrage to outrage, this Gefühlsfrage hangs in the air and creates space for writers.

The question has inspired many rich explorations. But it can also be seized on by thinkers who have kept pet theories on ice and now sense a pouring opportunity.

“The New Class War,” by [*Michael Lind*](https://www.nbcnews.com/think/why-is-this-happening-chris-hayes-podcast), the author of numerous books of nonfiction, fiction and poetry, anchors itself firmly in the why-is-this-happening genre. Unfortunately, because its theory seems to have predated, and been awaiting, this moment, it takes a great amount of jamming to fit Lind’s peg into the hole of the present situation. And the explanation that results is marked by an appalling minimization of the most dangerous administration in our lifetimes and a highly distorted portrait of [*Trump supporters*](https://www.nbcnews.com/think/why-is-this-happening-chris-hayes-podcast) as victims.

Lind’s originating interest seems to be this: American democracy worked in a certain way in the three decades after World War II, it stopped working that way, and oligarchy ensued. At the heart of the old way was what Lind calls “war-inspired class peace treaties.” In various sectors of the economy and polity, the ***working class*** benefited from power-sharing arrangements with business and government, often the result of wartime mobilization. Strong unions helped keep wages high, local political power brokers and party bosses made sure that ***working-class*** needs were represented in the marble corridors, and mass-membership organizations put a check on runaway greed by elites.

Then, starting in the 1970s, Lind says, what he calls the neoliberal “managerial elite” challenged this power-sharing and began turning the country into a casino where it always won. A combination of actors, from the left and the right, pushed for ever more public decisions to be made by highly educated technocratic elites living at a remove from the ***working class***. Big corporations pushed for more decisions to be made through global trade agreements than national legislation. Ivy League liberals pushed for more critical decisions to be made by Harvard-trained jurists than prejudiced lawmakers.

“When the dust from the collapse cleared,” Lind writes, “the major institutions in which ***working-class*** people had found a voice on the basis of numbers — mass-membership parties, legislatures, trade unions and grass-roots religious and civic institutions — had been weakened or destroyed, leaving most of the nonelite population in Western countries with no voice in public affairs at all, except for shrieks of rage.”

There is truth in this story thus far. But Lind is determined to press the tale of elite capture into an explanation of Trumpism. And this becomes very tricky, in part because Trump is less a refuge from oligarchy than the most oligarchic oligarch around, and in part because Lind’s thesis that “economic anxiety” drove Trump’s supporters is not convincing.

But Lind goes for it anyway.

To explain Trump’s support as a revolt against oligarchy, Lind has to accomplish a few things. Above all, he has to redraw the boundaries of the neoliberal overclass to include not just oligarchs but also liberal-minded educated people in general. “The university-credentialed overclass contains moderately paid schoolteachers and store managers as well as wealthy corporate lawyers and billionaire entrepreneurs,” he writes. If this is how you cut it, a black woman teaching public school in Atlanta is a member of the overclass, and a rural white man with his own seven-employee plumbing firm, making twice as much, belongs to the underclass. So his voting to elect a president who might place her in a permanent state of terror becomes a revolt against power.

Lind’s heart genuinely hurts for those shafted by oligarchy. But he is limited by conceptual blinders. And he seems to have an outdated (if widely shared) idea of who is a ***working-class*** person. When he thinks about what the oligarchy has done to America, he tends to think of white men as the principal victims. And when he begins to detail how these supporters of populism have been oppressed by the schoolteachers-to-billionaires overclass, things get really weird.

One way the elite functions, Lind says, is through the labeling of white-***working-class*** prejudices as phobias — as in transphobia, homophobia, Islamophobia. To call these things “phobias” is, he writes, “to medicalize politics and treat differing viewpoints as evidence of mental and emotional disorders.” Then, outlandishly, he takes it a step further. “If those in today’s West who oppose the dominant consensus of technocratic neoliberalism are in fact emotionally and mentally disturbed, to the point that their maladjustment makes it unsafe to allow them to vote, then to be consistent, neoliberals should support the involuntary confinement, hospitalization and medication of Trump voters and Brexit voters and other populist voters for their own good, as well as the good of society.”

Another way in which the elite oppresses the ***working class*** is, Lind tells us, policing its life after work. “The boss class pursues the ***working class*** after the workday has ended, trying to snatch the unhealthy steak or soda from the worker’s plate, vilifying the theology of the worker’s church as a firing offense and possibly an illegal hate crime to be reported to the police and denouncing the racy, prole-oriented tabloid internet as ‘fake news’ to be censored by the guardians of neoliberal orthodoxy and propriety.” What is going on here? Who is snatching the soda? Neoliberals? I thought business is trying to sell that soda. Isn’t it the opposite of neoliberalism to try to regulate it away? Who is suggesting that the worker’s church’s theology is possibly a hate crime, and what does that have to do with the neoliberal takeover? And isn’t “fake news” a term popularized by populist leaders and supporters? According to Lind, “fake news” is being pushed upon them by neoliberals?

For Lind, “the populist wave in politics on both sides of the Atlantic is a defensive reaction against the technocratic neoliberal revolution from above.” To put it this way is to ignore all the evidence that the wave was driven more by the desire to stay on top, culturally and racially, than to survive at the bottom. As [*Emma Green put it in The Atlantic*](https://www.nbcnews.com/think/why-is-this-happening-chris-hayes-podcast), summing up the research: “Evidence suggests financially troubled voters in the white ***working class*** were more likely to prefer Clinton over Trump. Besides partisan affiliation, it was cultural anxiety — feeling like a stranger in America, supporting the deportation of immigrants and hesitating about educational investment — that best predicted support for Trump.”

Oligarchy is indeed a big problem. But it stands alongside a second major aspect of American life that Lind almost completely ignores: a racial and social changing of the guard. As the prospect of a majority-minority America looms, the result has been increased anxiety and resentment among those groups that feel threatened. So when Lind says, “Almost all of the political turmoil in Western Europe and North America can be explained by the new class war,” you don’t feel in good hands.

So eager is Lind to be sympathetic to populists that he begins to take their talking points at face value. “Unfortunately, under the logic of asymmetrical multiculturalism,” he writes, “appreciation of minority and immigrant traditions is often coupled with elite contempt for the ancestral traditions of white native and white immigrant subcultures, which are alleged by overclass intellectuals to be hopelessly tainted by white supremacy or colonialism.” This is the kind of “equality feels like oppression” logic that leads people to found White Students Associations and Men’s Rights Clubs. In a country in which every president but one has been a white man, most C.E.O.s are white men and the syllabuses in schools remain dominated by white men’s words, it is amazing to think America is white-unfriendly.

Look, writing a book about Trump-era populism without a lens of racial awareness must be hard. Here’s how Lind describes political correctness, for instance: “the artificial dialect devised by leftist activists and spread by university and corporate bureaucrats that serves as a class marker distinguishing the college-educated from the vulgar majority below them.” In this framing, all the new awarenesses and sensitivities and humilities — for which I am profoundly thankful, since these days I’m much less often asked where I’m really from or told my English is impressive (thanks, they teach us well in Ohio!) — are just a ploy by leftists to hold white ***working-class*** people down. This understanding portrays the victims as the white ***working class***, and the oppressors as those students who no longer wish to be called “faggots” and secretaries tired of being “sweetie.” I, for one, am grateful for all the thinking and doing that have changed how Americans navigate one another’s identities, and I do not have the luxury of dismissing the improvement in the dignity I am accorded daily as an “artificial dialect.”

Now, if you are going to present Trump as the receptacle of the cries of the unheard, you will need to funhouse-mirror him beyond recognition. Lind is on it. He takes the quintessential racist moment of Trump’s presidency — his famous comments on Charlottesville — and defends them: “Phrases from his remarks were taken out of context, recombined and misconstrued so they could fit into the Trump-is-Hitler narrative.” He also dismisses concerns about Russia’s role in the 2016 election as “mythological thinking.” “Liberal democracy in the West today is not endangered by Russian machinations or resurgent fascism,” Lind writes, describing a world I would love to live in. In fact, get this: Lind believes the “paranoid demonological thinking” represented by worries about Russia and fascism “has the potential to be a greater danger to liberal democracy in the West than any particular populist movements.”

So dismissive is Lind of the idea that Trumpism has fascist echoes that he refers to such claims as a Brown Scare, a reference to Hitler’s Brownshirts. I’m no stranger to a Brown Scare, but, in my definition, it’s just me being brown and scared of my country losing its liberties, stature and mind.

Somewhere in here is the kernel of a good book: Lind’s original focus was oligarchy, and there is a way to end it, he says. “To supplement conventional electoral politics, reformers will need to rebuild old institutions or build new ones that can integrate ***working-class*** citizens of all origins into decision-making in government, the economy and the culture, so that everyone can be an insider.”

Still, what is missing from the book, and might have saved it, is actual human beings. I sometimes ask my nearly 5-year-old how he knows something, and he often says, like the man he’s learning to be, “I just know it in my brain.” This is a book written from the brain more than from the collision with the complexities of experience. It is a book that would have benefited from getting out there, interviewing people, testing theories against reality, heading down to the border, unearthing documents showing how companies think about the issues in question.

“The New Class War” lacks the texture and earth and seduction of real portraiture. Lind derides the “overclass” but doesn’t break any ground in depicting it. When he somewhat outdatedly says the tech industry makes “software” or elite city dwellers employ services like “Fingernail Former,” we get the sense of a man who has read more about the world than actually encountered it. When he says, “The rootedness of most ***working-class*** Americans and Europeans in their hometowns and regions is often lamented by the intellectuals of the managerial overclass: Why don’t the lazy losers in heartland communities show some initiative and move to the Bay Area to invent an app, or relocate to London to work in finance?” I realized that Lind was reporting from the inside of his own mind.

“The New Class War” is a reminder that, even in the Trump era — especially in the Trump era — it is curiosity rather than certainty that must propel us. What can be so exciting about books is watching authors end up far from where they began, carried forth by not knowing, wanting to know, then slowly knowing more, realizing what is still not known, plowing on, thinking, rethinking, going on a meandering intellectual journey that justifies you later going on a fractal of that journey with them.

Anand Giridharadas, an editor at large of Time, is the author, most recently, of “Winners Take All: The Elite Charade of Changing the World.” THE NEW CLASS WAR Saving Democracy From the Managerial Elite By Michael Lind 203 pp. Portfolio/Penguin. $25.

PHOTO: Workers in Monaca, Pa., wait to see Donald Trump, Aug. 13, 2019. (PHOTOGRAPH BY NICHOLAS KAMM/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE — GETTY IMAGES) (BR15)

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[***The View From Four Wards as Chicago Sets Out to Pick a Mayor***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67XD-GRY1-DXY4-X101-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; National Desk; Pg. 18

**Length:** 1844 words

**Byline:** By Julie Bosman and Jamie Kelter Davis

**Body**

CHICAGO -- Chicago is known as a city of neighborhoods, a sprawling metropolis divided into distinctive pockets defined by their own architecture, restaurants, languages, ballparks and beaches.

But this is a heated election season, so Chicagoans are temporarily dissecting the city in a more political parlance: the mathematics of wards.

There are 50 wards in all, each represented by a member in the City Council, and each with its own identity. The political winds can shift with every mayoral contest: In a runoff election in 2019, Mayor Lori Lightfoot won all 50, but in her unsuccessful February bid for re-election amid a crowded field of challengers, she took only 16. Paul Vallas and Brandon Johnson, the top two finishers in February, are spending the final days before their runoff on Tuesday crisscrossing the city campaigning for votes.

Mr. Vallas is white and Mr. Johnson is Black, and race has often loomed over elections in this city of roughly equal numbers of white, Black and Hispanic residents. But around the city, residents say their votes will be driven by broad, universal issues -- crime, education, housing and transportation. Residents are also seeing the issues from their own blocks and through the history of their neighborhoods, which in Chicago can feel like cities of their own.

Here are four wards in Chicago that offer a revealing look into how the city will pick its next mayor.

''We are a microcosm of Black America,'' Roderick Sawyer of the 6th Ward, the enclave on the South Side he has represented on the City Council for 12 years, said as he mingled at a campaign event at Josephine's, a popular soul food restaurant on 79th Street.

Few people know the ward -- and its politics -- more intimately than Mr. Sawyer, whose father, Eugene Sawyer, was a City Council member in the 6th Ward and Chicago's second Black mayor, assuming office after the sudden death of Harold Washington in 1987.

The 6th Ward is in the geographic heart of the South Side; its population is 95 percent Black and reliably Democratic.

In one part of the ward, there is Chatham, a middle-class neighborhood with neat rows of brick bungalows, instantly recognizable as classic Chicago architecture. Signs for block clubs are a staple of the neighborhood, welcoming passers-by to the block while warning them not to loiter or play loud music.

Further north, there is Englewood, a neighborhood with persistently high gun crimes in the city, where undeveloped, empty lots are common. The flight of Black families from Chicago's South Side to the suburbs and beyond in recent decades has been especially visible in Englewood, despite a robust network of community activists fighting for more investment.

What would bring the ward more stability and economic vitality, Mr. Sawyer said, are amenities: bars, restaurants and shops that would make life more appealing to residents.

''We need more of these,'' he said, motioning around him at Josephine's, the kind of place that attracts hordes for meals after Sunday church, and for birthday lunches and anniversaries. ''More coffee shops and Gymborees, more things for people to do.''

Ms. Lightfoot won big here in February, carrying 37 percent of the vote. She was followed by Willie Wilson, a businessman with a sizable base of ***working-class*** residents, with 22 percent. Mr. Johnson, the third-place finisher, is expected to have a strong performance here in the runoff. Mr. Vallas came in behind him.

But Mr. Sawyer, who endorsed Mr. Vallas, said that the 6th Ward offers a litmus test: According to his own electoral math, if Mr. Vallas captures even 20 percent of the vote, that could be all he needs to help boost him to a win citywide.

The residents of the 19th Ward on the Far Southwest Side of Chicago know how the rest of the city sees them: a white, conservative bubble of police officers and firefighters, Irish pubs and Catholic churches that is a relic of the old Chicago political machine.

''There is that history,'' said Clare Duggan, a Democratic political organizer who is a resident and native of the Beverly neighborhood. ''But we have a dichotomy in the 19th Ward.''

The South Side Irish Parade still rolls down Western Avenue in Beverly each year, a colorful display of Irishness in a city that takes pride in that slice of its identity. The 19th Ward, which hugs the border of the southwest suburbs, does have an unusually large population of city employees, but not just people who work for the police and fire departments -- teachers, sanitation workers and employees of libraries and the parks department.

And the ward still gives an occasional sense of being a throwback to the 20th century, with a car-centric, suburban feel and vintage neighborhood institutions like the Rainbow Cone ice cream shop that has been a favorite since 1926.

But it remains among more racially diverse areas in an often segregated Chicago, with a population that is 62 percent white, 29 percent Black, 7 percent Latino and 1 percent Asian. Ms. Duggan described the ward as roughly split between Mount Greenwood -- a conservative-leaning neighborhood that voted for Donald J. Trump in 2016 -- and the neighborhoods of Beverly and Morgan Park, which are more liberal. Beverly, with its spacious houses, tree-lined streets and Metra train to downtown, has long attracted the upper middle class, especially lawyers, bankers and white-collar workers who commute to the Loop.

During every election season, one thing defines the 19th Ward: sky-high voter turnout.

In the February election, the ward boasted the highest turnout in Chicago, with 58 percent of registered voters casting a ballot. Citywide, turnout was close to 36 percent.

''We had the highest voter turnout in the first round, and we will exceed that number in the runoff,'' said Ms. Duggan, who is a co-founder of the progressive political organization Illinois 123GO.

Political organizing runs deep here: in living rooms, where candidates have come for decades to introduce themselves to voters, and in churches, which decades ago played a role in successfully integrating the Beverly neighborhood.

The 19th Ward has an especially vocal place as the mayoral runoff approaches. In the first round of balloting in February, most of the ward's votes went to Mr. Vallas, a native of the South Side whose pro-law enforcement message was warmly received in the neighborhoods. Though the 19th Ward has relatively low crime, it has seen a spike in recent years, especially an increase in break-ins, robberies and carjackings that have sent many residents demanding more police patrols.

Residents of the 22nd Ward, an enclave on the West Side that is home to thousands of families of Mexican heritage, have seen turmoil in the last four years. An attempt to implode an abandoned power plant in the Little Village neighborhood in 2020 covered houses and businesses with a cloud of choking dust, leading furious residents to point out that such pollution would never have happened in a wealthier, whiter neighborhood on the North Side.

The neighborhood's street vendors who sell tamales have been victimized by armed robbers in recent months, prompting a plea to Mayor Lightfoot for more police presence.

Residents of this largely Latino ward said they are left with a sense of being overlooked by city leaders.

''I feel like we're put last in terms of what needs to be done,'' said Xochitl Nieto, 21, who works at a day care.

But as the mayoral race enters its final days, both candidates are making a push for Latino voters, many of whom supported Representative Jesús G. García, known as Chuy, who ran for mayor in the February election. Mr. García, who was born in Mexico and grew up in Little Village, won 57 percent of the vote.

Jaime Dominguez, a professor at Northwestern University who studies Latino politics, said he anticipates that the Latino vote -- which includes a wide array of geographic origins and political perspectives -- would split largely on generational lines on Tuesday. Younger Latino voters in Chicago lean toward progressive leaders, he said, including Mr. Johnson and the Democratic Socialists who have recently grown in number on the City Council; the older voters, he said, may lean toward Mr. Vallas.

In the first week of early voting at a Little Village library -- identified by a sign reading Biblioteca Pública de Chicago -- about 400 people had cast ballots, a rate that ticked slightly above the Feb. 28 election.

Ms. Nieto said the strong sense of Mexican culture is one of the things that drew her to the 22nd Ward. She had been living in Belmont Cragin, further north in the city, but found herself visiting Little Village on the weekends because of its restaurants and street life, its colorful painted murals that adorn the sides of buildings.

Finally, she decided to abandon her weekend visits and move there. ''I feel closer to home,'' she said.

Compress Chicago down to one neighborhood and you might find the 49th Ward.

This is Rogers Park, a tiny patch in the city's northeastern corner, bordering Lake Michigan and the North Shore suburbs. Its demographics are relatively close to those of the entire city: about 44 percent white, 25 percent Black, 21 percent Latino and 8 percent Asian.

But in this mayoral election, how the 49th Ward votes is a glimpse into how far left Chicago's voters could go. Mr. Johnson won 40 percent of the vote here in February, one of his strongest showings in the city.

''We've got a tradition of very progressive and active politics,'' said Maria Hadden, the City Council member who was just re-elected to her second term.

Those politics show up in the ward's devotion to welcoming outsiders, especially immigrants, refugees and members of other marginalized groups.

''This is where the non-dominant cultures were allowed to be,'' she said.

The lake, a feature that connects a lot of people in the 49th Ward, also shapes some of the ward's politics, fostering a concern for environmental issues.

The lakefront neighborhood is densely populated, with some grand, brick single-family homes but mostly apartments and condo buildings, especially in high-rises along Lake Michigan. Roughly 75 percent of residents rent their homes, Ms. Hadden said.

Many people in the neighborhood are ***working class***, especially in the service and hospitality industries, earning a wage below the median income for Chicago. As the mayoral election nears, some residents said they were concerned about their economic stability, the cost of living and expenses like rent and child care.

It was the 49th Ward's reputation as a place that is friendly to outsiders that drew Demetrius McGhee, 60, who moved there two years ago, he said as he waited for a bus.

Mr. McGhee does not work because of a disability, and he received a housing subsidy that allowed him to have an affordable rent in a building just one block from Lake Michigan.

''It has a very strong sense of community,'' he said. ''There's always somebody around, and people get to know each other.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/04/02/us/chicago-mayor-election-neighborhoods.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/04/02/us/chicago-mayor-election-neighborhoods.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: 49TH WARD Along Sheridan Road in Rogers Park, in the northeast, where the demographics largely mirror the city's as a whole.

6TH WARD The mayoral candidate Brandon Johnson, center, chatted with Arel Brown, who owns Soul Veg in Chatham.

22ND WARD The street vendors of Little Village, where a largely Latino population says it often feels overlooked by city officials. (A18)

WINDY CITY From top: The skyline from Loyola Beach in the Rogers Park area of the 49th Ward

Sam Wallace, an undecided voter, wore a Brandon Johnson button in Chatham, in the 6th Ward

the brick brownstones of Little Village in the 22nd Ward. (A18-A19)

19TH WARD Clare, Mary and Annie Duggan in Beverly Hills, where the sisters run a small business and a political nonprofit. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY JAMIE KELTER DAVIS FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A19) This article appeared in print on page A18, A19.

**Load-Date:** April 2, 2023

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[***The Trump Case and the Bathroom Files; letters***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68FK-B9F1-DXY4-X1FS-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

June 12, 2023 Monday 00:21 EST

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**Section:** OPINION; letters

**Length:** 1145 words

**Highlight:** Reader weigh in on the indictment of the former president. Also: A debate over affirmative action; the slow runner.

**Body**

To the Editor:

Re “[*U.S. Justice System Put on Trial as Trump Denounces the Rule of Law*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/10/us/politics/trump-documents-indictment-democracy.html)” (news analysis, front page, June 11):

Contrary to this analysis of the documents case against former President Donald Trump, what is being tested is not the credibility of the justice system. Mr. Trump’s completely predictable efforts to undermine confidence in the legal process are pure bluster.

What is actually at stake is the credibility of the political system. At any other time in United States history, a candidate for president charged with serious federal crimes that led to profound questions about his judgment and commitment to protecting the nation’s secrets would be decisively rejected by the voters.

Instead, early indications are that Mr. Trump’s base remains staunchly loyal to him. American democracy is imperiled if a significant segment of the voting public cannot see through dangerous, self-serving posturing.

In Abraham Lincoln’s first great speech, [*the Lyceum Address*](https://housedivided.dickinson.edu/sites/lincoln/lyceum-address-january-27-1838/) in 1838, he predicted that an aspiring tyrant would someday seek power, and he warned, “It will require the people to be united with each other, attached to the government and laws, and generally intelligent, to successfully frustrate his designs.”

Nearly 190 years later, Lincoln’s wisdom is truer than ever.

Steven S. Berizzi

Norwalk, Conn.

To the Editor:

Re “[*Trump Put U.S. at Risk, Indictment Says*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/09/us/politics/trump-indictment-charges-classified-documents.html)” (front page, June 10):

As the mother of a U.S. Marine reservist, I am sickened beyond belief to read that U.S. government top-secret information was stored in a bathroom at Mar-a-Lago.

Our son and tens of thousands of other servicemen and women put their lives on the line in service and sacrifice to this country. To think that a man who was elected president could be so malevolent as to break the law for his own selfish reasons is incomprehensible.

Kathryn Kleekamp

Sandwich, Mass.

To the Editor:

It is at once not surprising and mind-boggling to read the indictment of Donald Trump for his mishandling of classified documents (“[*The Trump Classified Document Indictment, Annotated*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/06/09/us/trump-indictment-document-annotated.html),” June 10).

It is not surprising because his alleged misconduct is consistent with his arrogant quip years ago that [*he could shoot someone on Fifth Avenue*](https://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2016/01/23/464129029/donald-trump-i-could-shoot-somebody-and-i-wouldnt-lose-any-voters#:~:text=%22I%20could%20stand%20in%20the,It's%2C%20like%2C%20incredible.%22) and not lose any voters. And it is mind-boggling because so many Republicans — no doubt celebrating in private — continue to publicly support Mr. Trump in order to not alienate his base.

There are certain moments that are, or should be, above politics. This is one of them. This is a time for somber reflection and a commitment to, and respect for, the rule of law.

Larry S. Sandberg

New York

To the Editor:

Re “[*The Greater Trump’s Opposition, the Greater His Support as a Martyr*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/08/opinion/trump-indicted.html?searchResultPosition=15),” by Damon Linker (Opinion guest essay, June 10):

I consider myself a liberal, but I am not feeling “giddy,” as Mr. Linker puts it, over the former president’s indictment. I am not gloating or smacking my lips but feeling sad, because the Republican Party has let it come to this low point.

I’m sad because Republicans have let themselves be guided by political polls rather than common sense and a regard for ethics and patriotism. They have followed Donald Trump down this dismal road, which has sullied the office of the presidency, and there seems to be no end in sight.

Chase Webb

Portland, Ore.

To the Editor:

Re “[*Trump Appointee Was Randomly Assigned to Case, Clerk Says*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/10/us/politics/judge-aileen-cannon-trump-documents.html)” (news article, June 11):

The supposedly random assignment of Judge Aileen Cannon to the Trump criminal case will be another test of the frequent pronouncements by members of the federal judiciary, including several Supreme Court justices, that politics never crosses the courtroom threshold.

Will Judge Cannon have learned nothing from the surprisingly strident [*appeals court slap-down*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/12/01/us/politics/trump-special-master.html) of her troubling and seemingly politically based previous rulings, or will she proceed as the fair and impartial judge she swore to be?

It is not only the public’s perception of the judiciary but also the future direction of the country that may hang in the balance.

Stephen F. Gladstone

Shaker Heights, Ohio

The writer is a lawyer.

Affirmative Action in College Admissions: Race or Class?

To the Editor:

Re “[*I’m in High School. I Hope Affirmative Action Is Rejected and Replaced With Something Stronger*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/05/opinion/college-affirmative-action-admissions.html?searchResultPosition=1),” by Sophia Lam (Opinion guest essay, nytimes.com, June 5):

The facts are clear: The [*vast majority*](http://aapidata.com/blog/affirmative-action-aavs-2022/) of Asian Americans support affirmative action. Amplifying the voices of the Asian American minority that oppose affirmative action without this essential context privileges their position at the expense of the 69 percent of Asian Americans who believe that affirmative action offers communities of color better access to higher education.

Regardless of the Supreme Court’s ruling, we will continue to stand in solidarity with communities of color and fight for policies that increase equal access to educational opportunities for all, particularly the underrepresented children of our multiracial society.

Michelle Boykins

Niyati Shah

Washington

Ms. Boykins is the senior director of strategic communications at Asian Americans Advancing Justice-AAJC. Ms. Shah is its director of litigation.

To the Editor:

Sophia Lam is entirely right. What is most puzzling about college admissions is that no colleges, including the most prestigious, are focused on diversity in such a socioeconomic-based way. “Underprivileged” includes many immigrants, people of color and all Americans from ***working-class*** backgrounds.

If a socioeconomic standard were applied, clearly African Americans and other students of color would benefit, but it would not be solely for their skin color.

Soft or hard quotas make Americans (and the Supreme Court for more than 40 years) uncomfortable. Why doesn’t Harvard, Princeton or Yale take this common-sense step?

Howard Fishman

Haddon Township, N.J.

The Slow Runner

To the Editor:

Re “[*For This Runner, There Is No Shame in Bringing Up the Rear*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/02/well/move/martinus-evans-slow-af-run-club.html?searchResultPosition=1)” (front page, June 3):

I enjoyed reading about Martinus Evans, the founder of Slow AF Run Club. I am now 71 and have been running since 1980 and used to be near the front in races. But now I’ve slowed to be near the back of the pack.

I too have been taunted by people in the crowds during the New York City Marathon about going too slow. His encouragement to all runners is excellent.

I too tell every slow runner in my club (New Hyde Park/Mineola Runners) to just get out there. I will stay with any runner, even if they have to walk. I’ve competed in marathons, half-marathons and triathlons and believe that no runner is too slow.

Some people in clubs have become elitist and don’t want to be bothered with slower runners. Shame on them. Once they were very slow too. How soon they forget.

This article is very important to show that there is support for all types and shapes of runners. Running is life-changing and lifesaving.

Jeffrey Salgo

Queens

This article appeared in print on page A23.

**Load-Date:** June 13, 2023

**End of Document**



[***Cannes 2023: The Films We’re Excited About Seeing***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:687J-VF31-JBG3-6505-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Section:** MOVIES

**Length:** 1091 words

**Byline:** Kyle Buchanan

**Highlight:** Wes Anderson, Martin Scorsese and Todd Haynes have works premiering this year at the festival on the French Riviera.

**Body**

Wes Anderson, Martin Scorsese and Todd Haynes have works premiering this year at the festival on the French Riviera.

Follow our live updates from the opening night of the [*Cannes Film Festival.*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2023/05/16/movies/cannes-film-festival)

Wes Anderson’s films have premiered at a wide variety of festivals, but after “[*Moonrise Kingdom*](https://www.nytimes.com/2012/05/25/movies/wes-andersons-moonrise-kingdom-with-bruce-willis.html)” (2012), “[*The French Dispatch*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/10/20/movies/the-french-dispatch-review.html)” (2021) and his upcoming ensemble comedy “Asteroid City,” Cannes is the fest he keeps coming back to. Last week, I asked Anderson what he finds so compelling about a debut on the Croisette.

“The reason to go to Cannes, I think, is because they said yes,” he deadpanned. “After that, there isn’t really much to contemplate.”

Well, there’s a little more to it than that, Anderson admitted: For cinema lovers, there is no holier pilgrimage to make than to the Cannes Film Festival, where movies are treated with the utmost reverence and routinely given [*marathon standing ovations*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/07/13/movies/cannes-french-dispatch-standing-ovation.html).

It is a place where great auteurs have been canonized, like Martin Scorsese, who won the Palme d’Or in 1976 for “[*Taxi Driver*](https://www.nytimes.com/1976/02/15/archives/film-view-scorseses-disturbing-taxi-driver.html)” and will return this year with his new feature “Killers of the Flower Moon,” and Quentin Tarantino, a Palme winner (for “Pulp Fiction” in 1994) and Cannes habitué who’ll be back at the fest this year for a wide-ranging conversation that may touch on his upcoming final film.

“I look at Cannes in relation to the other movies I know showed there, and I feel lucky enough to be included in the program that debuted those films,” Anderson said. “For me, it’s a chance to be involved in this movie history, which I love.”

A Cannes launch can be awfully expensive for a studio to bankroll, since the airfare, star entourages and five-star hotels alone all add up. Still, the return on investment can be major. Last year, “Top Gun: Maverick” launched with [*a fawning Tom Cruise summit*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/18/movies/tom-cruise-cannes.html) and sent fighter jets flying over the south of France, while Baz Luhrmann’s “Elvis” threw a rock concert on the beach where drones traced Elvis Presley’s silhouette in the sky. Both films leveraged their splashy debuts to become some of the best-performing global hits of the year, and were nominated for the best-picture Oscar, to boot.

This year, several star-driven films will attempt to capitalize on a Cannes bow, including “Indiana Jones and the Dial of Destiny,” which is being billed as Harrison Ford’s final appearance in his most iconic role. Can it overcome the tepid response to the last sequel, “Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull,” and the substitution of James Mangold (“[*Ford v Ferrari*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/11/14/movies/ford-v-ferrari-review.html)”) for Steven Spielberg as director of the series? At least the addition of Phoebe Waller-Bridge, in her most high-profile role since “[*Fleabag*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/05/16/arts/television/fleabag-amazon-review.html),” will add a welcome jolt to the franchise.

The director Todd Haynes, who premiered “[*Carol*](https://www.nytimes.com/2015/11/20/movies/review-carol-explores-the-sweet-science-of-magnetism.html)” at Cannes, returns to the festival with another female-driven two-hander: “May December,” which stars Julianne Moore as a teacher whose scandalous relationship with a former student is scrutinized by a movie star (Natalie Portman) preparing to play the teacher in a film. Other star-heavy films include “The New Boy,” featuring Cate Blanchett as a nun in her first role since “Tár,” and “Firebrand,” with Jude Law as Henry VIII and Alicia Vikander as his last wife, Katherine Parr.

And then there are “Asteroid City” and “Killers of the Flower Moon,” the fest’s two most anticipated premieres. The former takes place at a 1950s retreat for space-obsessed youngsters and stars Anderson staples like Jason Schwartzman, Scarlett Johansson and Tilda Swinton, as well as new recruit Tom Hanks, about whom Anderson said, “I couldn’t have had a better time working with anybody.” Scorsese’s Apple-backed film charts the mysterious murders of the Osage tribe in the 1920s and will bring stars like Leonardo DiCaprio and Robert De Niro to the red carpet.

(Still, weep for what might have been: Greta Gerwig’s candy-colored July release “Barbie” will skip an early premiere at Cannes, depriving us of a red-carpet fantasy to trump all others.)

In recent years, the winner of the prestigious Palme d’Or award has often gone to a film with breakout-hit potential, like “[*Parasite*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/10/10/movies/parasite-review.html)” and “[*Triangle of Sadness*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/06/movies/triangle-of-sadness-review.html).” The director of the latter film, Ruben Ostlund, will preside over this year’s competition jury, a group that includes Brie Larson and Paul Dano, and they’ll be picking their favorite from an auteur-heavy lineup that includes several former Palme winners.

Among them are Wim Wenders, who took the Palme for “Paris, Texas” and returns with “Perfect Days,” about a Tokyo toilet cleaner, and Hirokazu Kore-eda, whose new film “Monster” is the first film he has shot in Japan since his Palme winner “[*Shoplifters*](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/11/22/movies/shoplifters-review.html).” No director has ever taken the Palme three times, though Ken Loach could this year, if his new ***working-class*** drama “The Old Oak” proves as acclaimed as “The Wind That Shakes the Barley” and “[*I, Daniel Blake*](https://www.nytimes.com/2016/12/22/movies/i-daniel-blake-review-ken-loach.html).”

This year’s Cannes has its fair share of long films — “Occupied City,” Steve McQueen’s documentary about Nazi-occupied Amsterdam, runs four hours and six minutes — but not every buzzy premiere will be feature-length. The fest will also premiere shorts directed by Pedro Almodóvar (“A Strange Way of Life”) and the late Jean-Luc Godard (“Phony Wars”), while launching “The Idol,” an already-controversial HBO series from the “Euphoria” mastermind Sam Levinson starring Abel “the Weeknd” Tesfaye.

And though the festival will offer G-rated pleasures in the form of Pixar’s new film “Elemental,” it wouldn’t be Cannes without a few envelope-pushers. Keep an eye on Catherine Breillat, whose sexually explicit filmography (“Fat Girl,” “Romance”) gets a new entry with “Last Summer,” about a lawyer who falls for her teenage stepson.

Then there’s the film I’m most curious about: “The Zone of Interest,” an Auschwitz-set drama from the director Jonathan Glazer. Rumor has it that Cannes passed on Glazer’s audacious “Under the Skin” back in 2013 and was eager to make up for that mistake. Since Glazer’s films (“Birth” and “Sexy Beast”) are infrequent but stunning, a new project from the director is reason enough to say yes to Cannes — and after that, there isn’t really much to contemplate.

PHOTOS: Top from left, Jake Ryan, Jason Schwartzman and Tom Hanks in Wes Anderson’s “Asteroid City.” Clockwise from above left: Ember, voiced by Leah Lewis, in Pixar’s “Elemental”; Lily Gladstone and Leonardo DiCaprio in “Killers of the Flower Moon”; and a scene from Jonathan Glazer’s “The Zone of Interest.” (PHOTOGRAPHS BY FOCUS FEATURES; DISNEY/PIXAR; APPLE TV+; A24) This article appeared in print on page C2.

**Load-Date:** May 16, 2023

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[***Nevada Reflects Democrats' Hurdles Across U.S.***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:66J0-W651-JBG3-61DK-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; National Desk; Pg. 1

**Length:** 1813 words

**Byline:** By Jennifer Medina and Jonathan Weisman

**Body**

Inflation and a rocky economy are bolstering Republicans in their races against incumbent Democrats, motivating ''an electorate that simply wants change,'' as one G.O.P. consultant says.

LAS VEGAS -- The Culinary Workers Union members who are knocking on doors to get out the vote are on the cursed-at front lines of the Democratic Party's midterm battle.

Most voters do not open their doors. And when some do answer, the canvassers might wish they hadn't.

''You think I am going to vote for those Democrats after all they've done to ruin the economy?'' a voter shouted one evening last week from her entryway in a ***working-class*** neighborhood of East Las Vegas.

Miguel Gonzalez, a 55-year-old chef who described himself as a conservative Christian who has voted for Republicans for most of his life, was more polite but no more convinced. ''I don't agree with anything Democrats are doing at all,'' he said after taking a fistful of fliers from the union canvassers.

Those who know Nevada best have always viewed its blue-state status as something befitting a desert: a kind of mirage. Democrats are actually a minority among registered voters, and most of the party's victories in the last decade were narrowly decided. But the state has long been a symbolic linchpin for the party -- vital to its national coalition and its hold on the blue West.

Now, Democrats in Nevada are facing potential losses up and down the ballot in November and bracing for a seismic shift that could help Republicans win control of both houses of Congress. Senator Catherine Cortez Masto remains one of the most vulnerable Democratic incumbents in the country. Gov. Steve Sisolak is fighting his most formidable challenger yet. And the state's three House Democrats could all lose their seats.

The Democratic juggernaut built by former Senator Harry M. Reid is on its heels, staring down the most significant spate of losses in more than a decade.

The party had in recent years relied on the state's changing demographics, capitalizing on the workers who flocked there in search of an attainable path to middle-class dreams. But Nevada Democrats are learning that demographics alone are not destiny. The state's transient population has made building a reliable base of voters difficult, with would-be voters leaving in search of work elsewhere, as more children of immigrants in the state reach voting age. And with Mr. Reid's death last year, Democrats are missing the veteran leader who never hesitated to twist arms to get donors and activists on board.

The vulnerabilities in Nevada reflect Democrats' challenges nationwide, most acutely in the West. Worries over inflation and the economy overshadow nearly every other concern, particularly for the ***working-class*** and Latino voters the party has long counted on. And Republicans believe that voters blame the Democrats in power for the dour economic outlook.

''It's the purest example of a referendum election you have more than anywhere else in the country,'' said John Ashbrook, a consultant who is working with the campaign for Adam Laxalt, the Republican Senate candidate. Frustrations over inflation, he added, ''created an electorate that simply wants change.''

While the economy may be the most challenging hurdle for Democrats this year, it is not the only one: Republicans and nonpartisan voters make up nearly 60 percent of the Nevada electorate, which historically has lower turnout in midterm elections.

The Republican challengers were narrowly leading Mr. Sisolak and Ms. Cortez Masto in a new poll from the Nevada Independent and OH Predictive Insights, though the leads were within the margin of error. Former President Donald J. Trump is scheduled to hold a rally for the Republican candidates in the northern part of the state this week.

Even the most fervent Democratic backers acknowledge the steep challenges at a time when many people are still struggling to pay for basic needs, such as rent, gas and groceries. Both parties are trying to attract the state's ***working-class*** voters, who are less affluent and less likely to hold college degrees than in many other swing states.

Nevada remains firmly reliant on tourism to fuel hospitality and service jobs, which were temporarily wiped out by the pandemic. And while the resorts on the Las Vegas Strip are bustling once again, international travel and conferences have yet to rebound, and thousands of people are still out of work. The state's minimum wage has risen to $10.50 an hour, but rents have increased far more steeply.

''There is a significant amount of nervousness and fear about the economy and especially about the cost of housing. Your gas costs more, your rent costs more,'' said Ted Pappageorge, the secretary-treasurer of the Culinary Workers Union, which represents thousands of housekeepers, bartenders and cooks and has played a key role in electing Democrats in Nevada. ''Working families are hurting.''

While Republicans believe that the sour economic views have given them a chance to mount an aggressive offense, Democrats do not believe they have to be entirely defensive either. Instead, the party's candidates are trying to deliver a carefully crafted message, acknowledging voters' worries while suggesting that the economy is already improving and will get even better soon, as the pandemic fades.

For months now, Republicans have blamed Democrats for the sputtering slog to return to economic normalcy. During an event targeting small-business owners, Joseph Lombardo, the sheriff of the Las Vegas area who is running for governor, shared the stage with Nikki Haley, the former governor of South Carolina and United Nations ambassador. She recalled the initial pandemic shutdowns in 2020 and argued that Republican mayors had more effectively balanced the need to keep people safe with the need to keep them employed.

''We suffered the most here because we have all our eggs in one basket,'' Mr. Lombardo said, echoing the frequent refrain of the need to diversify the state's economy. He called for more programs to create a steady pipeline of electricians, plumbers and truck drivers. ''We need workforce development because those are quality jobs.''

Republicans are especially confident such messages will help the party peel off support from Latino voters, who make up roughly 20 percent of the electorate. Polls show the majority of Latino voters still favor Democrats, but if more than 30 percent of those voters cast their ballots for Republicans, the G.O.P. could gain the edge to win.

''The path to victory all runs through the Hispanic community,'' said Xochitl Hinojosa, a Democratic consultant who has worked in the state. ''Democrats are finally realizing, we've invested in Black voters significantly over decades, and we've been successful, but we've assumed Hispanics will turn out for us, and that's not been the case.''

Democrats also believe they can make inroads with independent and moderate voters who favor abortion rights. They have attacked Mr. Lombardo for repeatedly shifting his views on abortion and portray Mr. Laxalt as a reliable supporter of a federal abortion ban.

Representative Susie Lee pointed to a libertarian streak in voters that was activated by the Supreme Court's decision to overturn Roe v. Wade.

''Nevada voters don't want government messing with their personal choices, which I think is a big issue and one that's going to play out in this election,'' she said.

Nevada has four House districts, with three occupied by Democrats -- Ms. Lee and Representatives Steven Horsford and Dina Titus. All are considered deeply at risk. David Wasserman, the House analyst at the nonpartisan Cook Political Report, said Democrats in the State Legislature took a high-risk, high-reward strategy when redrawing the state's House seats, draining Democratic voters from Ms. Titus's central Las Vegas district to shore up the outlying districts. Now, the state map has three districts that lean slightly Democratic.

Mr. Horsford's new district lines are slightly more Democratic than the others, and his Republican opponent, Sam Peters, a conspiracy-minded conservative who has repeatedly called the 2020 election stolen, is the easiest to paint as an extremist. Mr. Wasserman said he expected this week to adjust his forecast in Mr. Horsford's favor, from a pure tossup to a race that leans Democratic.

Ms. Titus, an experienced political hand who taught political science at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, before winning a House seat in 2008, has not faced a real race in more than a decade. Her opponent, Mark Robertson, has a military record, a mild persona and strong ties to the Mormon Church, a powerful force in Nevada.

Ms. Lee may have the toughest Republican opponent, April Becker, whose soft-focused positive advertising has insulated her from Democratic attacks, many of them from Ms. Lee's well-funded campaign.

''Susie's ad is about April, and April's ad is about April,'' said Jeremy Hughes, a campaign aide for Ms. Becker. ''She missed an opportunity to reintroduce herself to people.''

Now the Las Vegas media market, one of the most expensive in the country, is cluttered with advertising from the House races as well as three statewide races, including the battle for secretary of state. Breaking through the din in the final weeks could be next to impossible for individual House candidates trying to reach voters who may not know whose district they live in.

''It's a difficult market,'' said Ben Ray, communications director for Emily's List, which works to elect women who support abortion rights. ''You've got a lot of voters that you need to talk to at odd hours. They're not going to catch the 6 o'clock news because that's when their shift starts.''

As they have in the final weeks during other election cycles, national Democratic groups are preparing a rescue mission. The House Majority PAC, which is affiliated with Democratic leadership, has reserved more than $11 million in advertising slots in the Las Vegas market for a final blitz.

The group has just released an online ad in English and Spanish, hitting Mr. Robertson on abortion, and began sending bilingual mailers attacking Ms. Becker for the ''extremists'' who support her campaign. Another direct mail effort from the PAC is going after Mr. Peters for his 2020 election denial and accusing him of wanting to ''defund public education.''

The advantage of incumbency allows Ms. Lee to talk up provisions in the bipartisan infrastructure bill that address Las Vegas's chronic water shortages. But because Nevada has such a transient population, incumbency matters less.

''I always run in a district that's a tough district, so I never go into an election with confidence,'' Ms. Lee said. ''I go in fighting to make my case in front of my voters. This is no different, for sure.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/03/us/politics/nevada-elections-democrats-republicans.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/03/us/politics/nevada-elections-democrats-republicans.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Primary voters in June in Las Vegas. In next month's elections, Democrats are facing potential losses up and down the Nevada ballot.

Nevada's Democratic members of the House, including Representative Dina Titus, left, are all seen as greatly at risk. In the state's governor's race, Joseph Lombardo, a Republican, has been attacked by Democrats for repeatedly changing his views on abortion. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY BRIDGET BENNETT FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A16)

**Load-Date:** October 4, 2022

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[***Chicagoans Are Picking a Mayor. Here’s What Matters From 4 Key Wards.***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67XD-FX31-JBG3-62G2-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Section:** US

**Length:** 1981 words

**Byline:** Julie Bosman and Jamie Kelter Davis

**Highlight:** Voters will go to the polls on Tuesday in the nation’s third-largest city, a place where neighborhoods often stand apart.

**Body**

[*Follow our live coverage of the 2023 Chicago mayoral runoff election*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2023/04/04/us/chicago-mayor-runoff).

CHICAGO — Chicago is known as a city of neighborhoods, a sprawling metropolis divided into distinctive pockets defined by their own architecture, restaurants, languages, ballparks and beaches.

But this is a heated election season, so Chicagoans are temporarily dissecting the city in a more political parlance: the mathematics of wards.

There are 50 wards in all, each represented by a member in the City Council, and each with its own identity. The political winds can shift with every mayoral contest: In a runoff election in 2019, Mayor Lori Lightfoot won all 50, but in her unsuccessful February bid for [*re-election*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/02/28/us/elections/results-chicago-mayor.html) amid a crowded field of challengers, she took only 16. Paul Vallas and Brandon Johnson, the top two finishers in February, are spending the final days before their runoff on Tuesday crisscrossing the city campaigning for votes.

Mr. Vallas is white and Mr. Johnson is Black, and race has often loomed over elections in this city of roughly equal numbers of white, Black and Hispanic residents. But around the city, residents say their votes will be driven by broad, universal issues — crime, education, housing and transportation. Residents are also seeing the issues from their own blocks and through the history of their neighborhoods, which in Chicago can feel like cities of their own.

Here are four wards in Chicago that offer a revealing look into how the city will pick its next mayor.

“We are a microcosm of Black America,” Roderick Sawyer of the 6th Ward, the enclave on the South Side he has represented on the City Council for 12 years, said as he mingled at a campaign event at Josephine’s, a popular soul food restaurant on 79th Street.

Few people know the ward — and its politics — more intimately than Mr. Sawyer, whose father, Eugene Sawyer, was a City Council member in the 6th Ward and Chicago’s second Black mayor, assuming office after the sudden death of Harold Washington in 1987.

The 6th Ward is in the geographic heart of the South Side; its [*population*](https://www.wbez.org/stories/interactive-new-chicago-ward-maps/9237bb12-f58a-4190-a14a-2fc16ceef5fb) is 95 percent Black and reliably Democratic.

In one part of the ward, there is Chatham, a middle-class neighborhood with neat rows of brick bungalows, instantly recognizable as classic Chicago architecture. Signs for block clubs are a staple of the neighborhood, welcoming passers-by to the block while warning them not to loiter or play loud music.

Further north, there is Englewood, a neighborhood with persistently high gun crimes in the city, where undeveloped, empty lots are common. The flight of Black families from Chicago’s South Side to the suburbs and beyond in recent decades has been especially visible in Englewood, despite a robust network of community activists fighting for more investment.

What would bring the ward more stability and economic vitality, Mr. Sawyer said, are amenities: bars, restaurants and shops that would make life more appealing to residents.

“We need more of these,” he said, motioning around him at Josephine’s, the kind of place that attracts hordes for meals after Sunday church, and for birthday lunches and anniversaries. “More coffee shops and Gymborees, more things for people to do.”

Ms. Lightfoot won big here in February, carrying 37 percent of the vote. She was followed by Willie Wilson, a businessman with a sizable base of ***working-class*** residents, with 22 percent. Mr. Johnson, the third-place finisher, is expected to have a strong performance here in the runoff. Mr. Vallas came in behind him.

But Mr. Sawyer, who endorsed Mr. Vallas, said that the 6th Ward offers a litmus test: According to his own electoral math, if Mr. Vallas captures even 20 percent of the vote, that could be all he needs to help boost him to a win citywide.

The residents of the 19th Ward on the Far Southwest Side of Chicago know how the rest of the city sees them: a white, conservative bubble of police officers and firefighters, Irish pubs and Catholic churches that is a relic of the old Chicago political machine.

“There is that history,” said Clare Duggan, a Democratic political organizer who is a resident and native of the Beverly neighborhood. “But we have a dichotomy in the 19th Ward.”

The South Side Irish Parade still rolls down Western Avenue in Beverly each year, a colorful display of Irishness in a city that takes pride in that slice of its identity. The 19th Ward, which hugs the border of the southwest suburbs, does have an unusually large population of city employees, but not just people who work for the police and fire departments — teachers, sanitation workers and employees of libraries and the parks department.

And the ward still gives an occasional sense of being a throwback to the 20th century, with a car-centric, suburban feel and vintage neighborhood institutions like the Rainbow Cone ice cream shop that has been a favorite since 1926.

But it remains among more racially diverse areas in an often segregated Chicago, with a [*population*](https://www.wbez.org/stories/interactive-new-chicago-ward-maps/9237bb12-f58a-4190-a14a-2fc16ceef5fb) that is 62 percent white, 29 percent Black, 7 percent Latino and 1 percent Asian. Ms. Duggan described the ward as roughly split between Mount Greenwood — a conservative-leaning neighborhood that voted for Donald J. Trump in 2016 — and the neighborhoods of Beverly and Morgan Park, which are more liberal. Beverly, with its spacious houses, tree-lined streets and Metra train to downtown, has long attracted the upper middle class, especially lawyers, bankers and white-collar workers who commute to the Loop.

During every election season, one thing defines the 19th Ward: sky-high voter turnout.

In the February election, the ward boasted the highest [*turnout*](https://www.chicagotribune.com/politics/elections/ct-chicago-voter-turnout-numbers-20230304-vfbdfa5klbaird7tkoqzyxmvcq-story.html) in Chicago, with 58 percent of registered voters casting a ballot. [*Citywide*](https://chicagoelections.gov/en/election-results-specifics.asp), turnout was close to 36 percent.

“We had the highest voter turnout in the first round, and we will exceed that number in the runoff,” said Ms. Duggan, who is a co-founder of the progressive political organization Illinois 123GO.

Political organizing runs deep here: in living rooms, where candidates have come for decades to introduce themselves to voters, and in churches, which decades ago played a role in successfully integrating the Beverly neighborhood.

The 19th Ward has an especially vocal place as the mayoral runoff approaches. In the first round of balloting in February, most of the ward’s votes went to Mr. Vallas, a native of the South Side whose pro-law enforcement message was warmly received in the neighborhoods. Though the 19th Ward has relatively low crime, it has seen a spike in recent years, especially an increase in break-ins, robberies and carjackings that have sent many residents demanding more police patrols.

Residents of the 22nd Ward, an enclave on the West Side that is home to thousands of families of Mexican heritage, have seen turmoil in the last four years. An attempt to implode an abandoned power plant in the Little Village neighborhood in 2020 covered houses and businesses with a cloud of choking dust, leading furious residents to point out that such pollution would never have happened in a wealthier, whiter neighborhood on the North Side.

The neighborhood’s street vendors who sell tamales have been [*victimized*](https://www.chicagotribune.com/news/ct-street-vendors-tamaleros-robbed-gunpoing-little-village-demand-police-20230110-e5mfd2por5dahpuomore4tv3u4-story.html) by armed robbers in recent months, prompting a plea to Mayor Lightfoot for more police presence.

Residents of this largely Latino ward said they are left with a sense of being overlooked by city leaders.

“I feel like we’re put last in terms of what needs to be done,” said Xochitl Nieto, 21, who works at a day care.

But as the mayoral race enters its final days, both candidates are making a push for Latino voters, many of whom supported Representative Jesús G. García, known as Chuy, who ran for mayor in the February election. Mr. García, who was born in Mexico and grew up in Little Village, won 57 percent of the vote.

Jaime Dominguez, a professor at Northwestern University who studies Latino politics, said he anticipates that the Latino vote — which includes a wide array of geographic origins and political perspectives — would split largely on generational lines on Tuesday. Younger Latino voters in Chicago lean toward progressive leaders, he said, including Mr. Johnson and the Democratic Socialists who have recently grown in number on the City Council; the older voters, he said, may lean toward Mr. Vallas.

In the first week of early voting at a Little Village library — identified by a sign reading Biblioteca Pública de Chicago — about 400 people had cast ballots, a rate that ticked slightly above the Feb. 28 election.

Ms. Nieto said the strong sense of Mexican culture is one of the things that drew her to the 22nd Ward. She had been living in Belmont Cragin, further north in the city, but found herself visiting Little Village on the weekends because of its restaurants and street life, its colorful painted murals that adorn the sides of buildings.

Finally, she decided to abandon her weekend visits and move there. “I feel closer to home,” she said.

Compress Chicago down to one neighborhood and you might find the 49th Ward.

This is Rogers Park, a tiny patch in the city’s northeastern corner, bordering Lake Michigan and the North Shore suburbs. Its demographics are relatively close to those of the entire city: about 44 percent white, 25 percent Black, 21 percent Latino and 8 percent Asian.

But in this mayoral election, how the 49th Ward votes is a glimpse into how far left Chicago’s voters could go. Mr. Johnson won 40 percent of the vote here in February, one of his strongest showings in the city.

“We’ve got a tradition of very progressive and active politics,” said Maria Hadden, the City Council member who was just re-elected to her second term.

Those politics show up in the ward’s devotion to welcoming outsiders, especially immigrants, refugees and members of other marginalized groups.

“This is where the non-dominant cultures were allowed to be,” she said.

The lake, a feature that connects a lot of people in the 49th Ward, also shapes some of the ward’s politics, fostering a concern for environmental issues.

The lakefront neighborhood is densely populated, with some grand, brick single-family homes but mostly apartments and condo buildings, especially in high-rises along Lake Michigan. Roughly 75 percent of residents rent their homes, Ms. Hadden said.

Many people in the neighborhood are ***working class***, especially in the service and hospitality industries, earning a wage below the median income for Chicago. As the mayoral election nears, some residents said they were concerned about their economic stability, the cost of living and expenses like rent and child care.

It was the 49th Ward’s reputation as a place that is friendly to outsiders that drew Demetrius McGhee, 60, who moved there two years ago, he said as he waited for a bus.

Mr. McGhee does not work because of a disability, and he received a housing subsidy that allowed him to have an affordable rent in a building just one block from Lake Michigan.

“It has a very strong sense of community,” he said. “There’s always somebody around, and people get to know each other.”

PHOTOS: 49TH WARD Along Sheridan Road in Rogers Park, in the northeast, where the demographics largely mirror the city’s as a whole.; 6TH WARD The mayoral candidate Brandon Johnson, center, chatted with Arel Brown, who owns Soul Veg in Chatham.; 22ND WARD The street vendors of Little Village, where a largely Latino population says it often feels overlooked by city officials. (A18); WINDY CITY From top: The skyline from Loyola Beach in the Rogers Park area of the 49th Ward; Sam Wallace, an undecided voter, wore a Brandon Johnson button in Chatham, in the 6th Ward; the brick brownstones of Little Village in the 22nd Ward. (A18-A19); 19TH WARD Clare, Mary and Annie Duggan in Beverly Hills, where the sisters run a small business and a political nonprofit. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY JAMIE KELTER DAVIS FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A19) This article appeared in print on page A18, A19.

**Load-Date:** April 4, 2023

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[***Workhorse Takes Stock Of His Life***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64M2-CJY1-DXY4-X0CM-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

January 24, 2022 Monday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section C; Column 0; The Arts/Cultural Desk; Pg. 1

**Length:** 1063 words

**Byline:** By Alexandra Jacobs

**Body**

I'm such a fan of the HBO series ''Succession,'' about a morally depraved, megarich media family, that I hum its theme song in the shower and have taken to wearing commanding pantsuits. So when I picked up ''Putting the Rabbit in the Hat,'' the new memoir by Brian Cox, who plays the family's tyrannical patriarch, Logan Roy, I was desperate for tidbits to tide me over during the long wait for Season 4.

Well, there aren't many. Cox writes gruffly of a newcomer director on the show giving Kieran Culkin, who plays his youngest son and is an ace at mixing up the script, notes to ''slow down.'' ''Now, this is an actor who's calibrated the patterns of his character's delivery over the course of two previous seasons,'' the author thunders, or so I imagine (as Roy, he's a big thunderer). ''He's not going to suddenly slow down just because you've given him a note.''

Cox confides furthermore that he doesn't really relate to the intense, Method-like ''process'' that Jeremy Strong uses to get into the character of Kendall, Logan's middle son. Fans already knew about Strong's tactics from a profile of him in The New Yorker that was chewed over for weeks after it was published in December. Some perceived condescension in the article toward Strong's ***working-class*** background, including an anonymous Yale classmate having marveled at his ''careerist drive.''

The heated discussion was fascinating and perplexing. When did acting become so bougie and aspirational? Wasn't a ***working-class*** background once a key element of the Hollywood success narrative -- getting yanked out, discovered and made over by the savior figure of agent or studio executive? Think Cary Grant (born Archibald Leach, son of a tailor's presser), Lana Turner (miner's daughter), Ava Gardner (child of sharecroppers) and all those other glamour figures of yesteryear.

A humble background didn't hinder Cox, who has gone from leading man of the British stage to one of America's most prolific and consistent character actors -- what is sometimes called a ''jobbing actor,'' though he now has the clout to negotiate a chauffeur, nice hotels and a double-banger trailer. Nobody rescued Cox, the consummate utility player. ''I knew that simply wasn't my ballpark,'' he shrugs, on the subject of Hollywood stardom. ''Besides, I'm too short.'' He's written two previous memoirs, one that tracks him to Moscow to direct ''The Crucible'' and another about the challenges of ''King Lear.'' Taking stock at 75, he's not so much a lion in winter (indeed, he was fired as the voice of Aslan in the Narnia movies) as a seasoned workhorse finally able to enjoy a victory gallop.

Cox writes eloquently about his origins in Dundee, Scotland, as the youngest of five children who occasionally had to beg for batter bits from the local chip shop. His parents met at a dance hall; his mother had been a spinner at jute mills and suffered multiple miscarriages and mental illness; his father, a shopkeeper and socialist, died when Brian was 8. Getting plunked in front of the telly rather than taken to the funeral was formative. So were later escapes to the movies, particularly ones like ''Saturday Night and Sunday Morning'' (1960), starring Albert Finney: ''a film that wasn't all about the lives of posh folk in drawing rooms, or struggling nobly in far-off places, or having faintly amusing high jinks on hospital wards,'' Cox writes. ''It was all about ***working-class*** people -- people like us.'' A kind teacher told him about a gofer gig at the local repertory theater and boom, he was home.

Cox went on to attend the London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art and perform in esteemed halls like the Royal Court, learning the classics but also grooving nicely with the rise of the angry young man and kitchen-sink realism led by the playwright John Osborne, with whom he became friends. Before very long he was working with his gods, including Finney.

At a time when theater, the fabulous invalid, is straitjacketed by the pandemic, it's heartening and a little wistful-making to have it recalled in all its messy midcentury glory. Cox fluffed a flustered Lynn Redgrave's wig; got felt up by Princess Margaret backstage; narrowly escaped dying in a plane crash on his way to audition for Laurence Olivier. Years later, as Lear in a wheelchair, he ''frisbeed'' his metal crown into the first row at the National Theater, injuring an audience member. He once compromised his testicles during a naked yoga scene. In the leaner years, he booked bikini waxes and cohabited with an army of cockroaches in a sublet apartment. There was drunkenness aplenty; one actor playing the priest in ''Hamlet'' got so soused he tumbled into Ophelia's grave.

Cox, who prefers cannabis to drink, can ramble on a bit. If times ever get lean again, it's easy to imagine him doing bedtime stories for a sleep app. He salts all the idolatry with disdain. On Kevin Spacey: ''A great talent, but a stupid, stupid man.'' On Steven Seagal: ''As ludicrous in real life as he appears onscreen.'' On Quentin Tarantino: ''I find his work meretricious. It's all surface.'' (Though he'd take a part if offered.) He's softer on Woody Allen, owning up to himself dating an 18-year-old when he was in his 40s. ''It seems that everybody in this book is either dead or canceled,'' he notes with some rue. He's preoccupied with making a ''good death,'' cataloging friends' ends with an almost clinical relish (cancer, emphysema, suicide, a heart attack so massive it threw the victim ''clean across the pebbles'').

Like many actors, Cox treads more nimbly on the boards than in his personal life. He admits he wasn't fully present for family tragedies, like his first wife's stillborn twins and their daughter's anorexia. ''And that's my flaw,'' he declares. ''It's this propensity for absence, this need to disappear.'' He loves the part of Logan partly because, when not thundering, he's ''reined in and bottled up.'' But on the page, at least, he is present, lively and pouring forth, though the hints of his distinctive burr may send you heading for the audiobook instead.Alexandra Jacobs is a book critic for The Times and the author of ''Still Here: The Madcap, Nervy, Singular Life of Elaine Stritch.'' Follow her on Twitter: @AlexandraJacobs.Putting the Rabbit in the HatA MemoirBy Brian CoxIllustrated. 374 pages. Grand Central Publishing. $29.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2022/01/21/books/review-brian-cox-memoir-putting-rabbit-in-hat.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/01/21/books/review-brian-cox-memoir-putting-rabbit-in-hat.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: PHOTO (C1)

Brian Cox (PHOTOGRAPH BY VINCENT TULLO FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (C4)

**Load-Date:** January 24, 2022

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[***Sex Lives of Hudson, N.Y., Bohemians; Fiction***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67G3-73C1-DXY4-X00M-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

February 3, 2023 Friday 13:35 EST

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**Section:** BOOKS; review

**Length:** 671 words

**Byline:** Jennifer Wilson

**Highlight:** In Jen Beagin’s “Big Swiss,” a sex therapist’s transcriptionist fantasizes about sleeping with a married female patient, who also happens to go to her dog park.

**Body**

BIG SWISS, by Jen Beagin

Like a lot of women I know who’ve only dated men, Flavia — the titular neurotic blonde in Jen Beagin’s new novel, “Big Swiss” — would make an exception for Detective Olivia Benson. Luckily, but also unluckily (Flavia is married, after all), there is a Mariska Hargitay look-alike at her local dog park, and like the “Law &amp; Order: S.V.U.” siren, this stranger is not the type to beat around the bush. No, Greta goes straight to the bush. “You must get this a lot,” she says, “but would you mind taking a quick look at this thing on my labia?”

Flavia is a gynecologist who harbors a dark past. Eight years ago, she was brutally attacked by a man now set to be released from prison. But Flavia’s “not one of these trauma people,” she assures her sex therapist, coolly, Swiss-ly. “I’m not attached to my suffering.” So what’s she doing in therapy at all? Well — she can’t have an orgasm, and when asked to describe sex with her husband, she replies: “like driving home from work and not remembering the ride.” The woman is as cold as forceps.

These admissions are typed out in the novel as transcripts of her therapy sessions. The transcriber listening in is none other than the dog park seductress herself, Greta, who had already fallen in love with Flavia’s voice long before they met IRL: “a voice you could snag your sweater on,” she thinks, but also one “sweet enough to suck on.” And suck Flavia she will, like a Swiss cough drop. “Ricola!” Greta imagines her yodeling upon orgasm. Theirs is a passionate affair, but Greta opts for a more irreverent label: a fest of the explicit sort. What to call things comes up not very often; their mouths are otherwise occupied. Flavia calls them “bisexual,” but Greta, who “couldn’t imagine settling on anything,” leaves it at “gayish.”

Greta has one of the many poorly paid health care jobs that now dominate the industry, part of a transformation in ***working-class*** labor away from manufacturing that the historian Gabriel Winant documented in “[*The Next Shift*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/03/31/books/review-next-shift-health-care-gabriel-winant.html)” (2021). In all her fiction Beagin likes to use class not just as a theme, but as a literary device, one that the rich can’t easily co-opt. Her characters collect secrets to collect their checks, like Mona, the housecleaner protagonist of her first two novels, “Pretend I’m Dead” (2018) and “[*Vacuum in the Dark*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/04/25/books/review/jen-beagin-vacuum-in-the-dark-halle-butler-new-me.html)” (2019); as readers we feast on the dirty laundry she finds under mattresses and inside cushions. Now Greta, an eavesdropper by trade, spills the sex secrets of the privileged bohemians of Hudson, N.Y. While waiting for her coffee at a cafe, she hears the voice of “A.A.G.,” a patient who likes to perform oral sex on his sister-in-law like a French foodie — that is to say, with a napkin over his head.

My mother is a medical transcriptionist, and I confess it brought me great pride to see her job — confusingly unprestigious to a lot of the people I interact with now (“Can’t that be done by computers?” they ask) — appreciated as one of the most intimate acts of literary interpretation there is. Whereas the therapist barely registers his patients’ pauses, Greta obsesses over them, feeling their omission from the record as unbearable, even malpractice.

But here I go getting sentimental and blabbering on about my upbringing — precisely the kind of inner-child healing crap Flavia and Greta swear to hate. Greta is also “not one of those trauma people” — despite dealing with the aftereffects of a family suicide and having been held up at gunpoint at the pharmacy where she used to work by a man demanding oxy 30s. Greta and Flavia say they aren’t wounded, that they don’t care about getting to the bottom of things, and yet — tellingly — they each vie to bottom whenever they make love. They are betrayed, as we all are, by their desires. Lube is also a salve.

Jennifer Wilson is a contributing essayist at the Book Review.

BIG SWISS | By Jen Beagin | 325 pp. | Scribner | $27

Jennifer Wilson is a contributing essayist at the Book Review.

This article appeared in print on page BR17.

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[***Democrats’ Troubles in Nevada Are a Microcosm of Nationwide Headwinds***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:66HV-D081-JBG3-610J-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

October 3, 2022 Monday 11:54 EST

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**Section:** US; politics

**Length:** 1871 words

**Byline:** Jennifer Medina and Jonathan Weisman

**Highlight:** Inflation and a rocky economy are bolstering Republicans in their races against incumbent Democrats, motivating “an electorate that simply wants change,” as one G.O.P. consultant says.

**Body**

Inflation and a rocky economy are bolstering Republicans in their races against incumbent Democrats, motivating “an electorate that simply wants change,” as one G.O.P. consultant says.

LAS VEGAS — The Culinary Workers Union members who are knocking on doors to get out the vote are on the cursed-at front lines of the Democratic Party’s midterm battle.

Most voters do not open their doors. And when some do answer, the canvassers might wish they hadn’t.

“You think I am going to vote for those Democrats after all they’ve done to ruin the economy?” a voter shouted one evening last week from her entryway in a ***working-class*** neighborhood of East Las Vegas.

Miguel Gonzalez, a 55-year-old chef who described himself as a conservative Christian who has voted for Republicans for most of his life, was more polite but no more convinced. “I don’t agree with anything Democrats are doing at all,” he said after taking a fistful of fliers from the union canvassers.

Those who know Nevada best have always viewed its blue-state status as something befitting a desert: a kind of mirage. Democrats are actually a minority among registered voters, and most of the party’s victories in the last decade were narrowly decided. But the state has long been a symbolic linchpin for the party — vital to its national coalition and its hold on the blue West.

Now, Democrats in Nevada are facing potential losses up and down the ballot in November and bracing for a seismic shift that could help Republicans win control of both houses of Congress. Senator Catherine Cortez Masto remains one of the most vulnerable Democratic incumbents in the country. Gov. Steve Sisolak is fighting his most formidable challenger yet. And the state’s three House Democrats could all lose their seats.

The Democratic juggernaut built by [*former Senator Harry M. Reid*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/12/28/us/politics/harry-reid-dead.html) is on its heels, staring down the most significant spate of losses in more than a decade.

The party had in recent years relied on the state’s changing demographics, capitalizing on the workers who flocked there in search of an attainable path to middle-class dreams. But Nevada Democrats are learning that demographics alone are not destiny. The state’s transient population has made building a reliable base of voters difficult, with would-be voters leaving in search of work elsewhere, as more children of immigrants in the state reach voting age. And with Mr. Reid’s death last year, Democrats are missing the veteran leader who never hesitated to twist arms to get donors and activists on board.

The vulnerabilities in Nevada reflect Democrats’ challenges nationwide, most acutely in the West. Worries over inflation and the economy overshadow nearly every other concern, particularly for the ***working-class*** and Latino voters the party has long counted on. And Republicans believe that voters blame the Democrats in power for the dour economic outlook.

“It’s the purest example of a referendum election you have more than anywhere else in the country,” said John Ashbrook, a consultant who is working with the campaign for Adam Laxalt, the Republican Senate candidate. Frustrations over inflation, he added, “created an electorate that simply wants change.”

While the economy may be the most challenging hurdle for Democrats this year, it is not the only one: Republicans and nonpartisan voters make up [*nearly 60 percent of the Nevada electorate*](https://www.nvsos.gov/sos/home/showpublisheddocument/10906/637985922150870000), which historically has lower turnout in midterm elections.

The Republican challengers were narrowly leading Mr. Sisolak and Ms. Cortez Masto in a new poll from the [*Nevada Independent and OH Predictive Insights*](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1FMgbnIJWR3zoCnMfSk9ft4EcHQOuJ_Q5/edit#gid=644494231), though the leads were within the margin of error. Former President Donald J. Trump is scheduled to hold a rally for the Republican candidates in the northern part of the state this week.

Even the most fervent Democratic backers acknowledge the steep challenges at a time when many people are still struggling to pay for basic needs, such as rent, gas and groceries. Both parties are trying to attract the state’s ***working-class*** voters, who are less affluent and less likely to hold college degrees than in many other swing states.

Nevada remains firmly reliant on tourism to fuel hospitality and service jobs, which were temporarily wiped out by the pandemic. And while the resorts on the Las Vegas Strip are bustling once again, international travel and conferences have yet to rebound, and thousands of people are still out of work. The state’s minimum wage has risen to $10.50 an hour, but rents have increased far more steeply.

“There is a significant amount of nervousness and fear about the economy and especially about the cost of housing. Your gas costs more, your rent costs more,” said Ted Pappageorge, the secretary-treasurer of the Culinary Workers Union, which represents thousands of housekeepers, bartenders and cooks and has played a key role in electing Democrats in Nevada. “Working families are hurting.”

While Republicans believe that the sour economic views have given them a chance to mount an aggressive offense, Democrats do not believe they have to be entirely defensive either. Instead, the party’s candidates are trying to deliver a carefully crafted message, acknowledging voters’ worries while suggesting that the economy is already improving and will get even better soon, as the pandemic fades.

For months now, Republicans have blamed Democrats for the sputtering slog to return to economic normalcy. During an event targeting small-business owners, Joseph Lombardo, the sheriff of the Las Vegas area who is running for governor, shared the stage with Nikki Haley, the former governor of South Carolina and United Nations ambassador. She recalled the initial pandemic shutdowns in 2020 and argued that Republican mayors had more effectively balanced the need to keep people safe with the need to keep them employed.

“We suffered the most here because we have all our eggs in one basket,” Mr. Lombardo said, echoing the frequent refrain of the need to diversify the state’s economy. He called for more programs to create a steady pipeline of electricians, plumbers and truck drivers. “We need workforce development because those are quality jobs.”

Republicans are especially confident such messages will help the party peel off support from Latino voters, who make up roughly 20 percent of the electorate. Polls show the majority of Latino voters still favor Democrats, but if more than 30 percent of those voters cast their ballots for Republicans, the G.O.P. could gain the edge to win.

“The path to victory all runs through the Hispanic community,” said Xochitl Hinojosa, a Democratic consultant who has worked in the state. “Democrats are finally realizing, we’ve invested in Black voters significantly over decades, and we’ve been successful, but we’ve assumed Hispanics will turn out for us, and that’s not been the case.”

Democrats also believe they can make inroads with independent and moderate voters who favor abortion rights. They have attacked Mr. Lombardo for repeatedly shifting his views on abortion and portray Mr. Laxalt as a reliable supporter of a federal abortion ban.

Representative Susie Lee pointed to a libertarian streak in voters that was activated by the [*Supreme Court’s decision to overturn Roe v. Wade*](https://www.nytimes.com/news-event/roe-v-wade-supreme-court-abortion).

“Nevada voters don’t want government messing with their personal choices, which I think is a big issue and one that’s going to play out in this election,” she said.

Nevada has four House districts, with three occupied by Democrats — Ms. Lee and Representatives Steven Horsford and Dina Titus. All are considered deeply at risk. David Wasserman, the House analyst at the nonpartisan [*Cook Political Report*](https://www.cookpolitical.com/), said Democrats in the State Legislature took a high-risk, high-reward strategy when redrawing the state’s House seats, draining Democratic voters from Ms. Titus’s central Las Vegas district to shore up the outlying districts. Now, the state map has three districts that lean slightly Democratic.

Mr. Horsford’s new district lines are slightly more Democratic than the others, and his Republican opponent, Sam Peters, a conspiracy-minded conservative who has repeatedly called the 2020 election stolen, is the easiest to paint as an extremist. Mr. Wasserman said he expected this week to adjust his forecast in Mr. Horsford’s favor, from a pure tossup to a race that leans Democratic.

Ms. Titus, an experienced political hand who taught political science at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, before winning a House seat in 2008, has not faced a real race in more than a decade. Her opponent, Mark Robertson, has a military record, a mild persona and strong ties to the Mormon Church, a powerful force in Nevada.

Ms. Lee may have the toughest Republican opponent, April Becker, whose soft-focused [*positive advertising*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ga0tSaMj07I) has insulated her from Democratic attacks, many of them from Ms. Lee’s well-funded campaign.

“Susie’s ad is about April, and April’s ad is about April,” said Jeremy Hughes, a campaign aide for Ms. Becker. “She missed an opportunity to reintroduce herself to people.”

Now the Las Vegas media market, one of the most expensive in the country, is cluttered with advertising from the House races as well as three statewide races, including the battle for [*secretary of state*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/06/14/us/politics/jim-marchant-nevada-secretary-of-state.html). Breaking through the din in the final weeks could be next to impossible for individual House candidates trying to reach voters who may not know whose district they live in.

“It’s a difficult market,” said Ben Ray, communications director for Emily’s List, which works to elect women who support abortion rights. “You’ve got a lot of voters that you need to talk to at odd hours. They’re not going to catch the 6 o’clock news because that’s when their shift starts.”

As they have in the final weeks during other election cycles, national Democratic groups are preparing a rescue mission. The House Majority PAC, which is affiliated with Democratic leadership, has reserved more than $11 million in advertising slots in the Las Vegas market for a final blitz.

The group has just released [*an online ad*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ym_rrQjsTMs) in English and Spanish, hitting Mr. Robertson on abortion, and began sending bilingual mailers attacking Ms. Becker for the “extremists” who support her campaign. Another direct mail effort from the PAC is going after Mr. Peters for his 2020 election denial and accusing him of wanting to “defund public education.”

The advantage of incumbency allows Ms. Lee to talk up provisions in the bipartisan infrastructure bill that address Las Vegas’s chronic water shortages. But because Nevada has such a transient population, incumbency matters less.

“I always run in a district that’s a tough district, so I never go into an election with confidence,” Ms. Lee said. “I go in fighting to make my case in front of my voters. This is no different, for sure.”

PHOTOS: Primary voters in June in Las Vegas. In next month’s elections, Democrats are facing potential losses up and down the Nevada ballot.; Nevada’s Democratic members of the House, including Representative Dina Titus, left, are all seen as greatly at risk. In the state’s governor’s race, Joseph Lombardo, a Republican, has been attacked by Democrats for repeatedly changing his views on abortion. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY BRIDGET BENNETT FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A16)

**Load-Date:** October 4, 2022

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[***Both Harvard and Yale Remove Schools of Law From Ranking System***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:66WC-RCD1-JBG3-63TJ-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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Late Edition - Final

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**Byline:** By Anemona Hartocollis

**Body**

Citing flaws in the way the ratings are determined, the schools said they will stop participating, breaking away from the rankings industry.

In perhaps the biggest challenge yet to the school rankings industry, both Yale and Harvard announced Wednesday that they were withdrawing from the influential U.S. News & World Report rankings of the nation's best law schools.

Colleges and universities have been critical of the U.S. News ranking system for decades, saying that it was unreliable and skewed educational priorities, but they had rarely taken action to thwart it, and every year almost always submitted their data for judgment on their various undergraduate and graduate programs.

Now both Yale and Harvard law schools have announced that they will no longer cooperate. In two separate letters posted on their websites, the law school deans excoriated U.S. News for using a methodology that they said devalued the efforts of schools like their own to recruit poor and ***working-class*** students, provide financial aid based on need and encourage students to go into low-paid public service law after graduation.

''It has become impossible to reconcile our principles and commitments with the methodology and incentives the U.S. News rankings reflect,'' John F. Manning, the dean of Harvard Law, said in his statement.

The two deans said they had decided to withdraw only after they and ''a number'' of other schools had taken their concerns directly to U.S. News and been rebuffed.

The news was unveiled in dramatic fashion, beginning Wednesday morning with Yale Law's dean, Heather K. Gerken, posting a statement. Later, Harvard joined in.

U.S. News reacted somewhat blandly to Yale, saying it stood by its ''mission'' to ''ensure that law schools are held accountable for the education they will provide.''

Asked whether U.S. News would continue to rank Yale, Eric Gertler, chief executive of U.S. News, said that the organization was reviewing options.

After Harvard's announcement, the tone became more conciliatory. ''We agree that test scores don't tell the full story of an applicant, and law schools make their own decisions on the applicant pool based on the mission of the school,'' U.S. News said in an email.

But the statement said the American Bar Association still requires standardized tests for almost all law schools. ''The rankings are a start, not an answer,'' U.S. News said. ''Our mission is, and has always been, to provide data on schools for prospective students and their families.''

The withdrawal of heavyweight institutions like Harvard and Yale is unlikely to topple the rankings industry. For one, only the law schools withdrew from the rankings. And even though U.S. News asks schools to provide their own data, much of the information is publicly available.

''It is unlikely that Yale Law's action will change the (profit-seeking) behavior of U.S. News leaders unless a significant number of other name-brand institutions follow suit,'' Robert Schaeffer, public education director of FairTest, an anti-testing group, said in an email on Wednesday.

But, he added, as Harvard joined in, ''if a few more brand-name law schools join in quickly, this initiative will have clout.''

The rankings are entrenched in the culture of higher education -- with every new annual ranking promoted by many of the schools that decry them. Prospective students have few other seemingly objective, data-based ways to judge schools.

Also, the rankings are perhaps more meaningful to lower-ranked institutions, which often advertise them prominently and depend on them to attract students, than to schools in the top 10, or even top 30, whose reputation and brand recognition are well established.

Yale, at No. 1, is followed in the law school rankings this year by Stanford, the University of Chicago, and then Columbia and Harvard, which were both ranked fourth.

Many critics of the rankings have said that the data can be easily manipulated, and pointed to the doubts this year over Columbia University's data.

Over the summer, Columbia announced that it would no longer participate in the rankings of national universities, and said it was reviewing its data -- which had resulted in a No. 2 spot -- after a math professor had questioned its accuracy. The university ultimately admitted that some of its data, including undergraduate class size and the percentage of faculty with the highest degree in their field, had been inaccurate.

U.S. News kept Columbia in the rankings nonetheless but dropped it to No. 18.

Even though Yale Law School has consistently been the top-rated school on the U.S. News list for the last three decades, Ms. Gerken said the rankings had been on her mind as she embarked on her second term as dean.

Asked why she would worry about them when Yale was No. 1, she said: ''It's not about Yale Law School. It's about legal education and the profession. It's a moment to step back and think about what we are doing.''

In her letter, Ms. Gerken called the U.S. News rankings a ''for-profit'' and ''commercial'' enterprise that is ''profoundly flawed.'' She said the methodology does not give enough weight to programs like Yale's ''that support public interest careers, champion need-based aid, and welcome ***working-class*** students into the profession,'' and as a result, skews the rankings of law schools that emphasize that work.

She said that 20 percent of a law school's overall ranking comes from grades and test scores. ''This heavily weighted metric imposes tremendous pressure on schools to overlook promising students, especially those who cannot afford expensive test preparation courses,'' she said in her letter. ''It also pushes schools to use financial aid to recruit high-scoring students.''

That money, she said, could be diverted to scholarships for low-income students.

Moreover, she said, the rankings were misleading in the way they portrayed the employment rate of Yale law students after graduation, an important metric for students who are acutely conscious that they have to start making money to pay off often exorbitant student loans.

Yale awards ''many more public interest fellowships per student than any of our peers.'' she wrote. ''Even though our fellowships are highly selective and pay comparable salaries to outside fellowships, U.S. News appears to discount these invaluable opportunities to such an extent that these graduates are effectively classified as unemployed.''

The metrics also devalued students who wanted to pursue advanced degrees like a master's or a Ph.D., Ms. Gerken said.

Mr. Manning, of Harvard, said the rankings methodology ''can create perverse incentives that influence schools' decisions in ways that undercut student choice and harm the interests of potential students.''

For one thing, he said, the ''debt metric'' adopted by U.S. News two years ago might appear to reflect lower debt at graduation because of generous financial aid. But the metric could also mean that a law school admitted ''more students who have the resources to avoid borrowing,'' he wrote. ''And to the extent the debt metric creates an incentive for schools to admit better resourced students who don't need to borrow, it risks harming those it is trying to help.''

There is currently an effort to do away with mandatory testing for admission to law school, but no final decision has been taken. At the same time, dozens of law schools now allow applicants to submit GRE scores in place of LSAT scores. Both are part of an effort to boost admissions for low-income students and students of color.

As for the rankings, many of the other top 10 law schools appeared on Wednesday to be holding their fire.

The University of Pennsylvania law school applauded Yale and Harvard ''for their leadership'' and said that it was ''evaluating this issue,'' but it did not immediately offer to join in.

Columbia and the University of Chicago declined to comment. New York University officials said they were aware of the action by Harvard and Yale, but ''we haven't made any determination on the matter yet.''

Neelam Bohra contributed reporting. Alain Delaquérière contributed research.Neelam Bohra contributed reporting. Alain Delaquérière contributed research.

**Graphic**

PHOTO: Yale School of Law was No. 1 this year, and Harvard's law school was tied for fourth. (PHOTOGRAPH BY CHRISTOPHER CAPOZZIELLO FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A25.

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[***Democrats Need to Find the Next Fetterman***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:66W5-S3N1-DXY4-X514-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** By Michael Sokolove

**Body**

When John Fetterman announced his candidacy for the U.S. Senate early in 2021, he vowed to compete everywhere, including areas of Pennsylvania that ''feel left behind'' and not ''part of the conversation.'' His campaign mantra was, ''Every county, every vote.''

To many political professionals, this sounded like a promise that would give way to the unforgiving arithmetic of a statewide campaign. Rural voters in Pennsylvania, as elsewhere in America, have been increasingly beyond the reach of Democrats. So why bother when you can just mine the deep trove of Democratic votes in the cities and close-in suburbs?

But Mr. Fetterman, the state's lieutenant governor and an unconventional politician in almost every way, did not waver. And the results showed that he had substantially cut into the huge margins that Donald Trump ran up in Pennsylvania's deep-red communities in defeating Hillary Clinton in 2016 -- and again four years later in losing the state, just barely, to Joe Biden.

Mr. Biden won Pennsylvania by a razor-thin 1.2 percentage points. Mr. Fetterman's margin over Mehmet Oz was over four percentage points -- a comfortable quarter million votes. He outpaced Mr. Biden and Mrs. Clinton in some of the metropolitan areas, most notably Pittsburgh and its suburbs -- but much of the difference was in the votes from across a landscape of small towns and rural communities.

Mr. Fetterman's victory represented the only Senate seat that either Democrats or Republicans flipped last week. Exactly how Mr. Fetterman was able to beat Dr. Oz -- in a swing state and even after suffering a near-fatal stroke that kept him off the campaign trail for weeks -- is worthy of close study by Democrats. Voters' willingness to send a still-recovering candidate to Washington implies a strong emotional investment in Mr. Fetterman.

No candidate can be replicated, and that is especially true of Mr. Fetterman. He is 6-foot-8 with a shaved head, multiple tattoos and a sartorial style that leans to hipster rustic. There are not a lot of other inked-up giants Democrats can put up for office -- but Democrats can take these lessons from his winning campaign.

One lesson from Mr. Fetterman is that he showed up, repeatedly, in places that Democrats rarely visited. He began during his run for Senate in 2016, when he lost in the primary. After he was elected lieutenant governor in 2018, a job with few official duties, he traveled the state constantly.

''He has physically spent more time in rural Pennsylvania than any candidate I've ever seen,'' Jeff Eggleston, the chairman of the state's Democratic Rural Caucus, told me. ''He got to know people. He spent time in our backyards. He made real, meaningful relationships, so people were willing to make a huge sacrifice in order to get him over the finish line.''

Mr. Eggleston is from Warren County, in the far northwest corner of Pennsylvania. If you looked at the results of last week's Senate race in only that county -- 63 percent for Dr. Oz to 34 percent for Mr. Fetterman -- you might think it was a bad night for the Democrat. But Mr. Trump twice won the county with nearly 70 percent of the vote. The same pattern repeated in rural areas across the state and, in combination with a solid performance with Democratic voters in the cities and close-in suburbs, allowed Mr. Fetterman to claim victory.

Mr. Fetterman's style and appearance are the first things that set him apart. Neil Oxman, a Philadelphia consultant who has run more than a dozen statewide races, including those of the two-term governor Ed Rendell, said that ''you can't discount the look'' -- his signature outfit is a Carhartt hoodie and cargo shorts. Mr. Oxman noted: ''It's an entry. He can talk to blue-collar people in a way that other Democrats have been failing at.''

Another lesson in Mr. Fetterman's success is that the issues that animate him have stayed consistent. They amount to an idiosyncratic basket of concerns that, critically, do not come off as poll-driven. As lieutenant governor, he headed the Board of Pardons and strongly advocated granting clemency to inmates who had served long terms and posed no threat. Dr. Oz spent millions on TV ads hammering him as lenient on crime, but Mr. Fetterman did not back down on the issue.

Mr. Fetterman has long supported the legalization of marijuana and flew a flag displaying cannabis leaves from his office in Harrisburg. ''The advocacy for legal marijuana is a big thing,'' said Christopher Borick, a pollster and the director of the Muhlenberg College Institute of Public Opinion in Pennsylvania. ''If you look at polling, it resonates with groups that Democrats struggle with -- a lot of the white ***working class*** and young men -- white, non-college-educated men.''

''The aspects that he put together will be looked at. We may see some Fetterman 2.0s in the next cycle,'' Mr. Borick added.

Though Mr. Fetterman is a ''prototypical white ***working-class*** male,'' said Anat Shenker-Osorio, a Bay Area-based strategist for progressive candidates and organizations -- ''a dude's dude,'' if you will -- she notes that he played against that type after his stroke. ''He demonstrated vulnerability. Stereotypically, his kind of male is not supposed to be weak or fall down. He admitted he was not in control and lifted up vulnerability as a strength.''

Pennsylvania has never elected a female governor or senator, and its Legislature has been dominated by men. The Supreme Court's decision to overturn Roe v. Wade played a critical role -- most likely the critical role -- in the much better than expected midterm performance by Democrats generally and by Mr. Fetterman in particular. He had already been an unyielding advocate of abortion rights; he talked about the issue more frequently after the Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization decision. ''Would he have won without Dobbs?'' Mr. Borick said. ''I'm not so sure.''

One thing that others might take from Mr. Fetterman is that while he hit hard at Dr. Oz, it was often with a sense of fun that stood out in an otherwise grim political atmosphere. To remind voters that his opponent was a longtime New Jerseyan who had only recently moved across state lines, his campaign (including the social media producer Annie Wu) trolled Dr. Oz with social media videos from Nicole LaValle, née Polizzi, a cast member of the ''Jersey Shore'' franchise better known as Snooki, and Steven Van Zandt of Bruce Springsteen's E Street Band.

Both Mr. Fetterman and his wife, Gisele, are witty users of social media. Even their dog has a Twitter account. On the morning after the election, I talked to Mr. Fetterman's campaign manager, Brendan McPhillips, about what lessons can be drawn from the campaign. ''It's about embracing candidates for who they are and not trying to nominate the same cookie-cutter people or mold them into something they're not,'' he said. ''And you can't try to slice off entire demographic categories and ignore them. It's a recipe for failure.''

Ms. Shenker-Osorio told me that the Democratic establishment in Pennsylvania lined up in the spring primary behind Mr. Fetterman's opponent, Conor Lamb, a moderate congressman from a family with a deep history in Democratic politics.

Mr. Fetterman ''was deemed too lefty,'' she said. ''They desperately wanted Lamb. So, as Step 1, how about we put an ax through 'electability' and recall that the middle of the road is where you get run over.''

Michael Sokolove, an author and contributing writer for The New York Times Magazine, writes frequently about Pennsylvania politics and culture.

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[*https://www.nytimes.com/2022/11/15/opinion/john-fetterman-democrats.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/11/15/opinion/john-fetterman-democrats.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO (PHOTOGRAPH BY JUSTIN MERRIMAN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A22.

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[***Why Unions Matter So Much***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67RH-2D41-JBG3-62JJ-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** BRIEFING

**Length:** 1868 words

**Byline:** David Leonhardt

**Highlight:** Is the Democratic Party again starting to pay more attention to them?

**Body**

Is the Democratic Party again starting to pay more attention to them?

For decades, the Republican Party has seemed to care more about labor unions than the Democratic Party has.

Many Republican officials treat organized labor as their political enemy. When Republicans gain power in a state capital, they often try to pass “right to work” laws meant to shrink unions. And these laws have their intended effect: They reduce the number of workers who belong to unions, reduce Democrats’ share of the vote in elections and reduce the number of ***working-class*** candidates who run for office, academic research has found.

Modern Democratic politicians, on the other hand, have often sat out the political battle. Every Democratic president for decades, including Joe Biden, has said he favors a federal law to make it easier for workers to organize — and each of those presidents has failed to pass such a law. Democratic leaders in Congress also have not made labor law a priority. Nor have many Democratic governors.

Jamelle Bouie, a Times Opinion columnist, captured this asymmetry [*when he wrote*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/12/04/opinion/pelosi-northam-unions-democrats.html): “Republicans and other conservatives know who their enemies are — they know that organized labor is a key obstacle to dismantling the social safety net. The question is whether Democrats understand that their fortunes are also bound up in the fate of workers.”

But events in Michigan this week raise the question of whether Democrats are starting to change their approach and devote more attention to strengthening organized labor.

Why Michigan matters

On Wednesday, Democrats in the Michigan House of Representatives [*passed a bill repealing the right-to-work law*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/09/us/michigan-democrats-right-to-work-lgbtq-guns.html) that Republicans enacted in 2012. For the new bill to become law, the State Senate, which Democrats also control, would need to pass it and Gov. Gretchen Whitmer would need to sign it, as she has signaled she will. Democrats gained control of the Michigan House and Senate in last year’s elections.

If the bill did become law, it would be one of only a handful of repeals of any statewide right-to-work laws. “It’s a huge deal,” Jake Grumbach, a political scientist at the University of Washington who has studied the issue, told me.

Currently, 27 states have such laws, including most of the South and the Great Plains, as well as Indiana and Wisconsin. Whenever Republicans control both the legislature and governorship in a state, they typically push for a right-to-work law. Yet when Democrats have taken control of a state government, they have sometimes left the law in place, as was the case in Virginia a few years ago, Grumbach noted.

The details of the right-to-work debate can be technical, but they’re worth taking a minute to understand. Above all, the laws mandate that nonunionized workers cannot be required to pay the equivalent of union dues, even if the union is negotiating pay and benefits on the workers’ behalf. Many contracts call for a company’s management and union to agree on pay and benefits for all workers in a given job category, regardless of their union status.

The central argument in favor of the laws is based on individual freedom: Why should workers have to pay dues to a union to which they don’t belong? The very term “right to work,” coined by a Dallas Morning News editorial writer in 1941, evokes freedom. The central argument against the laws is grounded in economics: They allow nonunionized workers to become free riders, receiving the advantages of collective bargaining without paying for it.

A 20 percent raise

Wherever you fall on this debate, the laws clearly have an impact. They lead union membership to decline, as more workers choose not to pay dues and instead take home more money in the short term. Eventually, the laws do enough to weaken unions that they disappear from some workplaces.

In the long term, the decline of unions tends to hurt workers: A large recent study, consistent with other research, found that union members made [*about 20 percent more on average*](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/07/06/business/labor-unions-income-inequality.html) than nonunionized workers who were otherwise similar. The additional wages often came out of corporate profits, which explains why the decline of unions has contributed to rising economic inequality. The shrinking of unions effectively redistributes income from low- and middle-income workers to affluent investors.

(In [*a new Times Magazine essay about American poverty*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/09/magazine/poverty-by-america-matthew-desmond.html), the sociologist Matthew Desmond writes: “With unions largely out of the picture, corporations have chipped away at the conventional midcentury work arrangement, which involved steady employment, opportunities for advancement and raises and decent pay with some benefits.”)

Then there are the political effects of unions. They help turn out voters and focus voters on economic issues. That focusing role is significant because of a fact that I’ve [*often covered*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/04/briefing/democrats-election-working-class-voters.html) in this newsletter: Many ***working-class*** Americans hold progressive economic views while also being religious, patriotic and socially moderate.

When a labor union talks to these voters about economic policy, they become more likely to vote for a Democrat. When they are not in a union, they may instead be swayed to vote Republican by their evangelical church or Fox News. A 2018 academic study, comparing counties on either side of a state border, found that the passage of a right-to-work law reduced the Democratic Party’s vote share by about three percentage points on average.

The bottom line

The repeal of Michigan’s right-to-work law would be significant on its own, given the size of the state’s economy and its importance in presidential elections. It would also highlight a larger trend: The Democratic Party again seems to be emphasizing organized labor, as it did in the mid-20th century.

Biden may have failed to pass a federal law making it easier for workers to join unions, but he has [*repeatedly talked about their importance*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/02/22/briefing/brian-deese-exit-interview.html) and included pro-union provisions in other bills. “He is paying more authentic attention to the needs of working people to have unions than the last three Democratic presidents have,” Michael Podhorzer, a former political director of the A.F.L.-C.I.O., told me.

What’s next in Michigan: The state senate seems likely to vote on the bill next week.

THE LATEST NEWS

The Budget

* Biden [*released his proposed budget*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2023/03/09/us/biden-budget-tax-news). It would reduce the deficit through a minimum tax on billionaires and a higher tax on corporate stock buybacks.

1. The budget won’t become law but offers a preview of the populist themes Biden will probably highlight in a re-election campaign.
2. Congressional Republicans [*called Biden’s plan*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2023/03/09/us/biden-budget-tax-news#the-gop-quickly-rejected-bidens-budget-foreshadowing-a-coming-clash) “a road map for fiscal ruin.” Republicans have not yet released their own budget plan.

Politics

* Prosecutors signaled that Donald Trump [*could be indicted soon*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/09/nyregion/trump-potential-criminal-charges-bragg.html) over hush money paid to the porn star Stormy Daniels.

1. Senator Mitch McConnell [*suffered a concussion*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/09/us/politics/mitch-mcconnell-hospitalized-washington.html) after falling at a private dinner. He’ll be in the hospital for a few days.
2. In exchange for normalizing relations with Israel, Saudi Arabia [*wants security assurances from Biden*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/09/us/politics/saudi-arabia-israel-united-states.html) and help with developing a civilian nuclear program.
3. Jenna Ellis, a lawyer who represented Trump in cases trying to overturn the 2020 election results, admitted she [*knowingly made false claims of voter fraud*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/09/us/politics/jenna-ellis-trump-2020-election.html).

War in Ukraine

* Russia’s attacks yesterday [*included hypersonic missiles*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/09/world/europe/russia-ukraine-missile-hypersonic.html), weapons that can travel at more than five times the speed of sound.

1. It has been difficult for Europe to [*break its dependency on Russia’s nuclear power industry*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/10/business/economy/russia-nuclear-energy-ukraine.html), because a state-owned company is a huge supplier of nuclear fuel.

Other Big Stories

* Residents in East Palestine, Ohio, [*are worried about their health*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/09/health/east-palestine-derailment-health-issues.html) after last month’s train derailment caused a toxic spill. Medical guidance is sparse.

1. Xi Jinping [*started a new term as China’s leader*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/09/world/asia/xi-economy-us-rivalry.html), cementing his power. He will focus on the economy and his nation’s rivalry with the U.S.
2. A gunman [*killed several people at a Jehovah’s Witness hall*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/09/world/europe/hamburg-shooting.html) in Hamburg, Germany. Mass shootings are rare in the country.
3. California is seeing more bad weather today. [*Track the latest storm*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/03/09/us/track-california-storm.html).
4. Australia will [*buy nuclear-powered submarines*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/09/us/politics/australia-nuclear-submarines-china.html) from the U.S., deepening a security pact to counter China.

Opinions

Why are conservatives obsessing about wokeness? With economic conservatism in shambles and Roe v. Wade gone, [*they’re flailing about for a cause*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/10/opinion/republican-woke-focus.html), Michelle Goldberg says.

Many American men [*are falling behind*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/10/opinion/ezra-klein-podcast-richard-reeves.html) in education, employment and health, Richard Reeves argues on “The Ezra Klein Show.”

MORNING READS

Coming of age: In a small Ohio town, the [*band room is an escape*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/03/09/style/ravenna-high-school-ohio-band.html).

“Gymtimidation” is real: Don’t let that [*stop you from working out*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/09/well/move/gym-workout-anxiety-fears.html).

Lab studies: Female mice have been left out of research because of their hormones. [*Male mice are more erratic*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/07/science/female-mice-hormones.html).

One more St. Patrick’s Day: Malachy McCourt, a 91-year-old actor, writer and bartender, [*still has a few stories left*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/10/nyregion/malachy-mccourt.html).

Advice from Wirecutter: Pick [*the best disposable camera*](https://www.nytimes.com/wirecutter/reviews/best-disposable-cameras/).

Lives Lived: Ian Falconer designed opera sets, drew covers for The New Yorker and created “Olivia,” a children’s book about a piglet that became a sensation. Falconer [*died at 63*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/08/books/ian-falconer-dead.html).

Robert Blake portrayed gritty characters, but a trial and acquittal in his wife’s murder eclipsed his acting career. Blake [*died at 89*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/09/obituaries/robert-blake-dead.html).

SPORTS NEWS FROM THE ATHLETIC

Accusations of hazing: Former women’s ice hockey players at Harvard say the program crossed the boundaries of [*acceptable treatment of athletes*](https://theathletic.com/4288145/2023/03/10/harvard-womens-hockey-mistreatment-hazing-katey-stone/).

The firing of a basketball legend: Patrick Ewing is [*out as Georgetown’s head coach*](https://theathletic.com/4293360/2023/03/09/georgetown-fires-patrick-ewing/). A possible replacement: [*Rick Pitino*](https://theathletic.com/4292837/2023/03/09/georgetown-coaching-candidates-pitino-keatts-ewing/).

Heels out: North Carolina fell to Virginia in the A.C.C. conference tournament yesterday, all but [*sealing its exclusion*](https://theathletic.com/4280956/2023/03/09/ncaa-tournament-bubble-watch-north-carolina/) from the N.C.A.A. tournament this year.

ARTS AND IDEAS

Fashion takes flight

The winter fashion season wrapped up this week, and if there was a central trend among the shows in Paris, it was feathers, [*The Times’s Elizabeth Paton writes*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/08/fashion/paris-fashion-week-trends-feathers.html): layered goose plumes on tops and pants, a large ostrich feather rippling out from pantsuits and more. “In our world of oppression, pressure and anxiety, we need freedom, lightness and the ability to fly,” the founder of a Ukrainian fashion label said.

PLAY, WATCH, EAT

What to Cook

Cocoa powder gives [*these cupcakes*](https://cooking.nytimes.com/recipes/1015531-chocolate-cupcakes) a deep chocolaty flavor.

What to Watch

“Scream VI” is [*a grimier entry in the franchise*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/08/movies/scream-vi-review.html), with some frightening suspense scenes.

Travel

Things to do for [*36 hours in Nashville*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/03/09/travel/things-to-do-nashville.html).

Late Night

The hosts discussed Trump’s new book, [*priced at $99*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/10/arts/television/stephen-colbert-trump-book.html).

News Quiz

How well did you [*follow the headlines this week*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/03/10/briefing/news-quiz-yeezys-tucker-carlson.html)

Now Time to Play

The pangram from yesterday’s Spelling Bee was unequaled. Here is [*today’s puzzle*](https://www.nytimes.com/puzzles/spelling-bee).

Here’s [*today’s Mini Crossword*](https://www.nytimes.com/crosswords/game/mini), and a clue: British Z’s (four letters).

And here’s [*today’s Wordle*](https://www.nytimes.com/games/wordle/index.html).

Thanks for spending part of your morning with The Times. See you tomorrow.

P.S. “Sin Eater: The Crimes of Anthony Pellicano,” a Times documentary about a Hollywood fixer, premieres tonight. [*Watch the trailer*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/07/NYT-Presents/anthony-pellicano-fixer-hollywood.html).

Here’s [*today’s front page*](https://static01.nyt.com/images/2023/03/10/nytfrontpage/scan.pdf).

“[*The Daily*](https://www.nytimes.com/thedaily)” is about Israel.

Matthew Cullen, Lauren Hard, Lauren Jackson, Claire Moses, Ian Prasad Philbrick, Tom Wright-Piersanti and Ashley Wu contributed to The Morning. You can reach the team at [*themorning@nytimes.com*](mailto:themorning@nytimes.com).

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PHOTO: UAW workers listen to a House Labor Committee meeting in Michigan on Wednesday. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Emily Elconin for The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** March 10, 2023

**End of Document**



[***How Democrats Can Build a John Fetterman 2.0; Guest Essay***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:66W0-5DS1-DXY4-X4D8-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

November 15, 2022 Tuesday 00:05 EST

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 1319 words

**Byline:** Michael Sokolove

**Highlight:** No candidate can be replicated, but Democrats can still take lessons from his winning campaign.

**Body**

When John Fetterman announced his candidacy for the U.S. Senate early in 2021, he vowed to compete everywhere, including areas of Pennsylvania that “feel left behind” and not “part of the conversation.” His campaign mantra was, “Every county, every vote.”

To many political professionals, this sounded like a promise that would give way to the unforgiving arithmetic of a statewide campaign. Rural voters in Pennsylvania, as elsewhere in America, have been increasingly beyond the reach of Democrats. So why bother when you can just mine the deep trove of Democratic votes in the cities and close-in suburbs?

But Mr. Fetterman, the state’s lieutenant governor and an unconventional politician in almost every way, did not waver. And the results showed that he had substantially cut into the huge margins that Donald Trump ran up in Pennsylvania’s deep-red communities in defeating Hillary Clinton in 2016 — and again four years later in losing the state, just barely, to Joe Biden.

Mr. Biden won Pennsylvania by a razor-thin 1.2 percentage points. Mr. Fetterman’s margin over Mehmet Oz was over four percentage points — a comfortable quarter million votes. He outpaced Mr. Biden and Mrs. Clinton in some of the metropolitan areas, most notably Pittsburgh and its suburbs — but much of the difference was in the votes from across a landscape of small towns and rural communities.

Mr. Fetterman’s victory represented the only Senate seat that either Democrats or Republicans flipped last week. Exactly how Mr. Fetterman was able to beat Dr. Oz — in a swing state and even after suffering a near-fatal stroke that kept him off the campaign trail for weeks — is worthy of close study by Democrats. Voters’ willingness to send a still-recovering candidate to Washington implies a strong emotional investment in Mr. Fetterman.

No candidate can be replicated, and that is especially true of Mr. Fetterman. He is 6-foot-8 with a shaved head, multiple tattoos and a sartorial style that leans to hipster rustic. There are not a lot of other inked-up giants Democrats can put up for office — but Democrats can take these lessons from his winning campaign.

One lesson from Mr. Fetterman is that he showed up, repeatedly, in places that Democrats rarely visited. He began during his run for Senate in 2016, when he lost in the primary. After he was elected lieutenant governor in 2018, a job with few official duties, he traveled the state constantly.

“He has physically spent more time in rural Pennsylvania than any candidate I’ve ever seen,” Jeff Eggleston, the chairman of the state’s Democratic Rural Caucus, told me. “He got to know people. He spent time in our backyards. He made real, meaningful relationships, so people were willing to make a huge sacrifice in order to get him over the finish line.”

Mr. Eggleston is from Warren County, in the far northwest corner of Pennsylvania. If you looked at the results of last week’s Senate race in only that county — 63 percent for Dr. Oz to 34 percent for Mr. Fetterman — you might think it was a bad night for the Democrat. But Mr. Trump twice won the county with nearly 70 percent of the vote. The same pattern repeated in rural areas across the state and, in combination with a solid performance with Democratic voters in the cities and close-in suburbs, allowed Mr. Fetterman to claim victory.

Mr. Fetterman’s style and appearance are the first things that set him apart. Neil Oxman, a Philadelphia consultant who has run more than a dozen statewide races, including those of the two-term governor Ed Rendell, said that “you can’t discount the look” — his signature outfit is a Carhartt hoodie and cargo shorts. Mr. Oxman noted: “It’s an entry. He can talk to blue-collar people in a way that other Democrats have been failing at.”

Another lesson in Mr. Fetterman’s success is that the issues that animate him have stayed consistent. They amount to an idiosyncratic basket of concerns that, critically, do not come off as poll-driven. As lieutenant governor, he headed the Board of Pardons and strongly advocated granting clemency to inmates who had served long terms and posed no threat. Dr. Oz spent millions on TV ads hammering him as lenient on crime, but Mr. Fetterman did not back down on the issue.

Mr. Fetterman has long supported the legalization of marijuana and flew a flag displaying cannabis leaves from his office in Harrisburg. “The advocacy for legal marijuana is a big thing,” said Christopher Borick, a pollster and the director of the Muhlenberg College Institute of Public Opinion in Pennsylvania. “If you look at polling, it resonates with groups that Democrats struggle with — a lot of the white ***working class*** and young men — white, non-college-educated men.”

“The aspects that he put together will be looked at. We may see some Fetterman 2.0s in the next cycle,” Mr. Borick added.

Though Mr. Fetterman is a “prototypical white ***working-class*** male,” said Anat Shenker-Osorio, a Bay Area-based strategist for progressive candidates and organizations — “a dude’s dude,” if you will — she notes that he played against that type after his stroke. “He demonstrated vulnerability. Stereotypically, his kind of male is not supposed to be weak or fall down. He admitted he was not in control and lifted up vulnerability as a strength.”

Pennsylvania has never elected a female governor or senator, and its Legislature has been dominated by men. The Supreme Court’s decision to overturn Roe v. Wade played a critical role — most likely the critical role — in the much better than expected midterm performance by Democrats generally and by Mr. Fetterman in particular. He had already been an unyielding advocate of abortion rights; he talked about the issue more frequently after the Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization decision. “Would he have won without Dobbs?” Mr. Borick said. “I’m not so sure.”

One thing that others might take from Mr. Fetterman is that while he hit hard at Dr. Oz, it was often with a sense of fun that stood out in an otherwise grim political atmosphere. To remind voters that his opponent was a longtime New Jerseyan who had only recently moved across state lines, his campaign (including the social media producer Annie Wu) trolled Dr. Oz with social media videos from Nicole LaValle, née Polizzi, a cast member of the “Jersey Shore” franchise better known as Snooki, and Steven Van Zandt of Bruce Springsteen’s E Street Band.

Both Mr. Fetterman and his wife, Gisele, are witty users of social media. Even their dog has a Twitter account. On the morning after the election, I talked to Mr. Fetterman’s campaign manager, Brendan McPhillips, about what lessons can be drawn from the campaign. “It’s about embracing candidates for who they are and not trying to nominate the same cookie-cutter people or mold them into something they’re not,” he said. “And you can’t try to slice off entire demographic categories and ignore them. It’s a recipe for failure.”

Ms. Shenker-Osorio told me that the Democratic establishment in Pennsylvania lined up in the spring primary behind Mr. Fetterman’s opponent, Conor Lamb, a moderate congressman from a family with a deep history in Democratic politics.

Mr. Fetterman “was deemed too lefty,” she said. “They desperately wanted Lamb. So, as Step 1, how about we put an ax through ‘electability’ and recall that the middle of the road is where you get run over.”

Michael Sokolove, an author and contributing writer for The New York Times Magazine, writes frequently about Pennsylvania politics and culture.

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PHOTO (PHOTOGRAPH BY JUSTIN MERRIMAN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A22.

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**End of Document**



[***With the End of Affirmative Action, a Push for a New Tool: Adversity Scores***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68M0-XKC1-JBG3-6537-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

July 3, 2023 Monday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; National Desk; Pg. 13

**Length:** 1408 words

**Byline:** By Stephanie Saul

**Body**

To build a diverse class of students, the medical school at U.C. Davis ranks applicants by the disadvantages they have faced. Can it work nationally?

For the head of admissions at a medical school, Dr. Mark Henderson is pretty blunt when sizing up the profession.

''Mostly rich kids get to go to medical school,'' he said.

In his role at the medical school at the University of California, Davis, Dr. Henderson has tried to change that, developing an unorthodox tool to evaluate applicants: the socioeconomic disadvantage scale, or S.E.D.

The scale rates every applicant from zero to 99, taking into account their life circumstances, such as family income and parental education. Admissions decisions are based on that score, combined with the usual portfolio of grades, test scores, recommendations, essays and interviews.

The disadvantage scale has helped turn U.C. Davis into one of the most diverse medical schools in the country -- notable in a state that voted in 1996 to ban affirmative action.

With the Supreme Court's ruling last week against race-conscious admissions, the medical school offers a glimpse of how selective schools across the country might overhaul their admissions policies, as they look for alternative ways to achieve diversity without running afoul of the new law.

Last week, President Biden called adversity scores a ''new standard'' for achieving diversity.

Word has gotten out about the U.C. Davis scale. Dr. Henderson said that about 20 schools had recently requested more information. And there are other socioeconomic measurements, including Landscape, released in 2019 from the College Board, the nonprofit that administers the SATs. That tool allows undergraduate admissions offices to assess the socioeconomic backgrounds of individual students.

But skeptics question whether such rankings -- or any kind of socioeconomic affirmative action -- will be enough to replace race-conscious affirmative action. And schools that use adversity scales may also find themselves wandering into legal quagmires, with conservative groups promising to fight programs that are simply stand-ins for race.

Over the years, medical schools have made some progress in diversifying their student bodies, with numbers ticking up. But just like undergraduate admissions, wealth and connections continue to play a determining role in who is accepted. More than half of medical students come from families in the top 20 percent of income, while only 4 percent come from those in the bottom 20 percent, according to data from the American Association of Medical Colleges.

There is also a family dynamic. Children of doctors are 24 times more likely to become doctors than their peers, according to the American Medical Association. It's hard to know why the profession passes down from generation to generation, but the statistic drove the association to adopt a policy opposing legacy preferences in admissions.

''That's a staggering economic gap between medical students and the general public,'' said Dr. Henderson, who comes from a ***working-class*** upbringing and now serves as associate dean of admissions.

As a consequence, the number of Black doctors remains stubbornly low: About 6 percent of practicing doctors in the United States are Black, compared with 13.6 percent of the American population who identify as Black.

With the Supreme Court decision, ''that number is likely to go down,'' said Dr. James E.K. Hildreth, the president of Meharry Medical College, formed in 1876 in Nashville to train Black health care providers.

Leaders in medicine say training more Black and Hispanic doctors could help bridge the vast divides in American health care. Research shows that doctors from underrepresented racial and ethnic groups are more likely to work in primary care or in locales where doctors are scarce.

And patients have better outcomes when treated by doctors from similar backgrounds, said Dr. Jesse M. Ehrenfeld, president of the American Medical Association.

The U.C. Davis scale has drawn attention because of its ability to bring in diverse students using what the schools says are ''race-neutral'' socioeconomic models.

In its most recent entering class of 133 students, 14 percent were Black and 30 percent were Hispanic. Nationally, 10 percent of medical school students were Black and 12 percent were Hispanic. A vast majority of the U.C. Davis class -- 84 percent -- comes from disadvantaged backgrounds, and 42 percent are the first in their family to go to college.

The overall acceptance rate has been less than 2 percent.

In the Davis scale, first used in 2012, eight categories establish an adversity score for each candidate. Factors include family income, whether applicants come from an underserved area, whether they help support their nuclear families and whether their parents went to college.

The higher an applicant rates on the disadvantage scale, the bigger the boost.

There is no set formula on how to balance the scale with the academic record, Dr. Henderson said, but a simulation of the system revealed that students from underrepresented groups grew to 15.3 percent from 10.7 percent. And the share of economically disadvantaged students tripled, to 14.5 percent of the class from 4.6 percent.

At the same time, scores from the MCAT, the standardized test for medical school applications, dropped only marginally.

Still, it's not easy to persuade medical schools to upend admissions standards, particularly anything that undermines the value of test scores and grades. Dr. Henderson said he had received pushback from his own colleagues.

''Doctors say their kids got into medical school elsewhere, and they didn't get in here,'' he said.

As the children of doctors, he said, those applicants earned an S.E.D. score of zero.

A number of scholars, including Richard D. Kahlenberg, have promoted using class-conscious preferences, which they say could address racial inequities in education without fostering the resentment often prompted by racially based diversity plans.

And President Biden said on Thursday that his administration would develop a ''new standard for colleges taking into account the adversity a student has overcome.''

''The kid who faced tougher challenges has demonstrated more grit, more determination,'' Mr. Biden told reporters at the White House, ''and that should be a factor that colleges should take into account in admissions.''

He might be talking about someone like Eleanor Adams, a member of the Choctaw Nation, who said that she did not think medical school was an option for her.

''I didn't grow up with a lot of money,'' she said.

But she found mentors who encouraged her, and today she is in her third year of medical school at U.C. Davis, which is in Sacramento. She plans to become an Indian Health Service doctor in Oklahoma -- fulfilling one of the school's goals, Dr. Henderson said, which is to train doctors who will return to their communities.

At schools in other states without affirmative action, such as the University of Michigan, admissions officials have complained that enrolling more socioeconomically disadvantaged students has not significantly increased the share of Black, Hispanic and Native American students.

''Those tools certainly have utility, but they fall short of accomplishing what a race-conscious admission practice does,'' said Dr. Ehrenfeld of the American Medical Association.

The socioeconomic rankings could also be legally challenged. Chief Justice John G. Roberts Jr., in his majority opinion on affirmative action, wrote that colleges could consider how race had affected an applicant's life. But he also warned against using proxies for race.

The Pacific Legal Foundation, a libertarian activist group, has already sued a selective school, Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology in Alexandria, Va., for using economic factors as stand-ins for race in admissions.

Joshua P. Thompson, a lawyer for the foundation, said the legal questions surrounding these disadvantage indexes were complex.

''I think the devil is going to be in the details,'' Mr. Thompson said. ''The Supreme Court was pretty clear that what can't be done directly can't be done indirectly.''

Should it come to that, Dr. Henderson said that his school's disadvantage scale would be defensible in court.

''Am I worried about it? Yes,'' Dr. Henderson said of a lawsuit. ''Is it going to stop me? No.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/07/02/us/affirmative-action-university-of-california-davis.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/07/02/us/affirmative-action-university-of-california-davis.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: Dr. Mark Henderson, right, of the University of California, Davis Medical School, one of the country's most selective and diverse. (PHOTOGRAPH BY JIM WILSON/THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A13.

**Load-Date:** July 3, 2023

**End of Document**



[***The Truth About Hot Cheetos Is Not in ‘Flamin’ Hot’; critic’s notebook***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68DX-0M61-JBG3-628P-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

June 9, 2023 Friday 23:18 EST

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**Section:** DINING

**Length:** 1134 words

**Byline:** Tejal Rao

**Highlight:** The film, now streaming on Hulu and Disney Plus, was adapted from a debunked memoir, but it does reveal how food brands want to be seen.

**Body**

The film, now streaming on Hulu and Disney Plus, was adapted from a debunked memoir, but it does reveal how food brands want to be seen.

Like Oscar Isaac, I occasionally [*use chopsticks to eat hot Cheetos*](https://www.gq.com/story/isaac-cheetos-kimmel-questions), a technique that keeps their red dust from sticking to my fingers. It’s the neatest way to keep pace with a perfectly engineered snack, designed both to satisfy the desire for its prickly heat and violent crunch, its convincing tang and mellow sweetness, and to fuel an immediate need to revisit it.

There are films this year celebrating (and satirizing) the invention of all kinds of consumer products, including the [*BlackBerry*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/11/movies/blackberry-review.html), [*Air Jordans*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/04/04/movies/air-movie-review.html) and [*Tetris*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/30/movies/tetris-review.html), but I never imagined that this spicy little snack produced by a multinational corporation could be the hero of a late-capitalist uplift saga.

“[*Flamin’ Hot*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=it7sNRloq-A&amp;t=76s),” directed by Eva Longoria and streaming now on Hulu and Disney Plus, is a frothy, optimistic, very American film about Richard Montañez, a Mexican American kid from San Bernardino County who grows up to work at a Frito-Lay plant and dreams up a billion-dollar idea: Flamin’ Hot Cheetos.

Through Montañez, the rise of the fingertip-staining, habit-forming, spicy corn-based snack becomes a story of the American dream — a ’90s-style janitor-to-executive tale fueled by pure grit and guts.

Is it Montañez’s biopic, or the snack’s? In the film, there’s no difference, and success is a blurry, feverish longing. Montañez imagines his personal triumph as tangled up with the product’s, and seems convinced that corporate approval of hot Cheetos will somehow translate to respect and representation for ***working-class*** Mexican Americans. If that all seems a bit too tidy, a bit too good to be true, well, it’s because it is.

“Flamin’ Hot” was adapted from the [*memoir-ish self-help book*](https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/622527/flamin-hot-by-richard-p-montanez/) of the real-life Richard Montañez. (One example of its guidance: “You can start your journey by putting your hunger to work for you so you can move past your fears.”). Though Mr. Montañez did work his way up from janitor to marketing executive at Frito-Lay, a [*Los Angeles Times investigation*](https://www.latimes.com/business/story/2021-05-16/flamin-hot-cheetos-richard-montanez) in 2021 thoroughly debunked the story of his inventing hot Cheetos.

In fact, in the late 1980s, Frito-Lay was losing on small-bag snack sales and getting desperate. Testing a spicy flavor line was a coordinated corporate strategy, and hot Cheetos were first released to the company’s test markets in Chicago, Detroit, Cleveland and Houston, not Southern California, where the film is set.

Mr. Montañez’s version was admittedly way more fun than the truth, but adapting it was also an opportunity to revise, reshape and ultimately align the story of hot Cheetos with consumers.

In the film, getting ready for his pitch to the executives, he practices his lines with a co-worker at the factory: “The Hispanic market will not be ignored!” But in the big meeting, he softens, admitting both his strategy and his vulnerability: “I want to know that I matter to you, to this company, to the world.”

Hot Cheetos are great, but I don’t know — does anyone think a snack can do all that? Gushers can [*tweet*](https://twitter.com/gushers/status/1269110304086114304?lang=en) about #BlackLivesMatter, M&amp;M’s green mascot can switch from [*heels to flats*](https://www.marketwatch.com/story/the-green-and-brown-m-ms-swap-sexy-heels-for-comfier-shoes-in-a-controversial-brand-makeover-11642797194) and Skittles can print new [*packaging*](https://www.cnn.com/2020/05/22/us/colorless-skittles-pride-trnd/index.html) for Pride, but we all know that gestures from food brands tend to be hollow.

In “Flamin’ Hot,” the PepsiCo chief executive Roger Enrico gives away the game: “You still think I’m investing in a janitor?” he says. “The Hispanic market is the future and this man is going to lead us there.”

It sounds like a betrayal, but it’s not. It’s exactly what Montañez, who would later become known as the “godfather of Hispanic marketing” has been fighting for from the start — not for people, but for consumers — and the film exalts it.

A murky and heartbreaking impulse drives Montañez from the start of the film, when he realizes that the elementary school bullies making fun of his lunch actually kind of like it. He starts charging them 25 cents per foil-wrapped bean burrito, converting his humiliation into cold, hard cash. Maybe he can’t get his haters to like him, but at least they like his food.

Later, at the Frito-Lay factory, Montañez and his co-workers “fight” corporate, which refuses to invest in marketing hot Cheetos properly, setting up the product — and by extension, Montañez and his crew — to fail. They find their own ingenious, dodgy ways to get the product off the shelves in Rancho Cucamonga. And Enrico, ultimately impressed by the numbers, calls Montañez to say he’d like the factory to produce five million cases.

The demand for more hot Cheetos is framed as our hero’s great victory, but the terms of the battle are a little flimsy, and its setup is insincere. Let’s rewind: Factory workers faced up against corporate suits to … do what exactly? To help those suits. To help Frito-Lay claim the Hispanic market in Southern California and to make the company more money.

Though that isn’t how things went down, the Flamin’ Hot flavor line is in fact a wild success story tied to its fans, who constantly expand on the brand’s reach with viral recipes like [*hot Cheetos salads*](https://www.tiktok.com/@freddsters/video/7027220930124451078?lang=en), elotes and fried chicken, until the dishes become canon. In an interview, [*Ms. Longoria emphasized*](https://www.latimes.com/entertainment-arts/movies/story/2023-03-11/eva-longoria-flamin-hot-cheetos-richard-montanez-sxsw) the sense of collective ownership over the snack: “I like to say, this isn’t PepsiCo’s product, this is our product. The Hispanic community made this product popular, we made it a pop-culture phenomenon.”

Much like the “Flamin’ Hot” origin story, that’s not entirely true. Though the film romanticizes labor on the production line, factories that produce hot Cheetos [*also employ underage migrant workers*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/02/25/us/unaccompanied-migrant-child-workers-exploitation.html), mostly from Central America, whose lungs sting from all the spicy dust in the air. The billion-dollar brand belongs totally and patently to PepsiCo, not the people who buy or make the snacks.

What “Flamin’ Hot” does get right, in a glossy fictional origin story, is showing us exactly how food brands wish we would see them — wholesome and harmless and completely essential to our lives, their wins and successes so tangled up with our own, it’s impossible to tell the difference.

Follow [*New York Times Cooking on Instagram*](https://www.instagram.com/nytcooking/), [*Facebook*](https://www.facebook.com/nytcooking/), [*YouTube*](https://www.youtube.com/nytcooking), [*TikTok*](https://www.tiktok.com/@nytcooking?lang=en) and [*Pinterest*](https://www.pinterest.com/nytcooking/). [*Get regular updates from New York Times Cooking, with recipe suggestions, cooking tips and shopping advice*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/cooking).

PHOTOS: “Flamin’ Hot” tells the not-actually-true story of Flamin’ Hot Cheetos through the life of Richard Montañez, a janitor who claimed to have invented the spicy snack. Center, Jesse Garcia, left with Dennis Haysbert, plays Mr. Montañez as a charming and somewhat unreliable narrator of his own story. Bottom, Eva Longoria, with Mr. Garcia, is the director. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY DANIEL DORSA FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES; ANNA KOORIS/SEARCHLIGHT PICTURES/20TH CENTURY STUDIOS; SEARCHLIGHT PICTURES/20TH CENTURY STUDIOS) This article appeared in print on page D16.

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**End of Document**



[***People Places Things***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68G5-FDF1-JBG3-637T-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

June 15, 2023 Thursday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section D; Column 0; Style Desk; Pg. 3; ARTIST'S QUESTIONNAIRE

**Length:** 2467 words

**Byline:** By Adam Bradley

**Body**

The artist, known for the influential Project Row Houses in Houston, discusses music, basketball and art's ability to improve lives.

In Athens more than 6,000 miles from his adoptive city of Houston, Rick Lowe is at home. Lowe first visited Greece in 2015, in advance of his participation in Documenta, the German exhibition of contemporary art, which marked its 14th installment in 2017 with the theme ''Learning From Athens.'' Lowe did just that, learning firsthand of the refugee crisis stoking tensions between local communities and asylum seekers arriving mainly from the Middle East and Africa. A longtime activist at home, Lowe saw this seemingly intractable circumstance abroad as a call to action.

Art, as Lowe conceives it, is a social as much as an aesthetic practice, requiring long-term engagement with specific people and places. His contribution to Documenta was the Victoria Square Project, a collaboration with the Greek artist Maria Papadimitriou that serves as a thriving communal hub of cross-cultural exchange, political action and artistic creation centered on empowering the city's Victoria Square area, known for its high volume of refugees. Eight years on, he remains the project's steward. VSP is art unfolding amid everyday life: struggle and joy, work and play, politics (hosting a mayoral debate) and culture (frequently staging talks, performances and exhibitions). It is only Lowe's most recent foray into social sculpture, an expansive concept developed in the 1970s by the German artist Joseph Beuys to describe a practice that embraces the communal and political functions of art in reshaping the world.

Lowe, 61, first gained recognition in the 1990s for his radical community-based effort Project Row Houses. Alongside a collective of Houston-based artists, and with support from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Elizabeth Firestone Graham Foundation, Lowe purchased two blocks of run-down shotgun houses in Houston's historically Black Third Ward neighborhood and transformed them into art spaces and community centers. Though Lowe stepped away from daily operations in 2018, Project Row Houses still thrives. In its 30th year, it now comprises 39 structures across five city blocks and fosters arts education programs, community enrichment efforts and neighborhood development initiatives.

For all his innovation, Lowe's artistic training was traditional. As an art student at Columbus State University in Columbus, Georgia, during the late 1970s and early '80s, he studied landscape painting in the manner of the Hudson River School. ''It wasn't really a decision for me,'' he says. ''It was more that I was going to a small, predominantly white college in the South with a very traditional art program.'' After relocating to Houston and connecting with the painter John T. Biggers, Lowe shifted his work toward a more explicitly political and figurative style, which he believed allowed him ''to speak more directly to a particular community or a particular context or circumstance within society.'' Lowe's approach was challenged in 1990, though, when a high school student visiting his studio with a class confronted him with a powerful pragmatic question, one that Lowe would later commemorate in the title of a breakout piece shown at the 2022 Whitney Biennial: ''If Artists Are Creative, Why Can't They Create Solutions?'' This challenge led Lowe to Beuys's social sculpture, which, along with Biggers's influence, prompted Project Row Houses and a series of other community-based works, from Tulsa to Chicago, and now to Athens.

Social sculpture can be transformative, but it rarely leaves a tangible record. In response, in his studio in Houston, Lowe has turned in recent years back to painting and drawing as a means of archiving this otherwise transitory and ephemeral work. Last September, Lowe debuted ''Meditations on Social Sculpture,'' his first New York solo exhibition, with Gagosian. It featured new work inspired by his community-based practice, particularly Project Row Houses and the Victoria Square Project. Many of the works involve paper collages that evoke domino tiles, vestiges of the games Lowe played with locals from Houston to Athens. ''Finding folks at the domino table has been one of the great gifts for me,'' Lowe says. Building on the improvised order of specific games, his canvases map physical space, as well as social relations and psychological states. They are intricate and variegated, playing with scale, with transience and permanence, with memory and evanescence. They are maps back to community, to the natural state of humans as social beings in an age of fracture and insolation.

A few weeks before he left Houston for Athens, where he will have two major solo exhibitions on view this summer, Lowe caught up with T over the phone.

What's the first piece of art you ever made?

I don't know if I want to tell you the honest truth or if I want to try to be a little bit more sophisticated.

Forget sophistication. We're getting into it today!

OK. I'm from a huge family -- there're 12 of us -- from Alabama. Poor, rural Alabama. No art classes. None of that stuff. My first drawing, and I must have made it at 12 years old or something, it was a drawing of a centerfold woman from Jet magazine. My siblings always laugh at me. I think somebody still has it somewhere. So you know where my head was. But that was childhood stuff. I didn't really start making art until I was in college, where I did my first landscape painting.

What's the first work you ever sold?

In my early days of painting, I had an anti-commercial slant to my thinking, because it was figurative work dealing with issues that were very personal to me -- Black issues, issues of poverty -- and I was conflicted about how those fit within a market. I had a hard time thinking that someone would own something that was speaking to the misfortunes of someone else. For that reason, I didn't sell any of the work from my first years as a painter. And then I went into social practice, where there were no objects to be sold. But as I made my way back [to drawing and painting], I started doing these domino drawings. I sold the first one through a little gallery here in Houston.

When would that have been?

That was 2015, 2016.

So you were in your 50s before you sold your first work of art. What do you think your anticapitalist 20-year-old self would critique, and what would he celebrate about where you are today?

He'd probably scratch his head and say, ''You're selling the revolution!'' But I think in the right context, he would see that revolution moves in many ways. There are many roles to play. That's what my younger self didn't understand. I was so absorbed in the practical elements [of activism] -- trying to improve the conditions of the lives of people -- that I neglected to understand the value of the poetics.

Where do you find that poetics?

It was always all around us. One of the things that Black people have never failed on is how to look cool. That's a very aesthetic thing. That's a very poetic thing. It didn't matter what the conditions were -- the practical conditions -- people still express that poetics in ways that are accessible to them, like at the very basic level, in their bodily adornment.

When you start a new piece, where do you begin?

I just pick a spot. John Biggers once asked the mathematician Bob Powell to explain the sacred art of geometry. Powell tried, but then threw his hands up. ''Artists! Let me just draw it for you.'' So he drew this 12-page [sequence]. The first page is just blank. There are infinite possibilities. The second page takes a leap of faith. You just put your compass down. And once you do that, you've got the beginning of a place. I take the same approach with my paintings. When I have a blank canvas, I think, ''This is a universe.'' Then I'll just start. Glue a couple of pieces -- my little domino chips, my imaginary domino games. It grows from there.

Given that approach, how do you know when you're done?

That's the big challenge. But I think it's an intuitive thing. You work on it and you work on it until you don't feel like there's anything else you can bring to it. Paintings, they speak to the artist as well. They're speaking to us and telling us where we are and where we're going. And at a certain point, they'll tell you: You're done.

What music do you play when you're making art?

As a teenager in the '70s in the South, the white people had their music, the Black people had their music. They had rock; we had soul. It was pretty simple. None of us dealt with anything outside of that. But when I went to college and started to explore, that's when I realized that my interests were broad. I was introduced to classical music. I was introduced to jazz. And later, as things evolved, it was hip-hop, punk, new wave and everything else. I just started going experimental. I will say that when I am soul searching and going deep into who I am, I go back to my roots. I will put on some gospel. Or I'll do Curtis Mayfield, Lionel Richie. Actually, I had a Zoom call with Lionel Richie just the other day and I found out he grew up about 30 miles from where I did.

Dominoes play a big role in some of your recent work. What draws you to the game?

My connection with dominoes feeds off my inclination toward activism. My way of being an activist is about connecting with people and community organizing. Who are the voices? What are their concerns? I found out fairly early on as I started doing community-engaged art -- or social practice art, as people like to call it -- that when you talk to people in group settings, like community meetings, you get a particular kind of response. People don't want to sound stupid. They're careful about what they're saying. But when you're sitting with people playing cards or dominoes or checkers, where everybody's just relaxed, that's when you really get to know them. So [playing games] became a key component of my community-engaged work.

I see how that would be effective in Houston. What's worked for you in Greece?

When I started working on the Victoria Square Project, I was trying to figure out how to connect with that community. So I'd walk through the neighborhood and would just check things out. And lo and behold, one day, I see a group of people gathered around a little table. I went over to look and they were playing dominoes. They were playing a little differently than we play here in Houston. But the thing about dominoes: Every house has its own rules. So I watched them play enough until I could figure out their approach. It turned out they weren't Greek, they were Albanian. I nodded to them, ''Can I get in the next game?'' And they all looked like, ''Who is this guy? What is he doing?" I got into the game. I made a few mistakes, sure. But before I knew it, they were fascinated with this new person playing. These Albanians became the guardians of the space where the Victoria Square Project is held.

Your art is engaged with community -- with specific people and places. At the same time, you've moved decidedly toward abstract painting. How do you square those two impulses?

My progression has been toward an expanded, and I guess I would call it a more mature, understanding of politics and how the world works. Early on, after I learned how to do landscapes, I rejected that because it did not allow me to speak directly to society. So I moved to figurative work. When I was doing figurative work, the whole point was to keep it narrowly focused on ***working-class*** issues, to speak directly to ***working-class*** folks. As I was doing that work, I was challenged by this kid who basically told me that my paintings were showing them what they already saw every day. ''If you're an artist and your job is to create,'' he asked me, ''then why can't you create solutions?'' That got me into a different framework. With the social sculpture work [like Project Row Houses], I think I truly started to understand a broader context for political work. The primary beneficiaries of works like Project Row Houses are people in the Third Ward community. Equally important to making that work happen, though, were the supporters beyond the community from all around the country. That became an important part of how the work could operate on multiple levels. And that actually set the stage for me to move into abstraction as a way to look at and talk about these urban and psychological issues that we're wrestling with every day.

That's a long way from landscapes.

The connection between my paintings in the early '80s, when I was learning landscape painting, and my paintings now, is that they [both] allow me to look at the earth -- the land, the place where I grew up in the South. I would go out and take photographs of landscapes. Before that point, it was just where I grew up; it was just there. But as I started to photograph and look at the land, I started to notice the deep green pine tree forest and the red clay soil. Those [hues and textures] became the basis for the paintings that I was making, but it also became imprinted upon me. ''This is where I'm from.'' So when I think about these abstract mapping pieces I'm doing now, I sometimes think of them as landscapes. The perspective has just shifted from straight on to a bird's-eye view, and then I can start looking at it politically: how the landscape through maps tells us stuff and offers us things to think about. From time to time, as I'm doing these works, I'm drawn to that palette of greens and that rust color, the red that burns through the soil there. So there are times as I'm painting now when I can feel a deep kinship with my earlier painting days.

How many hours of creative work do you think you do in a day?

Well, it depends. Like right now, man, I've been hitting the clock at anywhere from 14 to 16 hours a day.

Are you kidding me?

It's such a joy, though. It's such a pleasure. You know, I feel like this moment right now for me, getting ready for these shows in Athens, this is like my N.B.A. playoffs. There's no stopping. As Kobe [Bryant] once said, ''You rest at the end.''

You're a basketball fan? Who's your team?

I don't really have a team. I have players. For the last 10 years or so, it's been the Splash Brothers [Stephen Curry and Klay Thompson of the Golden State Warriors]. It's just beautiful to watch them play. And before that, there was my man Kobe. Kobe's always been an inspiration to me because I like to think we have a similar kind of mentality. I always tell people, ''I may not be the most talented, I may not be the most this or that but you're not gonna outwork me.'' That's always been my mode of life. Whenever I'm on to something, I'm there.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/07/t-magazine/rick-lowe-project-row-houses.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/07/t-magazine/rick-lowe-project-row-houses.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Left, as Rick Lowe prepared for his shows in Athens, his canvases reflected the Greek alphabet. Center, Mr. Lowe playing a domino game on canvas. Right, he traces topographies inspired by games of dominoes he plays in Houston.

Left, Mr. Lowe's studio. Right, a piece left over from his ''Black Wall Street Journey'' project. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY MICHAEL STARGHILL) This article appeared in print on page D3.

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**End of Document**



[***With End of Affirmative Action, a Push for a New Tool: Adversity Scores***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68KT-TR81-DXY4-X0SC-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** Stephanie Saul

**Highlight:** To build a diverse class of students, the medical school at U.C. Davis ranks applicants by the disadvantages they have faced. Can it work nationally?

**Body**

To build a diverse class of students, the medical school at U.C. Davis ranks applicants by the disadvantages they have faced. Can it work nationally?

For the head of admissions at a medical school, Dr. Mark Henderson is pretty blunt when sizing up the profession.

“Mostly rich kids get to go to medical school,” he said.

In his role at the medical school at the University of California, Davis, Dr. Henderson has tried to change that, developing an unorthodox tool to evaluate applicants: the socioeconomic disadvantage scale, or S.E.D.

The scale rates every applicant from zero to 99, taking into account their life circumstances, such as family income and parental education. Admissions decisions are based on that score, combined with the usual portfolio of grades, test scores, recommendations, essays and interviews.

The disadvantage scale has helped turn U.C. Davis into one of the most diverse medical schools in the country — notable in a state that [*voted in 1996*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/11/us/supreme-court-affirmative-action.html) to ban affirmative action.

With the Supreme Court’s [*ruling last week against race-conscious admissions*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/29/us/politics/supreme-court-admissions-affirmative-action-harvard-unc.html?name=styln-affirmative-action-scotus&amp;region=TOP_BANNER&amp;block=storyline_menu_recirc&amp;action=click&amp;pgtype=Article&amp;variant=undefined), the medical school offers a glimpse of how selective schools across the country might overhaul their admissions policies, as they look for alternative ways to achieve diversity without running afoul of the new law.

Last week, President Biden called adversity scores a “new standard” for achieving diversity.

Word has gotten out about the U.C. Davis scale. Dr. Henderson said that about 20 schools had recently requested more information. And there are other socioeconomic measurements, including Landscape, released in [*2019*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/08/27/us/sat-adversity-score-college-board.html) from the College Board, the nonprofit that administers the SATs. That tool allows undergraduate admissions offices to assess the socioeconomic backgrounds of individual students.

But skeptics question whether such rankings — or any kind of socioeconomic affirmative action — will be enough to replace race-conscious affirmative action. And schools that use adversity scales may also find themselves wandering into legal quagmires, with conservative groups promising to fight programs that are simply stand-ins for race.

Over the years, medical schools have made some progress in diversifying their student bodies, with numbers ticking up. But just like undergraduate admissions, wealth and connections continue to play a determining role in who is accepted. More than half of medical students come from families in the top 20 percent of income, while only 4 percent come from those in the bottom 20 percent, according to [*data*](https://www.aamc.org/data-reports/analysis-brief/report/updated-look-economic-diversity-us-medical-students) from the Association of American Medical Colleges.

There is also a family dynamic. Children of doctors are [*24 times*](https://www.ama-assn.org/education/medical-school-diversity/ama-don-t-back-down-diversity-medicine) more likely to become doctors than their peers, according to the American Medical Association. It’s hard to know why the profession passes down from generation to generation, but the statistic drove the association to [*adopt*](https://www.ama-assn.org/press-center/press-releases/ama-announces-new-policies-during-second-day-annual-meeting) a policy opposing legacy preferences in admissions.

“That’s a staggering economic gap between medical students and the general public,” said Dr. Henderson, who comes from a ***working-class*** upbringing and now serves as associate dean of admissions.

As a consequence, the number of Black doctors remains stubbornly low: [*About 6 percent*](https://www.aamc.org/data-reports/students-residents/data/report-residents/2022/table-b5-md-residents-race-ethnicity-and-specialty) of practicing doctors in the United States are Black, compared with 13.6 percent of the [*American population*](https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/US/RHI225222) who identify as Black.

With the Supreme Court decision, “that number is likely to go down,” said Dr. James E.K. Hildreth, the president of Meharry Medical College, formed in 1876 in Nashville to train Black health care providers.

Leaders in medicine say training more Black and Hispanic doctors could help bridge the vast divides in American health care. [*Research*](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5871929/) shows that doctors from underrepresented racial and ethnic groups are more likely to work in primary care or in locales where doctors are scarce.

And patients have better outcomes when treated by doctors from similar backgrounds, said Dr. Jesse M. Ehrenfeld, president of the American Medical Association.

The U.C. Davis scale has [*drawn attention*](https://www.statnews.com/2023/03/07/how-one-medical-school-became-remarkably-diverse-without-considering-race/) because of its ability to bring in diverse students using what the schools says are “race-neutral” socioeconomic models.

In its most recent [*entering class*](https://health.ucdavis.edu/mdprogram/admissions/pdfs/Matriculant-Demographics.pdf) of 133 students, 14 percent were Black and 30 percent were Hispanic. Nationally, [*10 percent of medical school students*](https://www.aamc.org/news/press-releases/diversity-increases-medical-schools-2022#:~:text=Diversity%20of%20enrollees,9.5%25%20in%202020%2D21.) were Black and 12 percent were Hispanic. A vast majority of the U.C. Davis class — 84 percent — comes from disadvantaged backgrounds, and 42 percent are the first in their family to go to college.

The overall acceptance rate has been less than 2 percent.

In the Davis scale, first used in 2012, eight categories establish an adversity score for each candidate. Factors include family income, whether applicants come from an underserved area, whether they help support their nuclear families and whether their parents went to college.

The higher an applicant rates on the disadvantage scale, the bigger the boost.

There is no set formula on how to balance the scale with the academic record, Dr. Henderson said, but a [*simulation*](https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/27763458/) of the system revealed that students from underrepresented groups grew to 15.3 percent from 10.7 percent. And the share of economically disadvantaged students tripled, to 14.5 percent of the class from 4.6 percent.

At the same time, scores from the MCAT, the standardized test for medical school applications, dropped only marginally.

Still, it’s not easy to persuade medical schools to upend admissions standards, particularly anything that undermines the value of test scores and grades. Dr. Henderson said he had received pushback from his own colleagues.

“Doctors say their kids got into medical school elsewhere, and they didn’t get in here,” he said.

As the children of doctors, he said, those applicants earned an S.E.D. score of zero.

A number of scholars, including [*Richard D. Kahlenberg*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/29/us/richard-kahlenberg-affirmative-action.html), have promoted using class-conscious preferences, which they say could address racial inequities in education without fostering the resentment often prompted by racially based diversity plans.

And President Biden said on Thursday that his administration would develop a “new standard for colleges taking into account the adversity a student has overcome.”

“The kid who faced tougher challenges has demonstrated more grit, more determination,” Mr. Biden told reporters at the White House, “and that should be a factor that colleges should take into account in admissions.”

He might be talking about someone like Eleanor Adams, a member of the Choctaw Nation, who said that she did not think medical school was an option for her.

“I didn’t grow up with a lot of money,” she said.

But she found mentors who encouraged her, and today she is in her third year of medical school at U.C. Davis, which is in Sacramento. She plans to become an Indian Health Service doctor in Oklahoma — fulfilling one of the school’s goals, Dr. Henderson said, which is to train doctors who will return to their communities.

At schools in other states without affirmative action, such as the University of Michigan, admissions officials have complained that enrolling more socioeconomically disadvantaged students has [*not significantly increased*](https://www.supremecourt.gov/DocketPDF/20/20-1199/232447/20220801155455154_Nos.%2020-1199%2021-707%20U-M%20amicus%20ISO%20resps..pdf) the share of Black, Hispanic and Native American students.

“Those tools certainly have utility, but they fall short of accomplishing what a race-conscious admission practice does,” said Dr. Ehrenfeld of the American Medical Association.

The socioeconomic rankings could also be legally challenged. Chief Justice John G. Roberts Jr., in his majority opinion on affirmative action, wrote that colleges could consider how race had affected an applicant’s life. But he also warned against using proxies for race.

The Pacific Legal Foundation, a libertarian activist group, has already [*sued*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/23/us/thomas-jefferson-high-school-admissions.html) a selective school, Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology in Alexandria, Va., for using economic factors as stand-ins for race in admissions.

Joshua P. Thompson, a lawyer for the foundation, said the legal questions surrounding these disadvantage indexes were complex.

“I think the devil is going to be in the details,” Mr. Thompson said. “The Supreme Court was pretty clear that what can’t be done directly can’t be done indirectly.”

Should it come to that, Dr. Henderson said that his school’s disadvantage scale would be defensible in court.

“Am I worried about it? Yes,” Dr. Henderson said of a lawsuit. “Is it going to stop me? No.”

PHOTO: Dr. Mark Henderson, right, of the University of California, Davis Medical School, one of the country’s most selective and diverse. (PHOTOGRAPH BY JIM WILSON/THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A13.

**Load-Date:** July 3, 2023

**End of Document**



[***Community***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6771-9MJ1-DXY4-X0KX-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** By May-lee Chai

**Body**

Bushra Rehman's ''Roses, in the Mouth of a Lion'' follows a young Pakistani Muslim protagonist as she discovers her nascent intellect and sexuality.

ROSES, IN THE MOUTH OF A LION, by Bushra Rehman

Bushra Rehman's stunningly beautiful coming-of-age novel ''Roses, in the Mouth of a Lion'' is set in the Corona neighborhood of Queens, New York, which was enshrined in pop culture by Paul Simon's 1972 hit ''Me and Julio Down by the Schoolyard.'' Rehman's exuberant young protagonist, Razia, knows the song well, although it puzzles her. ''Why would Paul Simon be singing about Corona?'' she muses. ''I didn't see many white people there unless they were policemen or firemen, and I didn't think Paul Simon had ever been one of those.''

In the late 1980s, Razia's Corona is home to a growing Pakistani Muslim community, along with Dominican and Korean immigrants. The earlier, largely Jewish and Italian, immigrant residents of Simon's day have moved on to wealthier, whiter neighborhoods.

Rehman evokes time and place like a poet, with descriptions both precise and lyrical, making the streets of this ***working-class*** neighborhood come alive on the page. One house has so many roses that ''they grew up and over, through the fence like they were some kind of convicts trying to scale the walls''; during the evening call to prayer, she writes, ''everyone in the neighborhood tilted their heads and listened. Out of basement apartments and sixth-floor walk-ups, Muslim men started walking toward the sound, pulling their topis out of the back seats of their pockets.''

At the novel's opening, it's 1985 and Razia is a precocious fifth grader just starting to bridle at the restrictions placed on her as a girl -- by her parents and by other members of her first-generation conservative, religious community. While boys are allowed to play freely, their misdemeanors forgiven, girls are expected to help their mothers with the housework, raising younger siblings, training for a future as wives and mothers with no options for a career or other path. Forbidden from cutting her hair or wearing clothing more revealing than the salwar kameez that her mother buys for her, Razia is jealous of other teenage girls ''decked out in makeup like tropical birds, laughing and being loud.''

However, Razia's mother recognizes her daughter's intelligence and allows her time for homework, reading and study, which ultimately leads to Razia testing into the prestigious, public Stuyvesant High School.

The only member of her immediate circle accepted at the school, Razia travels alone to Manhattan, which opens her eyes to a new world. Still, Rehman keeps it real. The school is its own insular community, made up of various cliques of teenagers and not always sympathetic adults, like the math teacher who demands every time she gets an answer wrong, ''How did you get into Stuyvesant?''

Here Razia falls in love with a classmate, coming into her own queer identity and wondering where she fits in. Rehman again proves her bona fides as a New York writer by making the Strand bookstore (''where barricades of books lined the sidewalk'') and its shelves of titles by queer authors the first place Razia begins to see herself as part of a larger community.

When a conservative ''Aunty'' spots Razia on a date and reacts with odium, Razia's journey into adulthood becomes more perilous. Where a lesser book might have stooped to stereotypes about Muslims or immigrants, Rehman shows readers the complexities within Razia's community. Individuals are allowed to be surprising, even to themselves, in this deft and empathetic novel.

May-lee Chai is the author, most recently, of ''Tomorrow in Shanghai: Stories.''

ROSES, IN THE MOUTH OF A LION | By Bushra Rehman | 276 pp. | Flatiron | $27.99

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2022/12/03/books/review/bushra-rehman-roses-in-the-mouth-of-a-lion.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/12/03/books/review/bushra-rehman-roses-in-the-mouth-of-a-lion.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: Corona, Queens, in 1982. (PHOTOGRAPH BY WALTER LEPORATI/GETTY IMAGES) This article appeared in print on page BR15.

**Load-Date:** January 1, 2023

**End of Document**



[***None of Wednesday's Debaters Will Topple Trump***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:698S-CT61-DXY4-X00X-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Body**

Donald Trump won't be defeated with sound bites. He won't be bested with wordplay. Ron DeSantis carped repeatedly that Trump was ''missing in action'' at the Republican presidential debate on Wednesday night, while Chris Christie called Trump a coward and christened him ''Donald Duck.'' How very clever.

And how totally futile. They were throwing darts at the absent front-runner when missiles are in order.

Trump has a mammoth lead over all of them, and there's no sign that it's shrinking. He's skating to the party's presidential nomination. Along the way, he's doing quadruple axels of madness, triple toe loops of provocation. He's fantasizing about executing a respected general, and he's fetishizing firearms, his words coming close to incitements of violence. He's not sorry for the Jan. 6 riots. To my ears, he'd like more of where that came from.

But did any of the seven candidates onstage at the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library in Simi Valley, Calif., talk about that? Nope. Mike Pence criticized Trump for wanting to consolidate too much power in Washington, D.C. DeSantis argued that Trump, if elected president again, could serve only one term, while DeSantis, who would be a newcomer to the White House, could serve two.

Christie, the bravest of a timid bunch, gave eloquent voice to how profoundly Trump had divided the country, pitting friend against friend and relative against relative, and while that's sadly true, that's also beside the point.

The point is that Trump has zero respect for democracy and has aspirations for autocracy. The point is that he keeps scaling new pinnacles of unhinged. The point is that he needs to win the presidency so that he doesn't have to worry about living out his days where he belongs: behind bars.

And perhaps the only shot that any of those seven candidates have to stop him and prevent the irreversible damage he'd do to the United States with four more years is to call a tyrant a tyrant, a liar a liar, an arsonist an arsonist. None of them did.

They're too frightened of his and his followers' wrath. So forgive me if I chortled every time they talked about leadership, which they talked about often on Wednesday night. They're not leaders. They're opportunists who are letting an opportunity slip away from them.

The hopelessness of their quest for the presidency and their deepening awareness of that were reflected in all the shouting and cross-talk. Dear Lord, what a din -- overlapping voices, operatic voices. It was like some misbegotten a cappella competition or the trailer for a movie I hope never to see: ''Pitch Imperfect.'' My ears will be ringing until the next Republican debate, scheduled for early November in Miami. Those poor Floridians. With DeSantis as their governor, haven't they suffered enough?

Instead of taking Trump sufficiently to task, instead of explaining in full why just about any one of them would be preferable to the madman of Mar-a-Loco, Nikki Haley and Tim Scott quarreled about drapes. Yes, drapes. He said she squandered $50,000 of federal money on them when she was the United Nations ambassador, she said she didn't, and they both grew very exercised about it. Where was that passion on the subject of Trump?

Instead of savaging him, the seven candidates tore into one another, seemingly vying not to catch up to Trump but to be declared the No. 1 alternative, like a beauty pageant runner-up poised to fulfill the winner's duties and wear the winner's tiara should the need arise.

DeSantis was more aggressive than ever, a contender of faded promise making a last stand. He crammed in his entire biography: ***working-class*** upbringing, Ivy League but held his nose, volitional military service, father of three.

Haley tussled with him, with Scott and especially with Vivek Ramaswamy, who was yet again the political equivalent of a jack-in-the-box, popping up every time you hoped that he'd finally been squished down. Haley called nonsense on his nonsense, telling him: ''Every time I hear you, I feel a little bit dumber.'' It wasn't very kind, but it was wholly relatable.

Ramaswamy tried humility on for size (''I'm here to tell you, no, I don't know it all''), but it didn't really fit. He's too frenetic and too splenetic, and he had the wrong hair for it, a kind of cartoon pompadour that puzzled me.

But not as much as Pence's demeanor did. He kept trying for jokes in a voice that wasn't remotely jokey, and he reached for conviction in a manner that lacked any trace of it. It's not more support from voters that he most needs. It's a transfusion.

''You hear the fire in all of our voices,'' he said at one point, but I couldn't detect so much as a flickering Bic disposable lighter in his. I suspect that he won't be in the hunt for much longer. Try hard not to miss him.

From the others, there was plenty of heat, and there were even important exchanges that delineated significant fault lines in the Republican Party. DeSantis and Ramaswamy objected to the continued flow of enormous aid to Ukraine; Haley deemed that reckless. DeSantis defended his extreme efforts to restrict abortion; Christie advocated something a tad closer to moderation.

But what will that matter if none of them chip away at Trump's lead? There have now been two Republican presidential debates. Trump has proudly skipped and obnoxiously counterprogrammed both of them. And his punishment from his supposed rivals has been a dainty slap on the wrist.

The moderators on Wednesday night were just as gentle on him, never posing a question as pointed as one during the first debate, when the candidates were asked whether they'd support Trump as the party's nominee even if he became a felon.

Instead, one of the moderators, Dana Perino, wondered which of the seven people onstage ''should be voted off the island'' to winnow the field of Trump alternatives. That was hugely revealing: She was suggesting that one of them had to go, when the candidate who needs exiling is the one who didn't bother to take the stage.

At least Christie recognized and remedied that, saying, ''I vote Donald Trump off the island.'' It was the right choice, rendered in the wrong words and wrong tone. This isn't a reality show. It's no episode of ''Survivor.'' It's a matter of our country's survival. But from the way seven candidates danced around the danger of Trump, you'd never know it.

For the Love of Sentences

In a sublime reflection in The Bitter Southerner about what Lucinda Williams's music means to him, Wyatt Williams (no relation) wrote: ''The songs we hear as children end up being a lot like our fathers; we go on hearing them in our heads even when they're not around.'' (Thanks to Eileen Van Schaik of Shoreline, Wash., for flagging this.)

In The New Yorker, Rachel Syme pondered the sartorial oddity of a leading fashion designer: ''The Thom Browne look has often been compared to Pee-wee Herman's archly nerdy costume or to Don Draper's office wear after a few rounds through the dryer, but it calls to my mind, too, some mischievous scamp out of a Roald Dahl book who is always conspiring to put a dead hamster in the headmistress's bed.'' (Joanne Strongin, Port Washington, N.Y.)

Also in The New Yorker, Judith Thurman distilled the conflict from which the plot of ''The Iliad'' proceeds: ''And with that puerile quarrel between stubborn warlords over the right to own and to rape a girl, Western literature begins.'' (Joyce Erickson, Seattle)

And Anthony Lane reflected on the liberties that the director Kenneth Branagh and the screenwriter Michael Green took in adapting Agatha Christie's ''Hallowe'en Party,'' set outside London, into the new movie ''A Haunting in Venice,'' set amid canals. ''I'm already looking forward to their next reworking of Christie: 'The Body in the Library,' perhaps, relocated to the freezer aisle of a Walmart,'' Lane wrote. (Abigail Smith, Downingtown, Pa.)

In The Washington Post, Petula Dvorak characterized the brief window in which pawpaws are available and ripe enough to eat: ''They are like some of D.C.'s other ephemeral delights -- cherry blossoms or the optimism and innocence of freshman members of Congress.'' (Joan Tindell, Tucson, Ariz.)

In Esquire, Charles P. Pierce explained Attorney General Merrick Garland's bind during his recent clash with Republicans at a House Judiciary Committee hearing: ''Garland rope-a-doped as best he could, but there were too many dopes for him to rope.'' (Peter Braverman, Bethesda, Md.)

In Vanity Fair, Carl Hiaasen put Trump and DeSantis side by side: ''Some claim Trump has a better sense of humor, but it was DeSantis who appointed a Jan. 6 rioter to the state board that oversees massage parlors.'' (Sue Jares, Los Angeles)

In The Times, Pamela Paul examined the embattled House speaker: ''As Kevin McCarthy announced the impeachment inquiry, you could almost see his wispy soul sucked out Dementor-style, joining whatever ghostly remains of Paul Ryan's abandoned integrity still wander the halls of Congress.'' (Jeff Merkel, Fairbanks, Alaska, and Michael Berk, San Diego, among many others)

Also in The Times, Bret Stephens previewed the Republican debate in Seussian style: ''I expect Ramaswamy to irritate, DeSantis to infuriate, Christie to needle, Pence to remind me of a beetle, Scott to smile and Haley to win by a mile. But I doubt it will move the dial.'' (Nancy Breeding, Raleigh, N.C., and Andrew Robinson, Syracuse, N.Y., among others) Bret also noted: ''Politics used to be debating ideas. Now it's about diagnosing psychosis.'' (Pierre Mullie, Orléans, Ontario, and Margaret Velarde, Denver, among others)

David French analyzed Trump's recent shadings of his position on abortion, saying: ''He is not convictionally pro-life. He is conveniently pro-life.'' (Paul Dobbs, Relanges, France)

And Tim Kreider, in a lovely essay about aging and vulnerability, inventoried the infirmities (''arthritic hips, ovarian cysts, herniated discs, breast cancer'') that set in as we move from middle to old age: ''It's as if we were all devices made by some big tech company, designed to start falling apart the instant the warranty expires and to be ingeniously difficult to repair, with zero support for older models.'' (Mike Rogers, Wilmington, N.C., and Maureen Burke, Sausalito, Calif., among others)

To nominate favorite bits of recent writing from The Times or other publications to be mentioned in ''For the Love of Sentences,'' please email me here and include your name and place of residence.

On a Personal Note

Our lives are accidents of a sort. We have only so much control over them. We get no say in the genes that we inherit, and while they're not the whole of our destinies, they're big parts of them -- seeds that are certain to flower, bombs that are sure to detonate. We're born into circumstances that liberate or limit us. We're the beneficiaries of good timing, or we're the victims of the opposite.

John Turturro knows that well. The actor, director and writer had a mentally ill brother, Ralph, who spent many of his 70 years at the Creedmoor Psychiatric Center in Queens. John visited him there frequently, got to know the place well and shared those memories in a moving 2015 presentation for the storytelling forum the Moth that you can find here. It's funny, it's soulful, and it builds to a poignant metaphor whose elegance takes you by surprise.

I had students in a class of mine at Duke watch it in advance of a recent Zoom visit from John, who'd agreed to talk with them about a book they were reading, ''Is There No Place on Earth for Me?'' by Susan Sheehan. It's a classic of meticulous journalism, chronicling the odyssey of a woman with schizophrenia and her parents as they struggle, often in vain, to calm her turmoil -- to bring nothing more and nothing less than a steady peace and baseline contentment to her days. For several years, John has been working to adapt it into a mini-series.

He wants people to understand that mental illness doesn't have the tidy arc that movies tend to give it. That it's not a problem reliably solved by extra heaps of love. That it's sometimes an endless road.

And the patients and families traveling it? They could be us. They're just like us: They're pushing through hardships that, yes, may be more daunting than other people's, but they're pushing nonetheless, with merciful instances of levity and cherished moments of grace. Such instances and moments flicker throughout ''Is There No Place on Earth for Me?,'' and John's Moth presentation brims with them.

The book and the talk are lessons in the randomness of our lives. They're also exhortations to meet it with whatever dignity and tenacity we can muster.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/28/opinion/republican-debate-donald-trump.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/28/opinion/republican-debate-donald-trump.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO (PHOTOGRAPH BY DAMON WINTER/THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A26.

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[***5 Restaurants in Naples That Go Beyond Pizza***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68S2-9NB1-JBG3-63JD-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section C; Column 0; Travel Desk; Pg. 8

**Length:** 1378 words

**Byline:** By Seth Sherwood

**Body**

Fried zucchini, classic ziti with Neapolitan ragù, mussel soup and artichoke hearts filled with mountain truffle cream: When it comes to food, there's more to this coastal Italian city than pizza.

The worldwide culinary fame of Italy's third-largest city boils down to one word: pizza. You can hardly hurl a tomato in the food's purported birthplace -- a scruffy, graffiti-stained port city of monumental Baroque buildings and narrow cobbled passageways -- without hitting a gaggle of culinary pilgrims jockeying to enter one of the hundreds (or thousands, by some counts) of pizzerias.

But a slew of top-notch trattorias, osterias and ristoranti exist right alongside pizza titans like Sorbillo and Da Michele. Drawing on the cornucopia of livestock and produce from the fertile fields and coastal waters of the Campania region -- cattle, goats, shellfish, wheat, artichokes, zucchini, figs, citrus fruits and more -- these eateries dish out local inventions from mussel soup to homegrown pastas to limoncello.

So when you're ready to foray beyond the overcrowded dens of dough and red sauce, here are five addresses in five neighborhoods offering both traditional and creative takes on beloved Neapolitan recipes and ingredients. Buon appetito.

Osteria della Mattonella

History suffuses this homey, family-run restaurant tucked into the tight grid of streets that forms the ***working-class*** Quartieri Spagnoli district, a hillside zone where laundry seems to hang from every rusted wrought-iron balcony.

As opera arias and sentimental Italian ballads echo off the swirly, hand-painted, 18th-century wall tiles, a succession of time-honored Neapolitan dishes passes from the open kitchen to the worn wooden tables, where a mainly Italian clientele gobbles them down: fried eggplant, fried zucchini, fried rice balls, myriad meatballs and ziti under generous ladles of thick, tomato-beef Neapolitan ragù (also on sale in jars for 8.50 euros, or about $9.25).

The seafood offerings are equally worthy, including tender anchovies and cod drenched in a dense sauce of tomatoes, capers and olives. For a coda, you can balance salty with sweet thanks to a sticky baba au rhum -- a favorite Franco-Polish dessert adopted in Napoli in the 18th century.

Osteria della Mattonella, Via Giovanni Nicotera 13. A three-course meal costs around 25 euros per person.

Tripperia O'Russ

Centuries ago, women from Napoli's lower classes would gather outside royal residences in hopes of being granted the discarded entrails of the animals slaughtered for aristocrats' banquets.

These days you need only go to one of the city's tripe restaurants to taste this enduring favorite, traditionally referred to as cucina povera -- the food of the poor -- which is made variously from pigs' feet, veal snout and bovine stomachs.

Begun as a pushcart business in 1945, Tripperia O'Russ has for decades occupied a simple, brightly lit white dining room on a middle-class residential street near the city's botanical gardens, earning a reputation as Naples's top temple of tripe. Amid the sound of hacking, a mix of local folks from all walks of life gather to dine on simple soups, pastas and stews loaded with slow-cooked innards.

The Tris Trippa sampler, ideal for the uninitiated, is a trio of tripe preparations: with potatoes and a thin sauce of olive oil, onions, peppers and tomato; with heavy tomato sauce; and with a mix of tomato sauce and beans. Those with more daring palates can enjoy carpaccio-ish slices of cooked veal tripe with just a lemon wedge as accompaniment. The restaurant serves no desserts, but big bottles of Peroni beer (2.50 euros) complement the onslaught.

Tripperia O'Russ, Via San Eframo Vecchio 68. A tripe medley and beer cost 12.50 euros.

La Locanda Gesù Vecchio

Despite its rustic décor and location in Naples's historic center, this cozy and popular spot is no relic. Loaded with craft beers (including a mild, easy-drinking house I.P.A.) and a secondary menu of gluten-free options, the four-year-old restaurant is run by a young, tattooed staff and serves a clientele of in-the-know international foodies.

Nonetheless, the reverent, old-school menu would have your Neapolitan grandmother smiling with recognition at items like eggplant parmigiana and pasta with potatoes and provolone cheese.

Among the antipasti, the mozzarella in carrozza demonstrates that the classic Campania cheese can be melted into tasty variations that require no pizza oven. Heated to stretchiness and spread on thick slices of egg-dipped grilled bread, the mozzarella becomes the star of a bubbly, gooey sandwich. The cheese makes another cameo in the crispy fried paccheri -- a beloved Neapolitan noodle stuffed with a combination of tomato sauce, beef, pork, pork lard, raisins, pine nuts and mozzarella.

If you can (and it will be a challenge), save room for the meaty, tomato sauce-drenched chunks of rabbit cacciatore -- a favorite dish from the nearby island of Ischia.

La Locanda Gesù Vecchio, Via Giovanni Paladino 26. A three-course meal costs around 30 euros per person.

Seafront Pasta Bar

Plenty of onions and lots of time. Those are the secrets to Genovese sauce, a Naples specialty despite its Genoa-derived name. Concocted mainly from finely sliced onions -- slow-cooked over a low flame for several hours -- along with olive oil and tender slivers of beef, the sauce is so emblematic of Naples that it probably deserves a towering monument in the grand square that the restaurant overlooks, Piazza Municipio.

The chunky, chewy ziti with Genovese sauce is just one of the flavorful noodle creations at Seafront Pasta Bar, a minimalist Scandinavian-chic dining room above the boutique for the Di Martino pasta manufacturer, which also operates the restaurant. Like the ziti, the dry noodles sold in the shop and served upstairs are made at the company's factory in the nearby town of Gragnano, a pasta mecca in Italy thanks to its long history of pasta-making and the many top brands still based there.

Rich local flavors also come together in the spaghetti alle vongole -- a swirl of buttery noodles larded with tender, sweet clams and charred garlic that arrive under a glass dome of olive-oil smoke -- and bucatini with an Ischia-inspired tomato sauce containing tender shredded rabbit.

Noodles even contribute to certain desserts, notably ''pastamisù,'' a classic tiramisù topped with coffee-soaked pasta shards that have been baked to crispiness.

Sea Front Pasta Bar, Piazza Municipio 1. For two pastas and dessert, expect to pay around 60 to 70 euros.

Sustanza

To find the new Sustanza restaurant, cross the street from the national archaeological museum; enter the soaring, glass-covered arcades of the 19th-century Galleria Principe di Napoli; slip past the potted palms and white-coated bartenders that fill the Art Nouveau-style Scotto Jonno cocktail bar; and climb the carpeted stone steps until you reach elegant dining rooms decorated with swirling Liberty-esque wallpaper and real Tiffany lamps.

Opened in May, this hidden-away restaurant serves intricate dishes of southern Italian and Mediterranean ingredients accompanied by natural wines. The menu comes courtesy of the chef Marco Ambrosino, a native of the nearby island of Procida who previously made a name for himself at 28 Posti in Milan.

On a recent evening, his concoctions featured several imaginative deployments of classic Campania ingredients, notably an artichoke heart filled with mountain truffle cream, and succulent mutton in a light sauce of jus and fermented butter. Dessert might be an herbaceous fig-leaf sorbet in laurel oil.

For a nightcap, consider returning to the ground-floor lounge. The Strega del Vesuvio cocktail (15 euros), as red and potent as the volcano it is named for, blends Scotch, gin, coffee liqueur and a cordial of tomatoes grown on Vesuvio's slopes into a tangy, smoky digestivo.

Sustanza, Galleria Principe di Napoli. The five-course tasting menu is 80 euros.

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[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/07/14/travel/restaurants-naples-italy.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/07/14/travel/restaurants-naples-italy.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Top, meatballs with ragù sauce. Above, Osteria della Mattonella, left, and arancini, or fried rice balls.

Top, La Locanda Gesù Vecchio. Above, crispy fried paccheri.

Sea Front Pasta Bar, left, and linguine with clams.

Top, Tripperia O' Russ, in the Arenaccia district. Above, tripe on display, left, and the Tris Trippa sampler plate.

Top, artichoke with truffle cream. Above, mutton with light sauce. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY ROBERTO SALOMONE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page C8.

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[***The End to the Beginning of a World***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65P4-3VV1-DXY4-X2V2-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Section:** Section C; Column 0; The Arts/Cultural Desk; Pg. 2; ASK A SHOWRUNNER

**Length:** 1312 words

**Byline:** By Desiree Ibekwe

**Body**

The cult British show's final season is now on Netflix, but its creator has plans for a spinoff movie and says he wants to follow the Shelby family into the 1940s and '50s.

LONDON -- Steven Knight knew something special was happening around ''Peaky Blinders,'' his TV crime drama, a few years ago, when the rapper Snoop Dogg asked to talk with him.

The pair met in a London hotel room, Knight said in a recent interview, and for three hours discussed the show, which is based on the real-life Shelby family that operated in Birmingham, in central England, in the shadow of World War I. ''Peaky'' reminded the rapper of how he got involved in gang culture in Los Angeles, Knight said.

''How the connection occurs between 1920s Birmingham and South Central, I don't know,'' Knight, 62, said. ''I think you just get lucky with some projects and it resonates with people.''

Since premiering in Britain in 2013, the tumultuous fortunes of the Shelby family, headed by Tommy Shelby (Cillian Murphy), and set against the backdrop of the political and social tumult of the interwar years, has resonated with many.

Devotees hold weddings themed around the show's early-20th-century aesthetic and cut their hair like the characters. The official ''Peaky'' brand extensions have been diverse, weird and wonderful, including an official cookbook, despite fans noting that Tommy is never seen eating; a Monopoly board game; a virtual reality game; and a dance show which premieres in Britain this year.

Now, after six seasons, the cultural hit is drawing to a close, its final outing dropping on Netflix on Friday. (The season aired in Britain earlier this year.) While Season 6 is the official conclusion of the show, Knight has trailed a spinoff movie and other projects, framing the final season as ''the end of the beginning.''

In a recent video interview, he discussed the development of ''Peaky,'' and what he has planned for the future. These are edited excerpts from the conversation.

When did you first have the idea to dramatize the story of the Peaky Blinders?

These stories were told to me when I was a kid by my parents because they grew up in Small Heath in Birmingham, and so they sort of experienced that world. When they told me stories, I always thought it would make a great drama.

I first thought about doing it as a TV series probably 20 years ago, and I'm really thankful that it didn't happen then because I don't think there was the technology to have done it justice. Then I was off writing movies and, when television started to become what it is now, someone said, do you have any television ideas? It was an idea that I had sort of in the bottom drawer.

Why did those stories resonate with you as a child, did you see them as heroes?

Yes. My dad's uncles were illegal bookmakers known as the Peaky Blinders, so he was in awe of them as a kid -- whenever he saw them he was terrified and impressed, they were heroes to him. He would see them in immaculate clothes with razor blades in their hats and drinking whiskey out of jam jars.

And I know those streets, I know the pubs, I know the Garrison pub -- the real one -- and when I wanted to do ''Peaky'' I decided to keep the mythology rather than be like, what was it really like?

I wanted to keep it as if they were being viewed through the eyes of a kid. The horses are all beautiful. The clothes are all magnificent. I was a big fan of westerns; it's like a western, and that's how I wanted to keep it.

Do you think the show has changed how Birmingham is viewed? In Britain at least, the city and the accent have often been maligned.

Part of the challenge in the beginning was to try and make Birmingham -- which was a blank canvas at best before -- cool. To give it a story. Liverpool has the Beatles and Manchester has the nightclub scene, Birmingham never really had anything.

There was a suggestion in the early days of moving the story to London or another city, and I said no. I think the fact that Birmingham was a blank canvas helped because there were no preconceptions.

According to people I know from Birmingham, when they go abroad and they speak, instantly people mention ''Peaky Blinders.'' And it's not a bad thing, it's always good. I think it has given Birmingham an identity that perhaps it didn't have, purely in the media.

The show could easily have been ahistoric, but you weave contemporary social movements and political goings-on throughout the seasons. Why was that important to you?

If you're setting something in the 1920s, if you look at what was really going on historically, it gives you an enormous amount of material to use.

I didn't look at history books because I think they, first of all, don't really tell the history of the ***working class*** anyway, and also they tend to look at trends and patterns that eventually made everything that happened seem inevitable when it wasn't.

If you look at newspapers and wherever you can get word-of-mouth testimony about the way life was, it's so fascinating. And if you can bring that into the work, it just gives it -- even though this is very heightened and mythological -- a real base.

The show takes place in a similar time frame to ''Downton Abbey.'' As in that series, British period dramas usually show ***working-class*** characters as servants.

Servants or figures of fun or whatever. What I wanted to do was have these ***working-class*** characters where we're not looking at them and saying, ''Isn't it a shame? Wasn't it awful? Wasn't their life so dreadful?'' Their lives are amazing and romantic and tragic.

An abiding critique of the show is its portrayal of violent masculinity. What do you think about claims that ''Peaky'' glorifies violence?

I think there's lots of things going on. First of all, you're depicting life in the '20s and '30s and it was very different -- to suggest that people behaved the way they behave now, would be the same as saying they didn't smoke. But also, the way that I look at it, any act of violence in ''Peaky'' has a very big consequence. If they get scarred, they stay scarred.

There's a scene in one of the early series where Arthur [a Shelby family member] is in a boxing ring and kills someone because he loses his temper. In the next season, that boy's mother turns up at the Garrison with a gun and wants to get revenge for what happened. In other words, it's not like this is parting violence. All violence has a consequence.

The show is coming to an end, but you have spoken of spinoffs, including a movie. Why do you want to keep returning to the show's world?

It's partly to do with the fact that it seems to be going up and not down in terms of audience. And I'm interested in concluding during the Second World War. So the film will be set during that war, and then the film itself will dictate what happens next.

But I'm quite interested in keeping that world going into the '40s and '50s and just seeing where it goes because as long as there's an appetite, then why not do it? I probably won't be writing them all, but the world will be established.

Tommy Shelby is a deeply complicated character. How did you want his story to end?

I always imagine that before Episode 1 of Season 1, he put a gun to his head and decided, ''Well, I'm not going to kill myself, I'm just going to do whatever I want.'' There's a great Francis Bacon quote about how, since life is so meaningless, we might as well be extraordinary. Tommy doesn't think there's a point, he doesn't think there's a goal, he doesn't think there's a destination, he just does these things.

Then over the six seasons, he, bit by bit, comes back to life. It's like something that's frozen is thawing out, but obviously that process is very painful. My take is that Season 6 is asking the question: Can Tommy Shelby be redeemed? And I think that question is answered in the last 10 minutes.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2022/06/10/arts/television/steven-knight-peaky-blinders.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/06/10/arts/television/steven-knight-peaky-blinders.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Above, Steven Knight, the creator of ''Peaky Blinders,'' in London. He said the show, set in Birmingham, England, was ''like a western, and that's how I wanted to keep it.'' Left, Cillian Murphy as Tommy Shelby, head of the Shelby crime family in that Netflix series. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY JEREMIE SOUTEYRAT FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

NETFLIX)

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[***The Only Shot That Those Seven Republicans Have to Stop Trump; Frank Bruni***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:698J-4T61-DXY4-X05R-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 2112 words

**Byline:** Frank Bruni

**Highlight:** On Wednesday night, none of them took it.

**Body**

Donald Trump won’t be defeated with sound bites. He won’t be bested with wordplay. Ron DeSantis carped repeatedly that Trump was “missing in action” at the Republican presidential debate on Wednesday night, while Chris Christie called Trump a coward and christened him “Donald Duck.” How very clever.

And how totally futile. They were throwing darts at the absent front-runner when missiles are in order.

Trump has a mammoth lead over all of them, and there’s no sign that it’s shrinking. He’s skating to the party’s presidential nomination. Along the way, he’s doing quadruple axels of madness, triple toe loops of provocation. He’s fantasizing about executing a respected general, and he’s fetishizing firearms, his words coming close to incitements of violence. He’s not sorry for the Jan. 6 riots. To my ears, he’d like more of where that came from.

But did any of the seven candidates onstage at the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library in Simi Valley, Calif., talk about that? Nope. Mike Pence criticized Trump for wanting to consolidate too much power in Washington, D.C. DeSantis argued that Trump, if elected president again, could serve only one term, while DeSantis, who would be a newcomer to the White House, could serve two.

Christie, the bravest of a timid bunch, gave eloquent voice to how profoundly Trump had divided the country, pitting friend against friend and relative against relative, and while that’s sadly true, that’s also beside the point.

The point is that Trump has zero respect for democracy and has aspirations for autocracy. The point is that he keeps scaling new pinnacles of unhinged. The point is that he needs to win the presidency so that he doesn’t have to worry about living out his days where he belongs: behind bars.

And perhaps the only shot that any of those seven candidates have to stop him and prevent the irreversible damage he’d do to the United States with four more years is to call a tyrant a tyrant, a liar a liar, an arsonist an arsonist. None of them did.

They’re too frightened of his and his followers’ wrath. So forgive me if I chortled every time they talked about leadership, which they talked about often on Wednesday night. They’re not leaders. They’re opportunists who are letting an opportunity slip away from them.

The hopelessness of their quest for the presidency and their deepening awareness of that were reflected in all the shouting and cross-talk. Dear Lord, what a din — overlapping voices, operatic voices. It was like some misbegotten a cappella competition or the trailer for a movie I hope never to see: “Pitch Imperfect.” My ears will be ringing until the next Republican debate, scheduled for early November in Miami. Those poor Floridians. With DeSantis as their governor, haven’t they suffered enough?

Instead of taking Trump sufficiently to task, instead of explaining in full why just about any one of them would be preferable to the madman of Mar-a-Loco, Nikki Haley and Tim Scott quarreled about drapes. Yes, drapes. He said she squandered $50,000 of federal money on them when she was the United Nations ambassador, she said she didn’t, and they both grew very exercised about it. Where was that passion on the subject of Trump?

Instead of savaging him, the seven candidates tore into one another, seemingly vying not to catch up to Trump but to be declared the No. 1 alternative, like a beauty pageant runner-up poised to fulfill the winner’s duties and wear the winner’s tiara should the need arise.

DeSantis was more aggressive than ever, a contender of faded promise making a last stand. He crammed in his entire biography: ***working-class*** upbringing, Ivy League but held his nose, volitional military service, father of three.

Haley tussled with him, with Scott and especially with Vivek Ramaswamy, who was yet again the political equivalent of a jack-in-the-box, popping up every time you hoped that he’d finally been squished down. Haley called nonsense on his nonsense, telling him: “Every time I hear you, I feel a little bit dumber.” It wasn’t very kind, but it was wholly relatable.

Ramaswamy tried humility on for size (“I’m here to tell you, no, I don’t know it all”), but it didn’t really fit. He’s too frenetic and too splenetic, and he had the wrong hair for it, a kind of cartoon pompadour that puzzled me.

But not as much as Pence’s demeanor did. He kept trying for jokes in a voice that wasn’t remotely jokey, and he reached for conviction in a manner that lacked any trace of it. It’s not more support from voters that he most needs. It’s a transfusion.

“You hear the fire in all of our voices,” he said at one point, but I couldn’t detect so much as a flickering Bic disposable lighter in his. I suspect that he won’t be in the hunt for much longer. Try hard not to miss him.

From the others, there was plenty of heat, and there were even important exchanges that delineated significant fault lines in the Republican Party. DeSantis and Ramaswamy objected to the continued flow of enormous aid to Ukraine; Haley deemed that reckless. DeSantis defended his extreme efforts to restrict abortion; Christie advocated something a tad closer to moderation.

But what will that matter if none of them chip away at Trump’s lead? There have now been two Republican presidential debates. Trump has proudly skipped and obnoxiously counterprogrammed both of them. And his punishment from his supposed rivals has been a dainty slap on the wrist.

The moderators on Wednesday night were just as gentle on him, never posing a question as pointed as one during the first debate, when the candidates were asked whether they’d support Trump as the party’s nominee even if he became a felon.

Instead, one of the moderators, Dana Perino, wondered which of the seven people onstage “should be voted off the island” to winnow the field of Trump alternatives. That was hugely revealing: She was suggesting that one of them had to go, when the candidate who needs exiling is the one who didn’t bother to take the stage.

At least Christie recognized and remedied that, saying, “I vote Donald Trump off the island.” It was the right choice, rendered in the wrong words and wrong tone. This isn’t a reality show. It’s no episode of “Survivor.” It’s a matter of our country’s survival. But from the way seven candidates danced around the danger of Trump, you’d never know it.

For the Love of Sentences

In a sublime reflection in The Bitter Southerner about what Lucinda Williams’s music means to him, Wyatt Williams (no relation) [*wrote*](https://bittersoutherner.com/feature/2023/lucinda-williams-and-the-idea-of-louisiana): “The songs we hear as children end up being a lot like our fathers; we go on hearing them in our heads even when they’re not around.” (Thanks to Eileen Van Schaik of Shoreline, Wash., for flagging this.)

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PHOTO (PHOTOGRAPH BY DAMON WINTER/THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A26.

**Load-Date:** September 28, 2023

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[***None of the Republicans on the Debate Stage Are Going to Topple Trump***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:698J-CT31-JBG3-607B-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

September 28, 2023 Thursday

The New York Times on the Web

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**Section:** Section ; Column 0; OpEd; FRANK BRUNI

**Length:** 2119 words

**Byline:** By Frank Bruni

**Body**

Donald Trump won't be defeated with sound bites. He won't be bested with wordplay. Ron DeSantis carped repeatedly that Trump was ''missing in action'' at the Republican presidential debate on Wednesday night, while Chris Christie called Trump a coward and christened him ''Donald duck.'' How very clever.

And how totally futile. They were throwing darts at the absent front-runner when missiles are in order.

Trump has a mammoth lead over all of them, and there's no sign that it's shrinking. He's skating to the party's presidential nomination. Along the way, he's doing quadruple axels of madness, triple toe loops of provocation. He's fantasizing about executing a respected general and he's fetishizing firearms, his words coming close to incitements of violence. He's not sorry for the Jan. 6 riots. To my ears, he'd like more where that came from.

But did any of the seven candidates onstage at the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library in Simi Valley, Calif., talk about that? Nope. Mike Pence criticized Trump for wanting to consolidate too much power in Washington, D.C. DeSantis argued that Trump, if elected president again, could serve only one term, while DeSantis, a newcomer to the White House, could serve two.

Christie, the bravest of a timid bunch, gave eloquent voice to how profoundly Trump had divided the country, pitting friend against friend and relative against relative, and while that's sadly true, that's also beside the point.

The point is that Trump has zero respect for democracy and aspirations for autocracy. The point is that he keeps scaling new pinnacles of unhinged. The point is that he needs to win the presidency so that he doesn't have to worry about living out his days where he belongs -- behind bars.

And perhaps the only shot that any of those seven candidates has to stop him and prevent the irreversible damage he'd do to the United States with four more years is to call a tyrant a tyrant, a liar a liar, an arsonist an arsonist. None of them did.

They're too frightened of his and his followers' wrath. So forgive me if I chortled every time they talked about leadership, which they talked about often on Wednesday night. They're not leaders. They're opportunists who are letting an opportunity slip away from them.

The hopelessness of their quest for the presidency and their deepening awareness of that were reflected in all the shouting and cross talk. Dear Lord, what a din -- overlapping voices, operatic voices. It was like some misbegotten a cappella competition or the trailer for a movie I hope never to see: ''Pitch Imperfect.'' My ears will be ringing until the next Republican debate, scheduled for early November in Miami. Those poor Floridians. With DeSantis as their governor, haven't they suffered enough?

Instead of taking Trump sufficiently to task, instead of explaining in full why just about any one of them would be preferable to the madman of Mar-a-Loco, Nikki Haley and Tim Scott quarreled about drapes. Yes, drapes. He said she squandered $50,000 of federal money on them when she was the United Nations ambassador, she said she didn't and they both grew very exercised about it. Where was that passion on the subject of Trump?

Instead of savaging him, the seven candidates tore into one another, seemingly vying not to catch up to Trump but to be declared the No. 1 alternative, like a beauty pageant runner-up poised to fulfill the winner's duties and wear the winner's tiara should the need arise.

DeSantis was more aggressive than ever, a contender of faded promise making a last stand. He crammed in his entire biography: ***working-class*** upbringing, Ivy-League-but-held-his-nose, volitional military service, father of three.

Haley tussled with him, with Scott and especially with Vivek Ramaswamy, who was yet again the political equivalent of a jack-in-the-box, popping up every time you hoped that he'd finally been squished down. Haley called nonsense on his nonsense, telling him: ''Every time I hear you, I feel a little bit dumber.'' It wasn't very kind, but it was wholly relatable.

Ramaswamy tried humility on for size (''I'm here to tell you, no, I don't know it all''), but it didn't really fit. He's too frenetic and too splenetic, and he had the wrong hair for it, a kind of cartoon pompadour that puzzled me.

But not as much as Pence's demeanor did. He kept trying for jokes in a voice that wasn't remotely jokey, and he reached for conviction in a manner that lacked any trace of it. It's not more support from voters that he most needs. It's a transfusion.

''You hear the fire in all of our voices,'' he said at one point, but I couldn't detect so much as a flickering Bic disposable lighter in his. I suspect that he won't be in the hunt for much longer. Try hard not to miss him.

From the others there was plenty of heat, and there were even important exchanges that delineated significant fault lines in the Republican Party. DeSantis and Ramaswamy objected to the continued flow of enormous aid to Ukraine; Haley deemed that reckless. DeSantis defended the extremeness of his efforts to restrict abortion; Christie advocated something a tad closer to moderation.

But what will that matter if none of them chips away at Trump's lead? There have now been two Republican presidential debates. Trump has proudly skipped and obnoxiously counterprogrammed both of them. And his punishment from his supposed rivals has been a dainty slap on the wrist.

The moderators on Wednesday night were just as gentle on him, never posing a question as pointed as one during the first debate, when the candidates were asked whether they'd support Trump as the party's nominee even if he became a convicted felon.

Instead, one of the moderators, Dana Perino, wondered which of the seven people onstage ''should be voted off the island'' to winnow the field of Trump alternatives. That was hugely revealing: She was suggesting that one of them had to go, when the candidate who needs exiling is the one who didn't bother to take the stage.

At least Christie recognized and remedied that, saying: ''I vote Donald Trump off the island.'' It was the right choice, rendered in the wrong words and wrong tone. This isn't a reality show. It's no episode of ''Survivor.'' It's a matter of our country's survival. But from the way seven candidates danced around the danger of Trump, you'd never know it.

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**Graphic**

PHOTO: (PHOTOGRAPH BY Damon Winter/The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** September 28, 2023

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[***J.D. Vance, ‘Hillbilly Elegy’ Author, Is Running for Senate in Ohio***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6321-0161-DXY4-X4P4-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

July 1, 2021 Thursday 16:01 EST

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**Section:** US; politics

**Length:** 668 words

**Byline:** Jeremy W. Peters

**Highlight:** The author and venture capitalist will vie for the Republican nomination in one of the most wide-open 2022 Senate races.

**Body**

The author and venture capitalist will vie for the Republican nomination in one of the most wide-open 2022 Senate races.

J.D. Vance, an author and venture capitalist whose best-selling memoir, “[*Hillbilly Elegy*](https://www.nytimes.com/2016/08/11/books/review-in-hillbilly-elegy-a-compassionate-analysis-of-the-poor-who-love-trump.html),” focused on the social and economic underpinnings of former President Donald J. [*Trump*](https://www.nytimes.com/2016/08/11/books/review-in-hillbilly-elegy-a-compassionate-analysis-of-the-poor-who-love-trump.html)’s appeal to the white ***working class***, said on Thursday that he would seek the Republican nomination for the Senate in Ohio.

Mr. [*Vance*](https://www.nytimes.com/2016/08/11/books/review-in-hillbilly-elegy-a-compassionate-analysis-of-the-poor-who-love-trump.html), 36, enters the campaign as a well-known and well-financed first-time candidate facing an open field. The Republican incumbent, Senator Rob Portman, [*is retiring after two terms*](https://www.nytimes.com/2016/08/11/books/review-in-hillbilly-elegy-a-compassionate-analysis-of-the-poor-who-love-trump.html). The race is one of a few in next year’s midterm elections that could determine which party controls the upper chamber of Congress, which is now split 50-50.

At his campaign kickoff event at a steel parts factory in Middletown, the city north of Cincinnati where he grew up, Mr. Vance made his backstory as a son of the Rust Belt central to his identity as a candidate.

He spoke at length about his upbringing, including how his “mamaw” had “kept him on the straight and narrow” as a youth, before diving into his political pitch. He staked out populist positions on issues like inequality and Big Tech and more conservative ones on matters like immigration and abortion.

“If you look at every issue in this country,” Mr. Vance said, “every issue I believe traces back to this fact: On the one hand, the elites in the ruling class in this country are robbing us blind, and on the other, if you dare complain about it, you are a bad person.”

Mr. Vance will benefit from [*$10 million pledged toward his campaign*](https://www.nytimes.com/2016/08/11/books/review-in-hillbilly-elegy-a-compassionate-analysis-of-the-poor-who-love-trump.html) by the billionaire venture capitalist Peter Thiel. Mr. Thiel was an early backer of Mr. Vance who hired him and later invested in the fund Mr. Vance now runs. But in the Republican primary, Mr. Vance will face a number of candidates who are well known in Ohio G.O.P. politics, including Josh Mandel, a former state treasurer, and Jane Timken, a former chair of the state Republican Party.

Mr. Trump won Ohio twice by comfortable margins. Courting his voters — thousands of whom showed up for [*a rally he held last weekend*](https://www.nytimes.com/2016/08/11/books/review-in-hillbilly-elegy-a-compassionate-analysis-of-the-poor-who-love-trump.html) outside Cleveland — will be crucial to winning a statewide Republican primary contest. Mr. Vance attended the event, Mr. Trump’s first since his supporters stormed the Capitol on Jan. 6, but he did not speak there.

After the 2016 publication of “Hillbilly Elegy,” Mr. Vance leveraged his fame into a part-time career as a fixture on the speaking circuit and as a media commentator. Lately, he has staked out a position among the more populist voices in his party who are targeting social media companies, China and the left wing of the Democratic Party.

The arc of Mr. Vance’s short time as a quasi-political figure has followed the prevailing mood among Republican office holders since Mr. Trump won in 2016. At first, he was deeply critical of the former president, calling him “noxious” and [*saying he worried*](https://www.nytimes.com/2016/08/11/books/review-in-hillbilly-elegy-a-compassionate-analysis-of-the-poor-who-love-trump.html) Mr. Trump was “leading the white ***working class*** to a very dark place.”

But today Mr. Vance is a prolific tweeter and occasional Fox News guest who has adopted Trumpian culture war language, denouncing “wokeness” and calling for more restrictive immigration policies.

His Republican opponents have already started dusting off his old anti-Trump statements as a way of suggesting that he is insincere and has lost touch with ***working-class*** Ohio.

Mr. Vance today is in a much different place than the young man he describes in “Hillbilly Elegy,” who struggled to overcome adversity; a mother who had a long history with substance abuse; family members who could not control their anger; and opioid-addicted friends and neighbors.

He served in the Marines, graduated from Yale Law School and joined Mr. Thiel’s venture capital firm. “Hillbilly Elegy” was [*made into a movie*](https://www.nytimes.com/2016/08/11/books/review-in-hillbilly-elegy-a-compassionate-analysis-of-the-poor-who-love-trump.html) directed by Ron Howard that was released last year.

PHOTO: J.D. Vance has made his back story as a son of the Rust Belt central to his political identity. (PHOTOGRAPH BY ANDREW SPEAR FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** August 8, 2021

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[***Three First-Rate Writers, and Their Second Books***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68W1-YVK1-DXY4-X30P-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

August 5, 2023 Saturday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section C; Column 0; The Arts/Cultural Desk; Pg. 6

**Length:** 1357 words

**Byline:** By Imogen West-Knights

**Body**

Exciting debuts from Naoise Dolan, Megan Nolan and Nicole Flattery suggested a new direction in Irish literature. Now, where will they take it?

In recent years, Irish novelists, and particularly Irish women novelists, have published some of the most compelling English-language literary fiction.

Not just Sally Rooney, whose three novels to date have sold millions of copies worldwide, but a whole host of women have written books which, taken together, suggest a new contemporary Irish literature that focuses on the precarity of modern working life, as well as intimacy and its failings.

Naoise Dolan, 31, Megan Nolan, 33, and Nicole Flattery, 33, are three of the better-known members of this cohort. Dolan's 2020 debut novel ''Exciting Times'' was the story of a love triangle set in Hong Kong; ''Acts of Desperation,'' from Nolan and published in 2021, charted the life of a young woman in an abject relationship; and Flattery also published her debut, ''Show Them A Good Time,'' a collection of deadpan and appealingly peculiar short stories, in 2020.

All three have also released a second book this year: Dolan's is an acerbic comedy of errors about an impending wedding called ''The Happy Couple,'' Nolan's ''Ordinary Human Failings'' follows an Irish family after one of its members is accused of a terrible crime, and ''Nothing Special'' is Flattery's tale of a young woman who gets a job as a typist at Andy Warhol's Factory.

In a recent video interview, the trio discussed what feels different the second time and how Irishness affects their work. This is an edited excerpt from a round-table discussion.

Why do you think the cliché of the difficult second novel exists?

NICOLE FLATTERY I think the publishing industry has an obsession with newness, and that's the way things are marketed. I'm not sure if it is a ''difficult second album'' situation, rather than an unwillingness to let writers grow. If your first book is outrageously successful, I can understand there's stress. I avoided that by writing a story collection.

NAOISE DOLAN People imagine that the pressure comes from the expectations of readers. I didn't feel that at all, because I figure adults should prime themselves with the expectation that they won't like every book that they read. And they would equally hate it if someone wrote the same book twice.

MEGAN NOLAN I was very pleased with how my book went, but it wasn't like this crazy level of success that meant I was feeling like all eyes were on me. But I was really scared about how people would read it, and whether it was any good. I don't think it will matter whether it's the second or 10th book that I write, I will have absolutely no ability to judge my own work at all.

Where did the ideas for your second books come from?

FLATTERY I read Olivia Laing's ''The Lonely City'' a few years ago, and there was a mention in that about Warhol's Factory and ''a, A Novel,'' so I read it. I liked the idea of working on a book about producing a work of art that has nothing to do with you, almost.

NOLAN There is an anecdote in Gordon Burn's book ''Somebody's Husband, Somebody's Son'' about a tabloid journalist approaching the family of Peter Sutcliffe, the British serial killer known as the Yorkshire Ripper, and offering them a hotel as a kind of ''safe space.'' In reality it was intended as a sequestered space where they could keep these very vulnerable ***working class*** people and offer them a load of alcohol and pocket money, hoping that they would uncover some juicy stuff about the murders. And so I thought that was a very striking idea.

DOLAN I wrote two books before the book that is actually my second published book. And in the second book of those books there was a wedding, which became the second published book.

Did you do anything differently when you were writing this book, as opposed to the last time?

FLATTERY My life throughout the period of writing this novel was a lot more stable than it was in my 20s, when I was writing the stories, which just felt chaotic. The move for me was just being like: I have to do this every single day. It felt way more like a job to me than the stories did.

NOLAN The first one I was only doing late at night. This one, I worked proper days. I treated it a little bit more like work, because I could afford to.

DOLAN This time around I showed bits of it to my editor before it was properly finished. Generally I had this fear that because I am so easily influenced, that it would steer me in some way that I would later regret. But it was helpful.

How do you feel you've developed?

DOLAN When I was writing my first novel, the aim was just to write something that fulfilled the requirements of being a novel. Now, I feel a lot more confident that I've got the form down, and I can use it to express things within that container.

NOLAN I haven't read it since it came out. By the time it did come out, I felt quite alienated from it. But that was an inevitable consequence of what I wanted the book to be, which was an exorcism. I think even as I was writing it, I was sort of nauseating myself with it.

FLATTERY My feeling when I reread the stories recently was a lot of sympathy for my younger self, like, ''Oh, it's not so bad.'' I feel like with your first book, you're very conscious that you have to be impressive. I'm not as interested in impressing anyone, which I think just comes with age.

Do you think being Irish is a key part of who you are as a writer? Or is it just a convenient way for the industry to categorize you?

NOLAN I didn't feel like ''Acts of Desperation'' was an especially Irish book. But this new one is decisively Irish. The first time around, I did feel a bit frightened about being referred to in a group with already extremely brilliant and successful writers, like Naoise and Sally Rooney. I didn't want to be put in that room because I will only suffer by comparison. But I don't have much feeling about it anymore.

DOLAN In terms of the Irishness of my work, it's probably not inherent, it's more that I am fascinated by language. If you're an Irish person who writes for international publications, you cannot but think constantly about Irish English.

FLATTERY My work has been noted as not very Irish. I don't often describe place. I don't have a hold on one county, like Colin Barrett writing about Mayo or Mike McCormack writing about Mayo, Sally Rooney writing about Mayo. Is anyone not writing about Mayo? But the next book will be more Irish. It's never really bothered me being grouped as an Irish female writer. I feel quite proud. I always feel very proud when an Irish person does well in anything.

Other than reading and writing, what else contributes to your creative process?

NOLAN I'm an intensely social person. I find people so interesting and wonderful, and want to find out how they feel. Obviously, it's true that you have to dedicate time and concentration to do any serious work. But my time spent with other people is not a distraction. It's a part of the way that I write, and why I write.

FLATTERY Yes, I was gonna say hanging out, which I think is so integral to creativity. I'm not joking. Just going for a drink with your friends and talking, and listening to how people talk, is reflected in my writing, I think.

DOLAN My main thing besides writing is that I'm an avid language learner. I find it really helpful to have something that I have absolutely no talent at, but still pursue enthusiastically.

What are you currently working on?

FLATTERY I'm working on something about a couple. I've never written really about couples, my first attempt at romantic love. It's set in a spa hotel.

DOLAN I'm working on a novel. It's set between Berlin and Dublin, but I don't really want to say anything else yet.

NOLAN I went to an event at MoMA last October where they were showing these old home movies an actor and artist made, and his son was presenting them. I started thinking about this idea of adults who have become the estate keepers of their artist parents. And also there's a couple involved.

FLATTERY We're all doing couples. Couples are huge.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/01/books/naoise-dolan-megan-nolan-nicole-flattery.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/01/books/naoise-dolan-megan-nolan-nicole-flattery.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: From left, the writers Megan Nolan, Naoise Dolan and Nicole Flattery. ''I think the publishing industry has an obsession with newness, and that's the way things are marketed,'' Flattery said. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY FROM LEFT: SOPHIE DAVIDSON

MARIA BIANCHI

MARIA RÓDENAS SÁINZ DE BARANDA) This article appeared in print on page C6.

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[***Ocasio-Cortez Reflects On Her Evolution, Politically and Personally***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:693N-2YJ1-JBG3-6329-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; National Desk; Pg. 16

**Length:** 3532 words

**Byline:** By Lulu Garcia-Navarro

**Body**

The congresswoman from New York says she's different from when she first took office. But she's not ready to call herself an insider.

Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez is used to being a lightning rod. Since her election in 2018, she has been celebrated and vilified by both parties, sometimes simultaneously. Ms. Ocasio-Cortez, though, is no longer the freshman outsider. Now in her third term, with a high-ranking position on a powerful House committee, she has learned to maneuver in Congress, making allies on the left and working with her political adversaries. She says that might make the progressive wing of her party ''suspicious,'' but she's comfortable having more influence on the inside.

We recently sat down to talk about this stage of her political career, as well as immigration, social media and how she feels about finding common ground with her right-wing colleagues. This interview has been edited and condensed for length and clarity.

So, how would you describe A.O.C. at 33?

Wow, what a question. I think that perhaps some of the things that would describe me in this moment might be: evolving, learning, challenging myself, but also rooted and grounded in who I am and why I'm here.

For a lot of people, 33 is a time when they are already established in a career and making plans about the future. You use these words -- evolving, but rooted -- and it kind of captures that tension. So I want to explore that with you. You are in your third term now. Your job's not new. A lot has changed since you were first elected in 2018. What is the thing that has changed the most about you since you first took office?

I think I have a sense of steadiness and confidence in what I'm doing. My election was characterized by so much upheaval, both nationally and personally. We were in a time of great political upheaval when President Trump was elected. The Democratic Party at that time was kind of lost in many ways. We were in transition between an older party and a newer one, in terms of where we were coming from ideologically.

Then also myself. I was waitressing up until -- I don't know, March? And I won my primary just a few short months later. And even coming into Washington, not just figuring out how I orient myself politically, coming from a background of direct action and activism, but then also adding on the entire profession of legislating at a federal level.

And then also the class dynamics, the gender dynamics that come from being a poor or ***working-class*** person going into an environment of extraordinary privilege. There were years of learning ahead of me.

When you say things have changed for you personally --

When I first came into office, I was unproven in a way that I think many other people may not be, right? There are a lot of people that are elected with a history of legislating. And I very much felt that I had to prove two things at the same time that were often at odds with one another.

I had to prove to the people that elected me that I am committed and very well grounded in all of the values and issues and fights -- from taking on a party establishment that can be very calcified to continuing to fight for landmark progressive issues like Medicare for all, and comprehensive changes to our immigration system or criminal justice reform.

And the second was that I had to prove to this world of Washington that I was serious and skilled, and that I wasn't just here to make a headline, but that I was here to engage in this process in a skilled and sophisticated way. That I did my homework, so to speak.

You built your brand as this political outsider, but now you're the vice ranking member on the powerful House Oversight Committee, the No. 2 spot for Democrats on that committee. So clearly you have proved at some point that you do mean business. Do you see yourself as more of an insider now?

I don't think so. I mean, on a certain level, once you are engaged as a legislator, you are on the inside. That is a function of the role. And that grants myself or anyone else in a similar position the tools to be able to translate this outside energy into internal change.

I'm curious if you understood in 2018, when you were first elected, that holding power and having relationships was going to be vital to how you moved the party?

When I first came in, I came into an environment that I sensed was never going to give me a chance, and into a party that was extremely hostile to my presence, extremely hostile to my existence. That's one of the reasons I dug so powerfully into my work.

I think a lot of women and people of color -- and especially women of color -- have heard time and time again, ''You have to work twice as hard to get half as far.'' And I felt like I had to work way, way harder to not even get half as far, you know? I knew that relationships and expertise, of course, were important, but I also felt that door was closed to me at that moment. And so the best thing that I could do is just work as hard as I possibly could to get to a point where I had earned the benefit of the doubt.

One of my first hearings ever was questioning Michael Cohen, and I remember the commentary at that time was, ''She's just going to put on a show.'' And I knew that I was capable of more than that. I think anyone who is used to being underestimated can relate to that experience.

I want to read you two recent headlines from New York magazine. They were written within a week of each other. The first is ''A.O.C. Is Just a Regular Old Democrat Now,'' and that accuses you of compromising on your progressive ideals as you work within the party system. And then came the rebuttal, which was ''The 'A.O.C. Left' Has Achieved Plenty,'' which argued that your wing has pushed the party leftward. Why do you think your role is still being parsed this way by Democrats and by those on the left?

Part of it is because we haven't really had a political presence like this in the United States before. I think very often you had this consummate insider that was bankrolled by corporate money and advancing this, frankly, very neoliberal agenda. And those were the people that we were used to seeing in power. And so I think over time there's been an inherent association between power, ascent and quote-unquote selling out.

I often say to my grass-roots companions that the left, for a very long time, was not used to having power in the United States. And so when we encounter power, we're so bewildered by it --

Suspicious of it?

Suspicious of it -- that there's no way in this country you can accrue any kind of power without there being some Faustian compromise.

I want to ask you about an unlikely political marriage. In the spring, you teamed up with Republican Matt Gaetz of Florida, an extremely controversial right-wing member of Congress, to ban fellow Congress people from trading stocks. Are you two friends now?

I think that is a generous characterization. I'd also like to add that the Republican lead on that legislation is Brian Fitzpatrick of Pennsylvania, a moderate Republican. And you know, I think many of us worked very hard on this legislation, because it speaks to a secondary or maybe a third dimensional cleave in both parties.

In order to get elected to the House, it requires just an absolutely ridiculous sum of money and access to capital that most people do not have. And this issue of banning members of Congress from trading an individual stock, I think, speaks to the class realities. Those members who are resistant to it, as well as members who are supportive of it, speaks to a very clear class difference in the U.S. Congress and is actually an area of common interest between Republicans and Democrats that come from a similar place on that issue.

I guess what I'm asking is if you are willing, then, to work with your ideological enemies if it's for what you consider to be the greater good?

Of course. And I think the oversight committee has opened many windows to that. There are elements of the libertarian right, or the Freedom Caucus, that oppose the level of defense contracting in the military budget. Civil rights and privacy violations are another area where I have discovered some elements of common interest. They're very few and far between, but where we identify them, I think it's important to burrow in on them and see what is possible.

I want to ask you about the way that you politically engage, because you've defined a certain style. You're extremely effective at using social media. We are now, though, in a different moment than we were when you first ran. There's a real backlash to social media. Has your thinking on your use of it shifted?

Well, I do think that our media environment, including our social media environment, has changed dramatically over the last five years. Elon Musk taking over Twitter has dramatically changed the media environment. You've had this mass exodus from the platform. It's become much more difficult for me, myself, to use. And that I think is reflected in my presence on some of these platforms.

What would make you get off X, formerly known as Twitter?

You know, this is a conversation that I've had. If one monitors my use of that platform, it has fallen precipitously. I think what would constitute a formal break is something that we actively discuss -- whether it would require an event or if it's just something that may one day happen.

You have 13 million followers there, so it's a huge audience. It's your largest audience on social media.

Absolutely. And that's why it's not something to be taken lightly.

I guess what I'm curious about is, for someone like you who has integrated the use of social media so much into the way that you engage with people, and especially young people -- how you see your participation in a platform like Twitter or X, and how Elon Musk has been using it. It seems antithetical to what you have said you fundamentally believe in. Your being on the platform, it could be argued, somehow supports his platform.

It's a legitimate point. It's something that I have absolutely struggled with. I've certainly pulled back on my activity on the platform due to those concerns, and I do wrestle with that.

Something that I've been focusing on a lot more is building audiences in alternative places. But, even now, when there are extraordinary events that happen, like natural disasters in the state of New York, I do think it's important to be able to have access to a messaging platform that people may trust. But it's uncomfortable. We've seen the media take different approaches to this -- the differences between NPR or The Washington Post or whatever it may be, contending with these same questions.

You recently took a trip to Latin America with other progressive Latino colleagues. You went to Chile, Brazil and Colombia, all countries led by recently elected leftist leaders. And you spoke about how important it is to have a growing number of Latinos now in Congress who are interested in the region. But there was something else you said that struck me, and it made me wonder about this new era for you. You said, ''We are here because fascist movements are global, and as a result, progressive movements also have to be global if we're going to rise to the challenges of these times.'' Do you see that as the natural progression of your work? Moving your ideas internationally, even if they might conflict with the foreign policy of the leader of your own party?

I wouldn't necessarily characterize my foreign policy goals as oppositional to the president's or to the United States. I am a member of Congress. I have sworn an oath to this country, and I take that oath very seriously. But I do believe that those progressive foreign policy goals do represent a departure from the inertia of our Cold War past.

Let's say you were from a very different part of the political spectrum than I am, and you believe that we have to take this very strong, realpolitik approach, that we must be countering China in the most aggressive terms possible. Let's say you believe all of those things. I still think that even if you were motivated by that, we would still come to similar conclusions, which is that we must reckon with our interventionist past in Latin America because it has created a trust problem among our neighbors in the Western Hemisphere.

When a country has had a history of interventionism, of supporting coups, of spying on our neighbors, why would you trust them now? And so whether you're doing it for moral reasons or realpolitik reasons, it's not just about it being the right thing to do. I think it's a smart thing to do in order for us to reset and build trust and relationships with our hemispheric partners.

In the Republican debate, you had Ron DeSantis say that perhaps an invasion of Mexico might be in order to stop drug trafficking.

Such a suggestion is so reckless that it's difficult to even capture. But the political incentive for Ron DeSantis to say something like that speaks to the lack of real attention that we pay domestically to our role as a member of this hemisphere. Part of our increased engagement in the region is not just about how we are thought of in Latin America, but also domestically, how we understand our closest neighbors.

Speaking of our closest neighbors, I want to talk about immigration. Under Biden, more asylum seekers are being held in private detention centers than under Trump. Families are still being separated. The Biden administration kept Trump-era policies that sped up deportations and made it harder for legitimate claimants to come to the U.S. So, what grade do you give the administration on immigration?

Immigration is arguably this administration's weakest issue. This is one area where our policy is dictated by politics, arguably more so than almost any other. There are very clear recommendations and suggestions that we have made to the administration to provide relief on this issue, and it's my belief that some of the hesitation around this has to do with a fear around just being seen as approving or providing permission structures, or really just the Republican narratives that have surrounded immigration.

We also need to examine the root causes of this migration and address that this problem doesn't start at our border, but it starts with our foreign policy.

I mean, it doesn't start at our border. And I know that this has been a right-wing talking point, but I do want to understand your thinking here. Why haven't you used your considerable clout as a Latina leader to visit the border and highlight the ongoing issues there now, like you did during the Trump administration?

Well, this is something that we're actively planning on. What I have done is tours of our New York-area facilities. Right now, this crisis is in our own backyard, and we have toured the Roosevelt Hotel, and I think it's been very important for us to -- especially to my constituents, who are demanding accountability on this -- to look at that front line that is right here in New York City.

I want to get to New York, but we're two and a half years into this administration, the crisis has been burgeoning, and you have been a self-declared and widely viewed leader on this issue.

Yes, yes. Well, I mean, again, I think that this is something that we have been working on. But when this crisis is right here in our own backyard, I have absolutely prioritized having that visitation presence. And I also think that there's a very, very, very dangerous understanding of the frontline of our migration crisis being just our border. And if we only think of the immigration crisis as a border issue and only understand our border as a southern border and not John F. Kennedy Airport, that constitutes a lack of imagination when it comes to immigration.

But under the Trump administration, you did make the southern border an issue.

Yes. And again, I will be visiting the border.

Let me ask you this: 100,000 migrants, as you have pointed to, have come to New York City, which your district is a part of. The city estimates it will spend $5 billion on caring for new arrivals this year. Some of this crisis is because migrants are being bused to New York by certain governors, but it's a real crisis, and a lot of New Yorkers don't like it. Sixty-two percent of registered voters in New York City, one poll found, support relocating migrants to other parts of the state. You've said New Yorkers would welcome migrants, but they're actually protesting. Have you misread your constituents' feelings about this?

I don't think so. I think that we're still willing, but what we need is partnership from the federal government. And I have not been shy around criticism of how the Biden administration has handled this issue. New York City is the front line on this, and we have regularly asked the administration for many, many different avenues of relief.

I think the issue that New Yorkers have is not that there are immigrants coming to New York City, but that immigrants are being prevented from sustaining and supporting themselves. We have New Yorkers, and we have New York businesses, that want to receive migrants and want to employ migrants. And that includes across the state. We have a robust agricultural sector that wants to hire migrants -- they have said this repeatedly. A hospitality sector that wants to do the same. And the Biden administration's refusal to open up work authorizations or extend temporary protective status really prevents us from doing what we do best, which is allowing and creating an environment where immigrants from all over the world can create a livelihood here.

Don't you think, though, that this is having an impact on the way the Democrats are viewed and their ability to argue that they're good stewards of governance? I mean, you have the mayor of New York City, a Democrat, fighting with the governor of New York, also a Democrat, and blaming the federal government, led by a Democrat.

Well, Mayor Adams and I certainly have had our differences in the past, and perhaps present, in terms of how we handle this issue. But I do believe that this adds to the pressure. This is absolutely a message that we have communicated to the president, that we must handle this issue when it comes to work authorizations, when it comes to temporary protective status, because it is absolutely having an impact.

Would you like someone to run against Mayor Adams in 2025?

Well, I was elected in a primary election against a very established Democrat. I believe that primaries are healthy for the party. I believe that primary elections are part of what keep us a robust and accountable party. So I certainly think that an election without any choice would be something that many New Yorkers would feel kind of uncertain about.

That sounds like a yes -- you'd like someone to run.

It's important for us to have choices, and I say this as a person who has had elements of our party mount primary challenges against me, and I don't take it personally.

Do you feel more comfortable in the Democratic Party now? The way you described it initially was fraught. They rejected you, and you were definitely trying to change the party. You have said you've pushed the party leftward. Many would agree. So is it OK to be a regular Democrat now?

The activist in me always seeks to agitate for more. I think despite there being progress, many people are still woefully underserved in this country. But the Democratic Party has changed dramatically in the last five years. Even if you just look at the numbers, I believe it's something around 50 percent of House Democrats have been elected since 2018. And so what is considered center and moderate now is dramatically different than what it was five years ago.

We started this conversation talking about how you entered politics at a particular moment, and not a good one. And you acknowledged that your tenure has been tumultuous, with attacks on democracy and on your own person. Do you like your job?

I certainly think I like it a lot more than I used to.

There have been times where this work has been extremely challenging, and I didn't know if I would survive in this position. But I see myself as having a very great responsibility, because at the end of the day, the representation of ***working-class*** people in our Congress is still extremely low. Women still only constitute 27 percent of our Congress. People of color, Latinas -- there have only been, I don't know, two to three dozen Latinas that have been elected in the history of the United States. And so I'm motivated by an extraordinary sense of responsibility, not just for representation, but to deliver on policy.

At 33 years old, first winning my election at 28 -- this has taken a large degree of learning. I'm also very hard on myself, and I have to sometimes put into perspective that I am comparing myself to the skill set and performance of people 20, 30, 40 years my senior. But again, it's something that is very important, and I maintain that one of my responsibilities is to hold the door open for those who are to come.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/30/us/politics/aoc-third-term-congress.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/30/us/politics/aoc-third-term-congress.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Now in her third term, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez says that from the outset, she has worked as hard as possible to earn the benefit of the doubt. (PHOTOGRAPH BY CHIP SOMODEVILLA/GETTY IMAGES)

PHOTOS (PHOTOGRAPHS BY ERIC GAY/ASSOCIATED PRESS

HAIYUN JIANG /THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A16.

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[***Patriotism Matters, Especially in Times Like These***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67WY-NF01-JBG3-621M-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Length:** 891 words

**Byline:** By David Brooks

**Body**

Dear Zoomers,

Because you're online so much you probably saw the Wall Street Journal/NORC poll that came out this week. It found that the share of Americans who say patriotism is very important to them has dropped to 38 percent from 70 percent since 1998. The share who say religion is very important has dropped to 39 percent from 62 percent. The share who say community involvement is very important has dropped to 27 percent from 47 percent. The share who say having children is very important has dropped to 30 percent from 59 percent.

These trends are partly driven by you, young adults under 30. Only 23 percent of you said that patriotism is very important or that having children is very important.

You're disillusioned and I get it. You've grown up in a crappy time -- Iraq, the financial crisis, Trump, George Floyd, the pandemic, a widespread sense that you won't be as well off as your parents.

But I grew up in a crappy time, too. I'm old enough to remember the assassinations of 1968. Over the next few years, Americans experienced defeat in Vietnam, crime rates beginning to surge and the hollowing out of cities, the energy crisis, wages beginning to decline, stagflation and Watergate.

But look at what happened next. Five years after the fall of Saigon, and the supposed death blow to American self-confidence that would cripple American power, the nation elected Ronald Reagan and felt a surge of optimism. Nine years after that, the Berlin Wall fell and the United States emerged as the world's dominant superpower. Three years after that the nation elected Bill Clinton and entered the 1990s era of relative peace, prosperity and calm. Crime rates began to plummet.

The political scientist Samuel Huntington was right: The story of American history is the story of periodic convulsions of failure and breakdown followed by long periods of readjustment and renewal.

As I witnessed America's recovery in the 1980s and 1990s I felt and saw around me a growing patriotism and faith in America. Sure, there was some of the resentful, rotten patriotism you now see at MAGA rallies, but there was also a more mature kind of patriotism, the love you have for your country when you know its flaws. It was a curious kind of patriotism, one that wanted to understand the full complexities of America, that wanted to read David McCullough, John Hope Franklin and Doris Kearns Goodwin, and watch those Ken Burns documentaries.

Personally, that kind of patriotism gave me a sense of identity and belonging. It ripped me from the prison of the present and placed me in a long procession of Americans -- the dead, the living and the unborn. It broke through the walls that separate one person from another and gave me a sense of membership in a community so varied and so much to be treasured that I have never been able to hate Americans who differ from me politically.

That kind of love is a propelling force for people who served the nation in all the different ways -- in government, the military and beyond. This love manifests as a wild and generous energy. ''Giving is the highest expression of potency,'' Erich Fromm wrote in ''The Art of Loving.'' ''In the very act of giving, I experience my strength, my wealth, my power. This experience of heightened vitality and potency fills me with joy.''

The recovery of the '80s and '90s ended early this century, and as leaders failed one after the other, I've swung wildly between optimism and pessimism, sometimes by the hour.

But over the past two years, I've become convinced that the latest of America's renewal periods has already begun. ***Working-class*** wages are rising, income inequality is declining and manufacturing jobs are more plentiful. America remains a vigorously innovative country on the planet. We lead the world in attracting the most foreign direct investment. America has a more diverse array of talented people than ever before. The Republican Party hasn't, but voters overall rejected Trumpism in 2022. Joe Biden may not be your cup of tea, but he's restored sanity, effectiveness and decency to the White House.

My greatest fear is that the latest renewal will be killed in its crib by the intractable forces of cynicism and withdrawal. My fear is that we've entered a distrust doom loop: People are so untrusting of their institutions and their neighbors that they are unwilling to reach out, to actively renew their communities and their country, and so the dysfunction will continue, and the distrust will increase, and so on and so on.

What really worried me about the Wall Street Journal poll is that people are still pulling inward on a variety of fronts; they are telling pollsters that patriotism, parenthood and community are not very important to them.

Only love and a leap of faith can break through distrust. That is why a credible form of patriotism is so important right now. We've hit that spot in the cycle of crisis and renewal at which people have to take the kind of common actions that send the vital message: we can trust each other.

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**Graphic**

This article appeared in print on page A21.

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[***Gay Old Times***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67CG-PHF1-JBG3-61GR-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

January 22, 2023 Sunday

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**Length:** 748 words

**Byline:** By Peter Kispert

**Body**

In his debut novel, ''The New Life,'' Tom Crewe reimagines the lives of two pioneers who studied, and supported, homosexuality in 19th-century England.

THE NEW LIFE, by Tom Crewe

Tom Crewe's intricate and finely crafted debut novel makes fiction of real history: In London, in the 1890s, two men, John Addington Symonds and Henry Havelock Ellis, collaborated on a study supporting freedom for ''sexual inverts,'' or what we would now call gay rights. Their efforts predate popular conceptions of the fight for equal rights, and it's their lives and work that take the spotlight in Crewe's reimagining.

''The New Life'' opens before the two men meet, with chapters alternating perspectives as a half-welcome third party disrupts each one's marriage. The novel first introduces John Addington, a wealthy writer and a closet sexual invert himself who begins to indulge his long-held desires with a much younger, ***working-class*** man named Frank Feaver. The story then shifts to the sexologist Henry Ellis. Henry's wedding to the feminist Edith opens his story, but his marriage becomes agitated by the boisterous Angelica, who quickly bonds with Edith while they are on their honeymoon.

From there, John's and Henry's stories unfold, in parallel and slowly. It's not until nearly 100 pages into ''The New Life'' (a fourth of this sizable novel) that their fates finally begin to intersect. John, having read some of Henry's work, writes to Henry to learn his thoughts on ''Greek feeling; or as it is becoming known, sexual inversion.'' Their exchange eventually leads to the idea for a book, ''Sexual Inversion,'' ''an impartial and really scientific study'' featuring anonymous accounts from gay men.

There is always a narrative risk when recapitulating events in historical fiction -- predetermination can deaden the pulse. Crewe, who earned his Ph.D. in 19th-century British history from the University of Cambridge, makes no such error. He attentively constructs rich, human motivations and contradictions for his fictionalized renderings of John and Henry. For John, freedom for sexual inverts would mean addressing a lifetime of repressed desire and a future with Frank. For Henry, the idea of sexual freedom has resonance with his wife and her lover. (Henry has a different ''peculiarity'' of his own.) Crewe uses the interior depth of John and Henry to build intrigue, creating provocative developments even without the use of overtly dramatic plot points.

A narrative jolt does arrive eventually, though. Halfway into the novel, in a compelling (though sudden) development, Oscar Wilde is put on trial for ''gross indecency,'' an event that raises John and Henry's anxieties about the reception of their project. Shortly after, John and Henry's book gets caught in turmoil of its own. Both incidents slice open questions of if, and how, John and Henry should stand by their work -- defending ''Sexual Inversion'' could bring about a moment of political and cultural reckoning that John and Henry both want, but it could also expose hidden parts of their lives, and their loved ones' lives, that they want to keep private.

''The New Life'' brims with intelligence and insight, impressed with all the texture (and fog) of fin de siècle London. Crewe's prose is stylish and precise, reminiscent of Alan Hollinghurst's. The novel falters only in its later chapters, when John begins a self-destructive streak that is too flatly written to be believable. Otherwise, the writing is exquisite. Moments of furtive queer intimacy -- scenes of John and Frank, especially -- accumulate power throughout, reminding us that a work like ''Sexual Inversion'' is important, that it is worth a cost to acknowledge these desires and loves as true, as natural. Altogether, Crewe crafts a meaningful tribute to the pioneering Symonds and Ellis.

For all its historical fixtures, the novel is energized by timeless questions: What's worth jeopardizing in the name of progress? Who should assume the greatest degree of risk in the pursuit of an ideal? Is it possible for one book to catalyze lasting change? ''The New Life'' offers a response through a powerful refrain by way of Henry's words, which John throws back to him during a crucial moment of doubt in their project: ''We must live in the future we hope to make.''

Peter Kispert is the author of ''I Know You Know Who I Am.''

THE NEW LIFE | By Tom Crewe | 390 pp. | Scribner | $28Peter Kispert is the author of ''I Know You Know Who I Am.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/01/03/books/review/the-new-life-tom-crewe.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/01/03/books/review/the-new-life-tom-crewe.html)

**Graphic**

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[***The Necessity of Patriotism (Even in Times Like These); David Brooks***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67WV-BW11-DXY4-X06J-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** David Brooks

**Highlight:** America is rebounding, but will cynicism stop the renewal?

**Body**

Dear Zoomers,

Because you’re online so much you probably saw the Wall Street Journal/NORC poll that came out this week. It found that the share of Americans who say patriotism is very important to them has dropped to 38 percent from 70 percent since 1998. The share who say religion is very important has dropped to 39 percent from 62 percent. The share who say community involvement is very important has dropped to 27 percent from 47 percent. The share who say having children is very important has dropped to 30 percent from 59 percent.

These trends are partly driven by you, young adults under 30. Only 23 percent of you said that patriotism is very important or that having children is very important.

You’re disillusioned and I get it. You’ve grown up in a crappy time — Iraq, the financial crisis, Trump, George Floyd, the pandemic, a widespread sense that you won’t be as well off as your parents.

But I grew up in a crappy time, too. I’m old enough to remember the assassinations of 1968. Over the next few years, Americans experienced defeat in Vietnam, crime rates beginning to surge and the hollowing out of cities, the energy crisis, wages beginning to decline, stagflation and Watergate.

But look at what happened next. Five years after the fall of Saigon, and the supposed death blow to American self-confidence that would cripple American power, the nation elected Ronald Reagan and felt a surge of optimism. Nine years after that, the Berlin Wall fell and the United States emerged as the world’s dominant superpower. Three years after that the nation elected Bill Clinton and entered the 1990s era of relative peace, prosperity and calm. Crime rates began to plummet.

The political scientist Samuel Huntington was right: The story of American history is the story of periodic convulsions of failure and breakdown followed by long periods of readjustment and renewal.

As I witnessed America’s recovery in the 1980s and 1990s I felt and saw around me a growing patriotism and faith in America. Sure, there was some of the resentful, rotten patriotism you now see at MAGA rallies, but there was also a more mature kind of patriotism, the love you have for your country when you know its flaws. It was a curious kind of patriotism, one that wanted to understand the full complexities of America, that wanted to read David McCullough, John Hope Franklin and Doris Kearns Goodwin, and watch those Ken Burns documentaries.

Personally, that kind of patriotism gave me a sense of identity and belonging. It ripped me from the prison of the present and placed me in a long procession of Americans — the dead, the living and the unborn. It broke through the walls that separate one person from another and gave me a sense of membership in a community so varied and so much to be treasured that I have never been able to hate Americans who differ from me politically.

That kind of love is a propelling force for people who served the nation in all the different ways — in government, the military and beyond. This love manifests as a wild and generous energy. “Giving is the highest expression of potency,” Erich Fromm wrote in “The Art of Loving.” “In the very act of giving, I experience my strength, my wealth, my power. This experience of heightened vitality and potency fills me with joy.”

The recovery of the ’80s and ’90s ended early this century, and as leaders failed one after the other, I’ve swung wildly between optimism and pessimism, sometimes by the hour.

But over the past two years, I’ve become convinced that the latest of America’s renewal periods has already begun. ***Working-class*** wages are rising, [*income inequality*](https://www.slowboring.com/p/inequality-falling?r=1rxedq&amp;utm_campaign=post&amp;utm_medium=email) is declining and manufacturing jobs are more plentiful. America remains [*a vigorously innovative*](https://www.globalinnovationindex.org/Home) country on the planet. We lead the world in attracting the most [*foreign direct investment*](https://www.imf.org/en/Blogs/Articles/2022/12/07/united-states-is-worlds-top-destination-for-foreign-direct-investment). America has a more diverse array of talented people than ever before. The Republican Party hasn’t, but voters overall rejected Trumpism in 2022. Joe Biden may not be your cup of tea, but he’s restored sanity, effectiveness and decency to the White House.

My greatest fear is that the latest renewal will be killed in its crib by the intractable forces of cynicism and withdrawal. My fear is that we’ve entered a distrust doom loop: People are so untrusting of their institutions and their neighbors that they are unwilling to reach out, to actively renew their communities and their country, and so the dysfunction will continue, and the distrust will increase, and so on and so on.

What really worried me about the Wall Street Journal poll is that people are still pulling inward on a variety of fronts; they are telling pollsters that patriotism, parenthood and community are not very important to them.

Only love and a leap of faith can break through distrust. That is why a credible form of patriotism is so important right now. We’ve hit that spot in the cycle of crisis and renewal at which people have to take the kind of common actions that send the vital message: we can trust each other.

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**Body**

Every morning in 21st-century America, thousands of people wake up and prepare to take a cross-country trip. Some are traveling for business. Others are visiting family or going on vacations. Whether they are leaving from New York or Los Angeles, Atlanta or Seattle, their trips have a lot in common.

They leave their homes several hours before their plane is scheduled to depart. Many sit in traffic on their way to the airport. Once they arrive, they park their cars and make their way through the terminal, waiting in a security line, taking off their shoes, removing laptops and liquids from their bags. When they finally get to the gate, they often wait again because their flight is delayed. The flight itself typically lasts about six hours heading west, and the travelers then need to find ground transportation to their destination. Door to door, cross-country journeys often last 10 or even 12 hours.

In the sweep of human history, these trips remain a marvel of ingenuity. For centuries, long-distance travel required weeks or months and could be dangerous. Today, somebody can eat breakfast on one end of the continental United States and dinner on the other. If you narrow the focus to recent decades, however, you will notice another striking fact about these trips: Almost none of the progress has occurred in the past half-century. A cross-country trip today typically takes more time than it did in the 1970s. The same is true of many trips within a region or a metropolitan area.

Compare this stagnation with the progress of the previous century. The first transcontinental railroad was completed in 1869, and passenger trains ran on its route days later, revolutionizing a journey that had taken months. People could suddenly cross the country in a week. Next came commercial flight. In the 1930s, an airplane could beat a train across the country by hopscotching from city to city. Finally, the jet age arrived: The first regularly scheduled nonstop transcontinental flight occurred on Jan. 25, 1959, from Los Angeles to New York, on a new long-range Boeing jet, the 707.

The poet Carl Sandburg was among the passengers on the return American Airlines flight that first day. ''You look out of the window at the waves of dark and light clouds looking like ocean shorelines,'' he wrote about the trip, ''and you feel as if you are floating away in this pleasantly moving room, like the basket hanging from the balloon you saw with a visiting circus when you were a boy.'' Sandburg was born in 1878, when crossing the country took almost a week. His cross-country flight took five and a half hours.

In the more than 60 years since then, there has been no progress. Instead, the scheduled flight time between Los Angeles and New York has become about 30 minutes longer. Aviation technology has not advanced in ways that speed the trip, and the skies have become so crowded that pilots reroute planes to avoid traffic. Nearly every other part of a cross-country trip, in airports and on local roads, also lasts longer. All told, a trip across the United States can take a few more hours today than in the 1970s.

The speed at which people can get from one place to another is one of the most basic measures of a society's sophistication. It affects economic productivity and human happiness; academic research has found that commuting makes people more unhappy than almost any other daily activity. Yet in one area of U.S. travel after another, progress has largely stopped over the past half-century.

In 1969, Metroliner trains made two-and-a-half-hour nonstop trips between Washington and New York. Today, there are no nonstop trains on that route, and the fastest trip, on Acela trains, takes about 20 minutes longer than the Metroliner once did. Commuter railroads and subway lines in many places have also failed to become faster. When I ride the New York City subway, I don't go from Point A to Point B much faster than my grandparents did in the 1940s. For drivers -- a majority of American travelers -- trip times have increased, because traffic has worsened. In the California metropolitan area that includes Silicon Valley, a typical rush-hour drive that would have taken 45 minutes in the early 1980s took nearly 60 minutes by 2019.

The lack of recent progress is not a result of any physical or technological limits. In other parts of the world, travel has continued to accelerate. Japan, China, South Korea and countries in Europe have built high-speed train lines that have tangibly improved daily life. Because the United States is less densely populated, high-speed trains would not work in much of this country. But they could transform travel in California, the Northeast and a few other regions -- and it is not as if this country has been improving its highways and airline network instead of its rail system. All have languished.

Why has this happened? A central reason is that the United States, for all that we spend as a nation on transportation, has stopped meaningfully investing in it. Investment, in simple terms, involves using today's resources to make life better in the long term. For a family, investment can involve saving money over many years to afford a home purchase or a child's college education. For a society, it can mean raising taxes or cutting other forms of spending to build roads, train lines, science laboratories or schools that might take decades to prove their usefulness. Historically, the most successful economic growth strategy has revolved around investment. It was true in ancient Rome, with its roads and aqueducts, and in 19th-century Britain, with its railroads. During the 20th century, it was true in the United States as well as Japan and Europe.

Investments are certainly not guaranteed to pay off: Just as families sometimes buy houses that decline in value, governments sometimes waste taxpayer dollars on programs that accomplish little. Still, successful people and societies have always understood that these risks are unavoidable. Failing to invest enough resources in the future tends to be the bigger mistake.

Investment is not simply a synonym for a bigger government. For decades, liberals and conservatives have been arguing over the size of government. Liberals prefer that the public sector play a larger role, and conservatives prefer a smaller one, in one realm after another: health care, retirement, environmental protection, business regulation and more. Investment has often been swept up in that debate. Some of the steepest declines in government spending on research and development -- a crucial form of investment -- occurred after Ronald Reagan won the presidency in 1980 with a message that less government was the solution to the country's economic troubles. Government investment has never recovered. In recent years, federal spending on research and development has been less than half as large, relative to the size of the economy, as it was in the mid-1960s.

In truth, investment is consistent with both a conservative and a liberal economic philosophy, as American leaders dating to Alexander Hamilton and Thomas Jefferson have recognized. Conservatives believe that the government should do the minimum necessary to create a flourishing society, and investment passes both tests: minimum and necessary. It passes the ''minimum'' test because many investments are surprisingly inexpensive compared with social insurance programs or the military. Last year, Social Security cost six times as much money as federal R.&D., and spending on the military and veterans was five times as large as R.&D. spending. Investment also passes the ''necessary'' test -- because the private sector tends to do less of it than a healthy economy needs.

Investments are expensive for a private company, and only a fraction of the returns typically flows to the original investors and inventors. Despite patents, other people find ways to mimic the invention. Often, these imitators build on the original in ways that are perfectly legal but would not have been possible without the initial breakthrough. Johannes Gutenberg did not get rich from inventing the printing press, and neither did Tim Berners-Lee from creating the World Wide Web in 1989.

The earliest stages of scientific research are difficult for the private sector to support. In these stages, the commercial possibilities are often unclear. An automobile company, for example, will struggle to justify spending money on basic engineering research that may end up being useful only to an aerospace company. Yet such basic scientific research can bring enormous benefits for a society. It can allow people to live longer and better lives and can lay the groundwork for unforeseen commercial applications that are indeed profitable. A well-functioning capitalist economy depends on large investments in research that the free market, on its own, usually will not make. The most obvious recent example was the crash program to create a Covid-19 vaccine.

During the laissez-faire years leading up to the Great Depression, the United States invested relatively little money in scientific research, and the country fell behind. Europe dominated the Nobel Prizes during this period, and European countries, including Nazi Germany, began World War II with a technological advantage over the United States. The scariest evidence could be seen in the North Atlantic Ocean and Gulf of Mexico, where German U-boats sank more than 200 ships -- sometimes visible from U.S. soil -- early in the war and killed 5,000 Americans. Recognizing the threat from this technological gap, a small group of American scientists and government officials began an urgent effort to persuade Franklin Roosevelt to support an investment program larger than anything before. The result, called the National Defense Research Committee, funded research into radar, sonar, planes, ships, vehicles and guns. It included a race to develop an atomic bomb before the Nazis did.

That effort arguably won World War II. American factories learned how to build a ship in less than three weeks, down from eight months at the war's start. ''We were never able to build a tank as good as the German tank,'' Lucius Clay, an American general, said. ''But we made so many of them that it didn't really matter.''

Clay's boss, the American military officer overseeing this productive effort, was Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower. He and the people around him absorbed the lesson about the awesome power of American investment. After becoming president in 1953, Eisenhower recognized that if government did not make vital investments, nobody would. ''The principal contradiction in the whole system comes about because of the inability of men to forgo immediate gain for a longtime good,'' he once wrote. ''We do not yet have a sufficient number of people who are ready to make the immediate sacrifice in favor of a long-term investment.''

The Eisenhower investment boom has no peer in U.S. history, at least not outside a major war. Its best-known achievement, the Interstate System, allowed people and goods to move around the country much more quickly than before. That highway system was one example among many. The Cold War -- especially after the 1957 launch of Sputnik raised fears that the Soviet Union had become scientifically dominant -- offered a rationale. As a share of the country's total economic output, federal spending on research and development roughly tripled between the early 1950s and early 1960s. This measure did not even capture highway construction and some other programs.

Eisenhower's agenda demonstrated the relative affordability of government investment. He had run for president as a conservative promising to rein in the excesses of the Democratic Party's 20-year hold on the White House. And he did restrain some forms of federal spending, balancing the budget for parts of his presidency. Still, the federal government was easily able to afford a much larger investment budget. Eisenhower was able to be both a fiscal conservative and the president who nearly tripled R.&D. spending.

It is worth pausing to reflect on how many global industries were dominated by American companies by the late 20th century. It happened in aviation (Boeing, American, United and Delta) and automobiles (General Motors, Ford and, later, Tesla), as well as energy (Exxon and Chevron), telecommunications (AT&T and Verizon) and pharmaceuticals (Pfizer, Johnson & Johnson, Eli Lilly and Merck). The United States built the world's best system of higher education, with its universities occupying more than half of the top spots in various rankings of top research institutions. American citizens dominated the scientific Nobel Prizes too.

None of this was inevitable. While there were multiple causes -- including the country's large consumer market and a vibrant private sector shaped by a national ethos that celebrates risk-taking -- the postwar investment boom was vital. That boom fit the historical pattern of successful government investments. First, the government paid for basic scientific research that the private sector was not conducting. Then the government helped create an early market for new products by buying them. Boeing, for example, got its start during World War I selling planes to the Navy. Later, the government paid for research that facilitated jet-airline technology and, by extension, the Boeing 707, the plane that launched transcontinental jet travel.

One of the clearest case studies is the computer industry, the same industry that would become known for a cadre of libertarian-leaning executives who dismissed the importance of government. In reality, American dominance in the digital economy would not exist without decades of generous government investment, partly because the private sector failed to see its potential in the industry's early days.

In the 1930s, a Harvard physics graduate student named Howard Aiken designed one of the world's first computers, nicknamed the Mark, with help from IBM engineers. But IBM's top executives, then focused on a mundane punch-card system that helped other companies keep track of their operations, were so unimpressed that they allowed Aiken to take the computer to a laboratory at Harvard University. During World War II, the U.S. Navy took over the lab. The Mark -- 51 feet long and eight feet tall, weighing nearly five tons and with 750,000 parts, including visible gears, chains and an electric motor -- helped the military perform complex calculations to make weapons more efficient. The New York Times described the computer as the Algebra Machine, and a Boston newspaper called it the Robot Brain. The military came to rely on it so heavily that the lab operated 24 hours a day. The lab had a phone connected directly to the Navy's Bureau of Ordnance in Washington so the officers could demand immediate solutions to their most pressing problems.

''We used to shake every time that darn thing rang,'' recalled Grace Hopper, a former math professor at Vassar College who worked in the lab as a Navy officer and would become a pioneering computer scientist. ''The pressure was terrific.'' At one point, the mathematician John von Neumann arrived at the lab bearing a long set of complex problems. He did not say why he needed them solved. After he and the team there solved them, von Neumann left to continue secretly working on the atomic-bomb project.

Despite the role that computers played in winning the war, most of corporate America still did not recognize their importance afterward. Into the 1950s, IBM executives -- focused on their lucrative punch-card business -- remained wary of investing in the development of any large new computer. ''It didn't move me at all,'' Thomas Watson Jr., IBM's chairman, wrote in 1990. ''I couldn't see this gigantic, costly, unreliable device as a piece of business equipment.''

Watson and other executives were not ignorant or uncreative. They were among the most successful businesspeople in the country. Their failure was structural, stemming from the resources at their disposal and the financial incentives that constrained them. Only one organization had enough money and a sufficient long-term horizon to bankroll the creation of the computer industry: the federal government.

It could afford the inevitable setbacks that basic research involved. The federal government could insist that researchers build on one another's ideas, rather than working in separate laboratories, unaware of related breakthroughs. The government could patiently finance research that was making progress but not yet ready for commercial applications. As soon as an invention was shown to be useful to the largest organization in the country -- the military -- the federal government could guarantee huge amounts of revenue through military contracts. As late as 1959, federal agencies financed about 85 percent of the country's electronics research.

The military even made possible IBM's belated entrance into computing: After its top executives realized their company would otherwise fade, they made it their top priority to win a bidding competition to create the computers needed for a network of radar stations across Alaska and Canada that would watch for a Soviet attack. Watson would later say that the contract was a watershed for the company.

Without a doubt, government officials make plenty of mistakes when choosing which projects to fund. They misjudge an idea's potential or allow political considerations to influence decisions. Some of these mistakes turn into symbols of government's supposed fecklessness, like Solyndra, a doomed clean-energy company that the Obama administration funded. Yet these failures tend to be cheap relative to the size of the federal budget, at least in the United States. (The risks of overinvestment are more serious in an authoritarian system like the old Soviet Union or contemporary China.) Even more important, a few big investment successes can produce returns, in economic growth and the resulting tax revenue, that cover the costs for dozens of failures. IBM and Google can pay for a lot of Solyndras.

Just as important, government can reduce its involvement as an industry matures and allow the market system to take over. After the government creates the initial demand for a new product, the sprawling private sector -- with its reliance on market feedback and the wisdom of crowds -- often does a better job allocating resources than any bureaucratic agency. When a company makes a better version of a product, it gains market share. The incentives for selling goods that improve people's lives can be enormous. Market capitalism may not do an adequate job of subsidizing basic scientific research, but it is very efficient at spreading the eventual fruits of that research. Government-funded research led to the development of penicillin, cortisone, chemotherapy, vaccines and cardiac treatments, which the private sector then produced and distributed. In transportation, the government built the air-traffic and Interstate-highway systems, which private companies used. Government funding helped develop the satellite, the jet engine, the snowmobile and the microwave oven.

By the end of the 1960s, the United States had become the most broadly prosperous country the world had ever known. Incomes had risen markedly for rich, middle class and poor alike -- and more for the poor and middle class than the rich. The Black-white wage gap fell markedly during these decades, even in the presence of virulent racism. Americans had faith during these years that the future could be better than the past, and they forged that future.

Not every form of investment is as tangible as a highway or computer. Education also fits the definition of a program that requires spending money today mostly to improve the quality of life tomorrow. In the middle of the 20th century, education was the investment that turbocharged many other investments.

Even before the Eisenhower investment boom, the United States took a relatively inclusive approach to education. Several of the country's founders believed that the success of their new democracy depended on an educated citizenry. The Massachusetts Constitution, which John Adams drafted, called for ''spreading the opportunities and advantages of education.'' The country obviously did not come close to achieving these ideals. It generally denied formal education to Black Americans, and many schools excluded girls. White boys from modest backgrounds often began working at young ages. But the early United States was nonetheless ahead of many other countries in the breadth of its grade schools. By the middle of the 19th century, the American population had surpassed Germany's as the world's most widely educated.

When parts of Europe began to catch up, the United States raced ahead again, opening public high schools in the early 1900s. Britain did not enact a law making it possible for many low-income students to attend high school until 1944. That same year, the United States Congress passed the G.I. Bill of Rights, and the postwar investment boom helped make good on the bill's promise by increasing spending on both K-12 schools and universities.

Education has always had its skeptics. Europe was slow to educate its masses because its leaders believed that doing so was a waste of resources: They didn't see why the ***working class*** needed to read literature, study history and learn mathematics. In the United States today, many people still believe that only a narrow subset of the population benefits from college -- that its benefits are overrated and that most Americans would be better off pursuing immediate employment. And different people are indeed best served by different kinds of education. Education is also not a cure-all for the American economy. Tax rates, antitrust policy, workers' bargaining power and many other areas matter enormously.

But downplaying the importance of education is a mistake, a mistake that the United States avoided during much of its rise to global pre-eminence. Relative to its economic rivals, the country could call on more college graduates to fill its professional ranks and more high-school graduates to fill its blue-collar ranks. IBM, Boeing, Pfizer, General Motors and other leading companies benefited from government investments in both basic science and in mass schooling. As Claudia Goldin (the latest Nobel laureate in economics) and Lawrence Katz have argued, the 20th century was the American century in large part because it was the human-capital century. Education -- knowledge -- can help people live better by allowing them to learn from past errors and make new discoveries. It can help companies and workers accomplish tasks more effectively and produce goods that other people want to buy.

The evidence is everywhere. Today, high school graduates earn more and are less likely to be out of work than people without a high school diploma, as has been the case for more than a century. College graduates earn more yet. Not only does mass education increase the size of the economic pie; it also evens out the distribution. The spread of American high schools and then colleges meant that graduates were no longer an elite group. The wage premium that they earned was spread among a larger group of workers.

The benefits extend far beyond economic measures. Life expectancy for Americans without a college degree has fallen to its lowest level since at least the early 1990s, the scholars Anne Case and Angus Deaton have shown, while it is only slightly below its pre-Covid peak for college graduates. In 2021, the average American with a bachelor's degree could expect to live eight years longer than somebody without one. More-educated Americans also report being more satisfied with their lives. They are less likely to suffer from chronic pain or to abuse alcohol and drugs. They are more likely to be married and to live with their young children.

Yes, the relationship between education and well-being is partly correlation rather than causation. Talented, hardworking people are more likely to finish school partly because of those characteristics, and they might have thrived even if they dropped out. But academic research has found that much of the relationship is causal. A clever study in Florida compared students whose grades and scores barely earned them admission to a public four-year college with students who just missed the cutoff; those students who were admitted fared significantly better in later life.

Although the rest of the world was slow to do so, it eventually came to recognize the benefits of the American approach to mass education and to copy it. In the 1970s, educational attainment began to surge in Europe and Asia. Political leaders effectively acknowledged that their elitist approach to education had been wrong. They understood that the amount of education that people need to thrive tends to rise over the course of history. The economy becomes more complex, thanks to technological change, and citizens need new knowledge and skills to take advantage of that technology, or else their labor will be replaced by it. When you think about education in these terms, you start to realize that the appropriate amount of schooling for a typical citizen changes over time. If 13 years -- kindergarten through 12th grade -- made sense a century ago, it surely is not enough today.

The chaos of the 1960s and 1970s helped end the era of great American investment. Crime rose rapidly during those decades. The country fought a losing war in Vietnam. Political leaders were murdered. A president resigned in scandal. And the economy seemed to break down, with both unemployment and inflation soaring. The causes were complex -- including wars in the Middle East that upended global energy markets -- but Americans understandably came to question their own government's competence.

In their frustration, many embraced a diagnosis that a group of conservative intellectuals had been offering for decades, mostly without winning converts. It held that the post-New Deal United States had put too much faith in government regulation and not enough in the power of the market to allocate resources efficiently. These intellectuals included Milton Friedman and Robert Bork, while the politician who successfully sold their vision was Reagan. The new consensus has become known as neoliberalism, a word that in recent years has turned into a catchall epithet to describe the views of moderate Democrats and conservatives. But the word is nonetheless meaningful. The neoliberal revolution in economic policy changed the country's trajectory. After 1980, regulators allowed companies to grow much larger, often through mergers. The government became hostile to labor unions. Tax rates on the affluent plummeted. And Washington pulled back from the major investments it had been making.

Federal spending on research and development, which had already come down from its post-Eisenhower high, declined in the 1980s and 1990s. In recent years, it has accounted for less than half as large a share of G.D.P. as it did 60 years ago. The country's roads, bridges, rail networks and air-traffic system have all atrophied -- hence the lengthening of travel times. The share of national income devoted to government spending on education stopped rising in the 1970s and has remained stagnant since. Less selective colleges, which tend to educate ***working-class*** students, tend to be especially lacking in resources. Other countries, meanwhile, have passed by the United States. Every American generation born between the late 1800s and mid-1900s was the most educated in the world. Americans under age 50 no longer hold this distinction. The lack of progress among American men has been especially stark. Men's wages, not coincidentally, have risen extremely slowly in recent decades.

The stagnation of investment does not stem only from the size of government. It also reflects the priorities of modern government, as set by both Republicans and Democrats. The federal government has grown -- but not the parts oriented toward the future and economic growth. Spending has surged on health care, Social Security, antipoverty programs, police and prisons. (Military spending has declined as a share of G.D.P. in recent decades.) All these programs are important. A decent society needs to care for its vulnerable and prevent disorder. But the United States has effectively starved programs focused on the future at the expense of those focused on the present. The country spent about twice as much per capita on the elderly as on children in recent years, according to the Urban Institute. Even the affluent elderly can receive more government help than impoverished children.

These choices help explain why the United States has fallen behind other countries in educational attainment, why our child-poverty rate is so high, why it takes longer to cross the country than it once did. As Eugene Steuerle, an economist with a long career in Washington, has said, ''We have a budget for a declining nation.''

Americans have come to believe that the country is, in fact, declining. Less than 25 percent of Americans say that the economy is in good or excellent condition today. Whether the economy has been growing or shrinking during the 21st century, whether a Democrat or Republican has been in the White House, most Americans have usually rated the economy as weak.

Pundits and politicians -- who tend to be affluent -- sometimes express befuddlement about this pessimism, but it accurately reflects reality for most Americans. For decades, incomes and wealth have grown more slowly than the economy for every group other than the very rich. Net worth for the typical family shrank during the first two decades of the 21st century, after adjusting for inflation. The trends in many noneconomic measures of well-being are even worse: In 1980, life expectancy in the United States was typical for an industrialized country. American life expectancy now is lower than in any other high-income country -- including Canada, Japan, South Korea, Australia, Britain, France, Germany, Italy and even less-wealthy European countries like Slovenia and Greece.

This great American stagnation has many causes, but the withering of investment is a major one. The economists and other experts who advise politicians have increasingly come to this conclusion, which explains why President Biden has made investment the centerpiece of his economic strategy -- even if that isn't always obvious to outsiders. He has signed legislation authorizing hundreds of billions of dollars to rebuild the transportation system, subsidize semiconductor manufacturing and expand clean energy. These are precisely the kinds of programs the private sector tends not to do on its own. All told, Biden has overseen the largest increase in federal investment since the Eisenhower era. Notably, the infrastructure and semiconductor bill both passed with bipartisan support, a sign that parts of the Republican Party are coming to question the neoliberal consensus. As was the case during the 1950s, the threat from a foreign rival -- China, this time -- is focusing some policymakers on the value of government investment.

There is plenty of reason to doubt that the country has reached a true turning point. Biden's investment program remains much smaller in scale than Eisenhower's, relative to the size of the economy. Many Republicans continue to oppose government investment, as the recent chaos in the House of Representatives indicates. It is possible that we are now living through a short exception to the country's long investment slump.

Whatever happens, the stakes should be clear by now. A government that does not devote sufficient resources to the future will produce a society that is ultimately less prosperous, less innovative, less healthy and less mobile than it could be. The citizens of such a society will grow frustrated, and with good reason.

This article is adapted from the book ''Ours Was the Shining Future,'' which will be published on Oct. 24 by Penguin Random House.

Opening illustration: Source photographs from Underwood Archives/Getty Images; Bettmann/Getty Images; iStock/Getty Images; Gamma-Keystone, via Getty Images; Encyclopedia Britannica/Getty Images; Pictorial Parade/Getty Images.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/17/magazine/us-public-investment.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/17/magazine/us-public-investment.html)

**Graphic**

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PICTORIAL PARADE/GETTY IMAGES) (MM26-MM27)

The lounge on a Pan Am Boeing 707, the first jetliner model to make regular nonstop flights across the United States. (PHOTOGRAPH BY PICTORIAL PARADE/ARCHIVE PHOTOS/GETTY IMAGES) (MM29)

Construction underway on the Golden Gate Bridge, a four-year, $34 million project, in 1936. (PHOTOGRAPH BY PETER STACKPOLE/THE LIFE PICTURE COLLECTION/SHUTTERSTOCK) (MM30-MM31)

The Mark, an early computer relied upon by the U.S. Navy during World War II, in its laboratory at Harvard University in 1944. (PHOTOGRAPH BY PHOTOQUEST/GETTY IMAGES) (MM32-MM33)

First graders in a new elementary school in Munster, Ind., in 1950. (PHOTOGRAPH BY BETTMANN/GETTY IMAGES) (MM34) This article appeared in print on page MM26, MM27, MM28, MM29, MM30, MM31, MM32, MM33, MM34, MM35.

**Load-Date:** October 22, 2023

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[***Majority of Latino Voters Out of G.O.P.’s Reach, New Poll Shows***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:66DM-5XS1-DXY4-X2XR-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

September 18, 2022 Sunday 12:55 EST

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**Section:** US; politics

**Length:** 1838 words

**Byline:** Jennifer Medina, Jazmine Ulloa and Ruth Igielnik

**Highlight:** A New York Times/Siena College poll found Democrats faring far worse than they have in the past with Hispanic voters. But overall, the party has maintained a hold on the Latino electorate.

**Body**

A New York Times/Siena College poll found Democrats faring far worse than they have in the past with Hispanic voters. But overall, the party has maintained a hold on the Latino electorate.

It has been nearly two years since Donald Trump made surprising gains with Hispanic voters. But Republican dreams of a major realignment of Latino voters drawn to G.O.P. stances on crime and social issues have failed to materialize, according to a new poll by The New York Times and Siena College.

[*The poll*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2022/09/18/upshot/times-siena-poll-hispanic-crosstabs.html) — one of the largest nonpartisan surveys of Latino voters since the 2020 election — found that Democrats had maintained a grip on the majority of Latino voters, driven in part by women and the belief that Democrats remained the party of the ***working class***. Overall, Hispanic voters are more likely to agree with Democrats on many issues — immigration, gun policy, climate. They are also more likely to see Republicans as the party of the elite and as holding extreme views. And a majority of Hispanic voters, 56 percent, plan to vote for Democrats this fall, compared with 32 percent for Republicans.

But the survey also shows worrying signs for the future of the Democratic message. Despite that comfortable lead, the poll finds Democrats faring far worse than they did in the years before the 2020 election. Younger male Hispanic voters, especially those in the South, appear to be drifting away from the party, a shift that is propelled by deep economic concerns. Weaknesses in the South and among rural voters could stand in the way of crucial wins in Texas and Florida in this year’s midterms.

Anthony Saiz, 24, who reviews content for a social media platform in Tucson, Ariz., said he had to take on a second job baking pizzas at a beer garden to make ends meet. Mr. Saiz voted for President Biden in 2020 and considers himself a Democrat because he grew up in a Democratic household. But under Mr. Biden, he said, the cost of living seemed to have doubled for him even as he moved into a smaller apartment.

“The choices he has been making for the country have been putting me in a bad spot,” he said of Mr. Biden.

How Latinos will vote is a crucial question in the November elections and for the future of American politics. Hispanic voters are playing a pivotal role in the battle over control of Congress, making up a significant slice of voters — as high as 20 percent — in two of the states likeliest to determine control of the Senate, Arizona and Nevada. Latinos also make up more than 20 percent of registered voters in more than a dozen highly competitive House races in California, Colorado, Florida and Texas, among other states.

Democrats have long assumed that the growing Latino electorate would doom Republicans, and the prospect of an increasingly diverse electorate has fueled anxieties among conservatives. The 2020 election results — in which Mr. Trump gained an estimated [*eight percentage*](https://www.dropbox.com/s/ka9n5gzxwotfu1a/wh2020_public_release_crosstabs.xlsx?dl=0) points among Hispanic voters compared to 2016 — began changing both parties’ outlooks. The Times/Siena poll shows that historic allegiances and beliefs on core issues remain entrenched, though some shifts are striking.

While majorities of Hispanic voters side with Democrats on social and cultural issues, sizable shares hold beliefs aligned with Republicans: More than a third of Hispanic voters say they agree more with the G.O.P. on crime and policing, and four out of 10 Hispanic voters have concerns that the Democratic Party has gone too far on race and gender. Hispanic voters view economic issues as the most important factor determining their vote this year and are evenly split on which party they agree with more on the economy.

Hispanic voters in America have never been a unified voting bloc and have frequently puzzled political strategists who try to understand their behavior. The 32 million Latinos eligible to vote are recent immigrants and fourth-generation citizens, city dwellers and rural ranchers, Catholics and atheists.

Both parties have been full of bluster and soaring expectations for Latino voters, raising and spending millions of dollars to attract their support, but there has been little concrete nonpartisan data to back up their speculation. The survey offers insights into a portion of the electorate that many strategists have called the new swing vote and whose views are often complicated by contradictions among subgroups.

Dani Bernal, 35, a digital marketer and entrepreneur in Los Angeles, said she switched back and forth between candidates from both parties, in large part based on their economic policies. Her mother, she said, had arrived in Florida from Bolivia with only a bag of clothes and $500 to her name, and had been able to thrive there because taxes were low and the cost of living had been affordable. Economic issues loom large in her decisions, Ms. Bernal said.

“I am registered as a Republican, but I am exactly like Florida: I swing back and forth,” she said.

Republicans are performing best with Hispanic voters who live in the South, a region that includes Florida and Texas, where Republicans have notched significant wins with Latino voters in recent elections. In the South, 46 percent of Latino voters say they plan to vote for Democrats, while 45 percent say they plan to vote for Republicans. By contrast, Democrats lead 62 to 24 among Hispanic voters in other parts of the country.

How this poll captured Latino sentiment on election issues. We spoke with 522 Hispanic voters, more than four times as many as in our last survey — a method pollsters call an oversample. [*Here’s how that works.*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/18/us/politics/latino-vote-polling.html#latino-poll-infobox)

A generation gap could also lead to more Republican gains. Democrats, the poll found, were benefiting from particularly high support among older Latino voters. But voters under 30 favor Republicans’ handling of the economy by 46 percent, compared with 43 percent who favor Democrats.

Republicans also have strength among Latino men, who favor Democrats in the midterm election but who say, by a five-point margin, that they would vote for Mr. Trump if he were to run again in 2024. Young men in particular appear to be shifting toward Republicans. They are a key vulnerability for Democrats, who maintain just a four-point edge in the midterms among men younger than 45.

The Times/Siena poll provides a glimpse of Latino voters who have traditionally supported Democrats in the past but plan to vote for Republicans this fall: They are disproportionately voters without college degrees who are focused on the economy, and they are more likely to be young, male and born in the United States but living in heavily Hispanic areas.

Immigration remains a key issue for Hispanic voters, and both parties have a particular appeal. While Democrats have pushed for overhauling the legal immigration system and providing a path to citizenship for many undocumented immigrants, Republicans have focused on cracking down on illegal immigration and using border politics to galvanize their base.

Democrats maintain a significant advantage on the issue of legal immigration, with 55 percent of Hispanic voters saying they agree with the party, compared with 29 percent who say they agree with Republicans. But the G.O.P. has made inroads as it has stepped up anti-immigration rhetoric and policy: 37 percent of Latino voters favor Republicans’ views on illegal immigration. And roughly a third support a wall along the U.S.-Mexico border.

Amelia Alonso Tarancon, 69, who emigrated from Cuba 14 years ago and now lives outside Fort Lauderdale, Fla., wants Congress to offer legal status to undocumented workers who have been in the country for decades. But she agrees with Republicans on their hard-line views against illegal immigration. The issue motivated her to vote for Mr. Trump, though she is a registered Democrat.

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In their effort to attract new voters, Republicans have frequently criticized Democrats as being too “woke.” The accusation resonates with many Hispanic voters, with 40 percent saying that the party has gone too far in pushing a “woke” ideology on race and gender. But there is a clear split: 37 percent take the opposite view and say the party has not gone far enough. And nearly one in five Hispanic voters surveyed said they didn’t know whether Democrats were too woke — a term that cannot be easily translated into Spanish.

On many social and cultural issues, Hispanic voters remain aligned with the Democratic Party.

The majority, 58 percent, have a favorable view of the Black Lives Matter movement, while 45 percent say the same about the Blue Lives Matter movement, which defends law enforcement personnel. A majority believe that abortion should be legal in all or most cases; even among Republican Hispanics, four in 10 oppose the Supreme Court’s decision to overturn Roe v. Wade. Support for Black Lives Matter and abortion rights is propelled largely by young people. When asked whom they agreed with more on gun policy, 49 percent said Democrats, while 34 percent said Republicans.

Republicans attempting to court Latino voters have repeatedly painted Democrats as elitist and out of touch, but the poll suggests that strategy is having limited success.

Nearly six in 10 Hispanic voters continue to see the Democrats as the party of the ***working class***. While white Republicans uniformly see themselves as the ***working-class*** party, even some Hispanic Republicans believe that mantle belongs to Democrats. And there was no evidence in the poll that Republicans were performing any stronger among non-college-educated Latinos or among Hispanics who lived in rural areas, two key demographic groups they have focused on for outreach. One in four Hispanic voters in rural areas remain undecided about who they will vote for in November.

Democrats have been roundly criticized for their embrace of the term Latinx, which is meant to be more inclusive than the gendered words Latino and Latina. Previous surveys have shown only a small minority of Hispanic voters prefer the term. But the poll suggests that Latinx is hardly the most polarizing issue; just 18 percent said they found the term offensive.

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Nate Cohn contributed reporting.

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PHOTO: (PHOTOGRAPH BY The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

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[***Hispanic Voters Still Lean Blue, Poll Concludes***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:66DM-6X51-JBG3-60K9-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

September 18, 2022 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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**Length:** 1805 words

**Byline:** By Jennifer Medina, Jazmine Ulloa and Ruth Igielnik

**Body**

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**Load-Date:** September 18, 2022

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[***Midterm Race Appears Tight, Polling Shows***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65X9-8FJ1-JBG3-62DF-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

July 13, 2022 Wednesday

Late Edition - Final

Copyright 2022 The New York Times Company

**Section:** Section A; Column 0; National Desk; Pg. 1

**Length:** 1586 words

**Byline:** By Nate Cohn

**Body**

Nonwhite and ***working-class*** Democrats worry more about the economy, while white college graduates focus more on cultural issues like abortion rights and guns.

With President Biden's approval rating mired in the 30s and with nearly 80 percent of voters saying the country is heading in the wrong direction, all the ingredients seem to be in place for a Republican sweep in the November midterm elections.

But Democrats and Republicans begin the campaign in a surprisingly close race for control of Congress, according to the first New York Times/Siena College survey of the cycle.

Overall among registered voters, 41 percent said they preferred Democrats to control Congress compared with 40 percent who preferred Republican control.

Among likely voters, Republicans led by one percentage point, 44 percent to 43 percent, reflecting the tendency for the party out of power to enjoy a turnout advantage in midterms.

The results suggest that the wave of mass shootings and the recent Supreme Court decision to overturn Roe v. Wade have at least temporarily insulated the Democrats from an otherwise hostile national political environment while energizing the party's predominantly liberal activist base.

But the confluence of economic problems and resurgent cultural issues has helped turn the emerging class divide in the Democratic coalition into a chasm, as Republicans appear to be making new inroads among nonwhite and ***working-class*** voters -- perhaps especially Hispanic voters -- who remain more concerned about the economy and inflation than abortion rights and guns.

For the first time in a Times/Siena national survey, Democrats had a larger share of support among white college graduates than among nonwhite voters -- a striking indication of the shifting balance of political energy in the Democratic coalition. As recently as the 2016 congressional elections, Democrats won more than 70 percent of nonwhite voters while losing among white college graduates.

With four months to go until the election, it is far too soon to say whether the campaign will remain focused on issues like abortion and gun control long enough for Democrats to avoid a long-expected midterm rout. If it does, a close national vote would probably translate to a close race for control of Congress, as neither party enjoys a clear structural advantage in the race. Partisan gerrymandering has slightly tilted the map toward Republicans in the House, but Democrats enjoy the advantages of incumbency and superior fund-raising in key districts.

Recent unfavorable news for Democrats, in the form of Supreme Court rulings, and some tragic news nationally might ordinarily mean trouble for the party in power, but that's not what the results suggest.

The survey began 11 days after the Supreme Court's decision to overturn Roe v. Wade, when cellphones were still buzzing with news alerts about the mass shooting in Highland Park, Ill.

In an open-ended question, those who volunteered that issues related to guns, abortion or the Supreme Court were the most important problem facing the country represented about one in six registered voters combined. Those voters preferred Democratic control of Congress, 68 percent to 8 percent.

Some of the hot-button cultural issues thought to work to the advantage of Republicans at the beginning of the cycle, like critical race theory, have faded from the spotlight. Only 4 percent of voters combined said education, crime or immigration was the most important issue facing the country.

The Times/Siena survey is not the first to suggest that the national political environment has improved for Democrats since the Supreme Court overturned Roe. On average, Democrats have gained about three points on the generic congressional ballot compared with surveys taken beforehand.

In the wake of the court's ruling, the poll finds greater public support for legal abortion than previous Times/Siena surveys. Sixty-five percent of registered voters said abortion should be mostly or always legal, up from 60 percent of registered voters in September 2020.

The proportion of voters who opposed the court's decision -- 61 percent -- was similar to the share who said they supported Roe v. Wade two years ago.

Democrats are maintaining the loyalty of a crucial sliver of predominantly liberal and highly educated voters who disapprove of Mr. Biden's performance but care more about debates over guns, democracy and the shrinking of abortion rights than the state of the economy.

Voters who said issues related to abortion, guns or threats to democracy were the biggest problem facing the country backed Democrats by a wide margin, 66 percent to 14 percent.

For some progressive voters, recent conservative policy victories make it hard to stay on the sidelines.

Lucy Ackerman, a 23-year-old graphic designer in Durham, N.C., said Mr. Biden had repeatedly failed to live up to election promises. She recently registered with the Democratic Socialists of America. Nonetheless, she has committed herself to getting as many Democrats elected this fall as possible.

She says the Supreme Court's decision to overturn Roe made politics personal: She and her wife married after the decision leaked, out of fear that the court might roll back same-sex marriage rights next.

''The recent events have given me this push to do more,'' she said. ''I've gotten more involved in political efforts locally. I've helped sign friends up to vote.''

The liberal backlash against conservative advances in the court appears to have helped Democrats most among white college graduates, who are relatively liberal and often insulated by their affluence from economic woes. Just 17 percent of white college-educated Biden voters said an economic issue was the most important one facing the country, less than for any other racial or educational group.

Over all, white college graduates preferred Democratic control of Congress, 57-36. Women propelled Democratic strength among the group, with white college-educated women backing Democrats, 64-30. Democrats barely led among white college-educated men, 46-45.

Although the survey does not show an unusually large gender gap, the poll seems to offer some evidence that the court's abortion ruling may do more to help Democrats among women. Nine percent of women said abortion rights was the most important issue, compared with 1 percent of men.

The fight for congressional control is very different among the often less affluent, nonwhite and moderate voters who say the economy or inflation is the biggest problem facing the country. They preferred Republican control of Congress, 62 percent to 25 percent, even though more than half of the voters who said the economy was the biggest problem also said abortion should be mostly legal.

Just 74 percent of the voters who backed Mr. Biden in the 2020 election, but who said the economy or inflation was the most important problem, said they preferred Democratic control of Congress. In contrast, Democrats were the choice of 87 percent of Biden voters who said abortion or guns was the most important issue.

The economy may be helping Republicans most among Hispanic voters, who preferred Democrats to control Congress, 41-38. Although the sample size is small, the finding is consistent with the longer-term deterioration in Democratic support among the group. Hispanics voted for Democrats by almost a 50-point margin in the 2018 midterms, according to data from Pew Research, then President Donald J. Trump made surprising gains with them in 2020.

No racial or ethnic group was likelier than Hispanic voters to cite the economy or inflation as the most important issue facing the country, with 42 percent citing an economic problem compared with 35 percent of non-Hispanic voters.

Republicans also appear poised to expand their already lopsided advantage among white voters without a college degree. They back Republicans by more than a two-to-one margin, 54-23. Even so, nearly a quarter remain undecided compared with just 7 percent of white college graduates.

As less engaged ***working-class*** voters tune in, Republicans may have opportunities for additional gains. Historically, the party out of power excels in midterm elections, in no small part by capitalizing on dissatisfaction with the president's party.

Only 23 percent of undecided voters approved of Mr. Biden's job performance.

Silvana Read, a certified nursing assistant who lives outside Tampa, Fla., is one of the Hispanic voters whom Republicans will try to sway to capitalize on widespread dissatisfaction with Mr. Biden.

An immigrant from Ecuador, she despised Mr. Trump's comments about women and foreigners, but voted for him because her husband convinced her it would help them financially. Now she and her husband, 56 and 60, blame Mr. Biden for their falling 401(k)s.

''My husband, he sees the news on the TV, he says, 'I don't think I can retire until 75,''' she said. ''We can't afford to finish paying the mortgage.''

Still, her allegiance to the Republican Party does not extend far beyond Mr. Trump. She offered no preference in the fight for control of Congress.

She does not plan to vote in the midterms.

The Times/Siena survey of 849 registered voters nationwide was conducted by telephone using live operators from July 5-7. The margin of sampling error is plus or minus four percentage points. Crosstabs and methodology are available here.

Francesca Paris contributed reporting.Francesca Paris contributed reporting.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2022/07/13/upshot/poll-2022-midterms-congress.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/07/13/upshot/poll-2022-midterms-congress.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: (PHOTOGRAPH BY FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** July 13, 2022

**End of Document**



[***Pitting Rich Against Poor***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:645P-34K1-DXY4-X0MV-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; Editorial Desk; Pg. 20; LETTER

**Length:** 212 words

**Body**

Summary summary summary

To the Editor:

In ''What's the Matter With Scarsdale?'' (The Morning Newsletter, nytimes.com, Nov. 4), David Leonhardt suggests that affluent voters who support tax increases are voting against their economic interests as much as ***working-class*** voters do when they oppose those same increases. This line of argument defines the meaning of economic interest too narrowly.

Affluent voters who support more social services often do so because they understand that inequality and poverty are bad for everyone. Unequal societies have been shown to have more anxiety, less economic growth and greater political instability. It is thus in everyone's economic and political interest to have more egalitarian societies. Some rich people will have fewer excess goods, but that's a small price to pay for a decent and stable world.

The real issue is that the shared interests of the affluent few and the less affluent many are perpetually blocked by a political and economic elite who continue to pit us against one another. Until this elite is either rejected by a nonviolent social movement or manages to recognize that they, too, will be better off in a more equal world, we will continue on the path of our fractured politics.

Avram AlpertPrinceton, N.J.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/24/opinion/letters/pitting-rich-against-poor.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/24/opinion/letters/pitting-rich-against-poor.html)

**Load-Date:** November 27, 2021

**End of Document**



[***From Houston to Athens, Rick Lowe Takes His Social Sculpture Global; Artist’s Questionnaire***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68DG-2861-JBG3-631P-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

June 7, 2023 Wednesday 23:07 EST

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**Section:** T-MAGAZINE

**Length:** 2515 words

**Byline:** Adam Bradley

**Highlight:** The artist, known for the influential Project Row Houses in Houston, discusses music, basketball and art’s ability to improve lives.

**Body**

The artist, known for the influential Project Row Houses in Houston, discusses music, basketball and art’s ability to improve lives.

In Athens more than 6,000 miles from his adoptive city of Houston, Rick Lowe is at home. Lowe first visited Greece in 2015, in advance of his participation in Documenta, the German exhibition of contemporary art, which marked its 14th installment in 2017 with the theme “Learning From Athens.” Lowe did just that, learning firsthand of the refugee crisis stoking tensions between local communities and asylum seekers arriving mainly from the Middle East and Africa. A longtime activist at home, Lowe saw this seemingly intractable circumstance abroad as a call to action.

Art, as Lowe conceives it, is a social as much as an aesthetic practice, requiring long-term engagement with specific people and places. His contribution to Documenta was the Victoria Square Project, a collaboration with the Greek artist Maria Papadimitriou that serves as a thriving communal hub of cross-cultural exchange, political action and artistic creation centered on empowering the city’s Victoria Square area, known for its high volume of refugees. Eight years on, he remains the project’s steward. VSP is art unfolding amid everyday life: struggle and joy, work and play, politics (hosting a mayoral debate) and culture (frequently staging talks, performances and exhibitions). It is only Lowe’s most recent foray into social sculpture, an expansive concept developed in the 1970s by the German artist Joseph Beuys to describe a practice that embraces the communal and political functions of art in reshaping the world.

Lowe, 61, first gained recognition in the 1990s for his radical community-based effort [*Project Row Houses*](https://projectrowhouses.org/). Alongside a collective of Houston-based artists, and with support from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Elizabeth Firestone Graham Foundation, Lowe purchased two blocks of run-down shotgun houses in Houston’s historically Black Third Ward neighborhood and transformed them into art spaces and community centers. Though Lowe stepped away from daily operations in 2018, Project Row Houses still thrives. In its 30th year, it now comprises 39 structures across five city blocks and fosters arts education programs, community enrichment efforts and neighborhood development initiatives.

For all his innovation, Lowe’s artistic training was traditional. As an art student at Columbus State University in Columbus, Georgia, during the late 1970s and early ’80s, he studied landscape painting in the manner of the Hudson River School. “It wasn’t really a decision for me,” he says. “It was more that I was going to a small, predominantly white college in the South with a very traditional art program.” After relocating to Houston and connecting with the painter John T. Biggers, Lowe shifted his work toward a more explicitly political and figurative style, which he believed allowed him “to speak more directly to a particular community or a particular context or circumstance within society.” Lowe’s approach was challenged in 1990, though, when a high school student visiting his studio with a class confronted him with a powerful pragmatic question, one that Lowe would later commemorate in the title of a breakout piece shown at the 2022 Whitney Biennial: [*“If Artists Are Creative, Why Can’t They Create Solutions?”*](https://whitney.org/exhibitions/2022-biennial?section=36) This challenge led Lowe to Beuys’s social sculpture, which, along with Biggers’s influence, prompted Project Row Houses and a series of other community-based works, from Tulsa to Chicago, and now to Athens.

Social sculpture can be transformative, but it rarely leaves a tangible record. In response, in his studio in Houston, Lowe has turned in recent years back to painting and drawing as a means of archiving this otherwise transitory and ephemeral work. Last September, Lowe debuted “Meditations on Social Sculpture,” his first New York solo exhibition, with Gagosian. It featured new work inspired by his community-based practice, particularly Project Row Houses and the Victoria Square Project. Many of the works involve paper collages that evoke domino tiles, vestiges of the games Lowe played with locals from Houston to Athens. “Finding folks at the domino table has been one of the great gifts for me,” Lowe says. Building on the improvised order of specific games, his canvases map physical space, as well as social relations and psychological states. They are intricate and variegated, playing with scale, with transience and permanence, with memory and evanescence. They are maps back to community, to the natural state of humans as social beings in an age of fracture and insolation.

A few weeks before he left Houston for Athens, where he will have two major solo exhibitions on view this summer, Lowe caught up with T over the phone.

What’s the first piece of art you ever made?

I don’t know if I want to tell you the honest truth or if I want to try to be a little bit more sophisticated.

Forget sophistication. We’re getting into it today!

OK. I’m from a huge family — there’re 12 of us — from Alabama. Poor, rural Alabama. No art classes. None of that stuff. My first drawing, and I must have made it at 12 years old or something, it was a drawing of a centerfold woman from Jet magazine. My siblings always laugh at me. I think somebody still has it somewhere. So you know where my head was. But that was childhood stuff. I didn’t really start making art until I was in college, where I did my first landscape painting.

What’s the first work you ever sold?

In my early days of painting, I had an anti-commercial slant to my thinking, because it was figurative work dealing with issues that were very personal to me — Black issues, issues of poverty — and I was conflicted about how those fit within a market. I had a hard time thinking that someone would own something that was speaking to the misfortunes of someone else. For that reason, I didn’t sell any of the work from my first years as a painter. And then I went into social practice, where there were no objects to be sold. But as I made my way back [to drawing and painting], I started doing these domino drawings. I sold the first one through a little gallery here in Houston.

When would that have been?

That was 2015, 2016.

So you were in your 50s before you sold your first work of art. What do you think your anticapitalist 20-year-old self would critique, and what would he celebrate about where you are today?

He’d probably scratch his head and say, “You’re selling the revolution!” But I think in the right context, he would see that revolution moves in many ways. There are many roles to play. That’s what my younger self didn’t understand. I was so absorbed in the practical elements [of activism] — trying to improve the conditions of the lives of people — that I neglected to understand the value of the poetics.

Where do you find that poetics?

It was always all around us. One of the things that Black people have never failed on is how to look cool. That’s a very aesthetic thing. That’s a very poetic thing. It didn’t matter what the conditions were — the practical conditions — people still express that poetics in ways that are accessible to them, like at the very basic level, in their bodily adornment.

When you start a new piece, where do you begin?

I just pick a spot. John Biggers once asked the mathematician Bob Powell to explain the sacred art of geometry. Powell tried, but then threw his hands up. “Artists! Let me just draw it for you.” So he drew this 12-page [sequence]. The first page is just blank. There are infinite possibilities. The second page takes a leap of faith. You just put your compass down. And once you do that, you’ve got the beginning of a place. I take the same approach with my paintings. When I have a blank canvas, I think, “This is a universe.” Then I’ll just start. Glue a couple of pieces — my little domino chips, my imaginary domino games. It grows from there.

Given that approach, how do you know when you’re done?

That’s the big challenge. But I think it’s an intuitive thing. You work on it and you work on it until you don’t feel like there’s anything else you can bring to it. Paintings, they speak to the artist as well. They’re speaking to us and telling us where we are and where we’re going. And at a certain point, they’ll tell you: You’re done.

What music do you play when you’re making art?

As a teenager in the ’70s in the South, the white people had their music, the Black people had their music. They had rock; we had soul. It was pretty simple. None of us dealt with anything outside of that. But when I went to college and started to explore, that’s when I realized that my interests were broad. I was introduced to classical music. I was introduced to jazz. And later, as things evolved, it was hip-hop, punk, new wave and everything else. I just started going experimental. I will say that when I am soul searching and going deep into who I am, I go back to my roots. I will put on some gospel. Or I’ll do Curtis Mayfield, Lionel Richie. Actually, I had a Zoom call with Lionel Richie just the other day and I found out he grew up about 30 miles from where I did.

Dominoes play a big role in some of your recent work. What draws you to the game?

My connection with dominoes feeds off my inclination toward activism. My way of being an activist is about connecting with people and community organizing. Who are the voices? What are their concerns? I found out fairly early on as I started doing community-engaged art — or social practice art, as people like to call it — that when you talk to people in group settings, like community meetings, you get a particular kind of response. People don’t want to sound stupid. They’re careful about what they’re saying. But when you’re sitting with people playing cards or dominoes or checkers, where everybody’s just relaxed, that’s when you really get to know them. So [playing games] became a key component of my community-engaged work.

I see how that would be effective in Houston. What’s worked for you in Greece?

When I started working on the Victoria Square Project, I was trying to figure out how to connect with that community. So I’d walk through the neighborhood and would just check things out. And lo and behold, one day, I see a group of people gathered around a little table. I went over to look and they were playing dominoes. They were playing a little differently than we play here in Houston. But the thing about dominoes: Every house has its own rules. So I watched them play enough until I could figure out their approach. It turned out they weren’t Greek, they were Albanian. I nodded to them, “Can I get in the next game?” And they all looked like, “Who is this guy? What is he doing?" I got into the game. I made a few mistakes, sure. But before I knew it, they were fascinated with this new person playing. These Albanians became the guardians of the space where the Victoria Square Project is held.

Your art is engaged with community — with specific people and places. At the same time, you’ve moved decidedly toward abstract painting. How do you square those two impulses?

My progression has been toward an expanded, and I guess I would call it a more mature, understanding of politics and how the world works. Early on, after I learned how to do landscapes, I rejected that because it did not allow me to speak directly to society. So I moved to figurative work. When I was doing figurative work, the whole point was to keep it narrowly focused on ***working-class*** issues, to speak directly to ***working-class*** folks. As I was doing that work, I was challenged by this kid who basically told me that my paintings were showing them what they already saw every day. “If you’re an artist and your job is to create,” he asked me, “then why can’t you create solutions?” That got me into a different framework. With the social sculpture work [like Project Row Houses], I think I truly started to understand a broader context for political work. The primary beneficiaries of works like Project Row Houses are people in the Third Ward community. Equally important to making that work happen, though, were the supporters beyond the community from all around the country. That became an important part of how the work could operate on multiple levels. And that actually set the stage for me to move into abstraction as a way to look at and talk about these urban and psychological issues that we’re wrestling with every day.

That’s a long way from landscapes.

The connection between my paintings in the early ’80s, when I was learning landscape painting, and my paintings now, is that they [both] allow me to look at the earth — the land, the place where I grew up in the South. I would go out and take photographs of landscapes. Before that point, it was just where I grew up; it was just there. But as I started to photograph and look at the land, I started to notice the deep green pine tree forest and the red clay soil. Those [hues and textures] became the basis for the paintings that I was making, but it also became imprinted upon me. “This is where I’m from.” So when I think about these abstract mapping pieces I’m doing now, I sometimes think of them as landscapes. The perspective has just shifted from straight on to a bird’s-eye view, and then I can start looking at it politically: how the landscape through maps tells us stuff and offers us things to think about. From time to time, as I’m doing these works, I’m drawn to that palette of greens and that rust color, the red that burns through the soil there. So there are times as I’m painting now when I can feel a deep kinship with my earlier painting days.

How many hours of creative work do you think you do in a day?

Well, it depends. Like right now, man, I’ve been hitting the clock at anywhere from 14 to 16 hours a day.

Are you kidding me?

It’s such a joy, though. It’s such a pleasure. You know, I feel like this moment right now for me, getting ready for these shows in Athens, this is like my N.B.A. playoffs. There’s no stopping. As Kobe [Bryant] once said, “You rest at the end.”

You’re a basketball fan? Who’s your team?

I don’t really have a team. I have players. For the last 10 years or so, it’s been the Splash Brothers [Stephen Curry and Klay Thompson of the Golden State Warriors]. It’s just beautiful to watch them play. And before that, there was my man Kobe. Kobe’s always been an inspiration to me because I like to think we have a similar kind of mentality. I always tell people, “I may not be the most talented, I may not be the most this or that but you’re not gonna outwork me.” That’s always been my mode of life. Whenever I’m on to something, I’m there.

PHOTOS: Left, as Rick Lowe prepared for his shows in Athens, his canvases reflected the Greek alphabet. Center, Mr. Lowe playing a domino game on canvas. Right, he traces topographies inspired by games of dominoes he plays in Houston.; Left, Mr. Lowe’s studio. Right, a piece left over from his “Black Wall Street Journey” project. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY MICHAEL STARGHILL) This article appeared in print on page D3.

**Load-Date:** June 14, 2023

**End of Document**



[***Those Biden ‘Gaffes’? Some Key Voters Actually Like Them***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:60VH-0GV1-JBG3-60JD-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 1053 words

**Byline:** Stephanie Muravchik and Jon A. Shields

**Highlight:** Some of the ***working-class*** voters Biden must appeal to are sometimes enthralled by President Trump’s transgressions.

**Body**

Some of the ***working-class*** voters Biden must appeal to are sometimes enthralled by President Trump’s transgressions.

If Joe Biden is going to rebuild the Democrats’ “blue wall” and win states like Pennsylvania, Michigan and Wisconsin, and claim the White House, he will need to appeal to the ***working-class*** Democratic communities that put Donald Trump over the top in 2016. They include [*more than 200 counties*](https://ballotpedia.org/Pivot_Counties:_The_counties_that_voted_Obama-Obama-Trump_from_2008-2016) that supported Barack Obama twice before voting for Mr. Trump.

Many of these places had long records of unbroken support for Democratic presidential candidates, some even stretching back to before the New Deal.

Mr. Biden needs to tune in to their cultural sensibilities if he’s going to bring at least some of these pivotal former blue strongholds back into the Democratic fold. He is one of the few Democrats, as a child of ***working-class*** Scranton, Pa., capable of doing so.

We spent the past few years hanging out in bars, churches and town council meetings with these voters — whom we call “Trump’s Democrats.” We interviewed nearly 100 people in three formerly blue strongholds that voted for Mr. Trump: Johnston, R.I., a suburb of Providence; Ottumwa, Iowa, a small industrial city and an inspiration for the setting of the Roseanne Barr show; and Elliott County, a tiny Appalachian community in northeastern Kentucky.

Despite their geographic diversity, these places have much in common with one another and with the many other Democratic communities that swung for Mr. Trump in critical Midwest battleground states. They are overwhelmingly white and ***working class***. They care about patriotism and serving their country and are especially attached to the places they live, with strong, place-based loyalties.

Their honor culture is common throughout the world and in many American communities that are not dominated by the professional managerial class.

As part of that, they share what we would call a Trumpian political culture.

In the communities we visited, some of their most beloved Democratic politicians have a Trumpian sensibility: They are macho, quick to engage in political conflict and relentless counterpunchers. One is Ottumwa’s Jerry Parker, a former mayor and a current county supervisor. He supported Hillary Clinton during the 2016 primaries; during one local primary meeting, he threatened to take a conflict with a Bernie Sanders supporter “outside.”

Similarly, Mayor Joe Polisena of Johnston is popular even though he is a self-described political “street fighter.” Mr. Polisena doesn’t hesitate to verbally rough up citizens who openly criticize his rule — during Town Council meetings, for example, he calls them “malcontents” and “misfits.”

People in these communities admire the president because he seems familiar. As someone in Johnston told us, Mr. Trump seems “more human, more like us, the working person.” Mr. Trump’s incessant counterpunching, called a sign of a thin skin by many observers in professional circles, is often interpreted as common in many ***working-class*** communities.

Survey data back these reports. The American National Election Survey [*reveals*](https://ballotpedia.org/Pivot_Counties:_The_counties_that_voted_Obama-Obama-Trump_from_2008-2016) that Trump voters — especially those who previously voted for Mr. Obama — were particularly likely to admire Mr. Trump as a “strong leader.”

Honor cultures provide clear rules for deterring aggression and determining social status. A citizen, especially a man, must not tolerate insults and must show his readiness to respond with violence if necessary. He may dislike the expectations of honor culture, but he is not free to ignore them. In a context where ignoring a challenge is always interpreted as cowardice rather than magnanimity, to protect oneself, a person must respond in the prescribed way. A social reputation for toughness is everything. It must always be defended and maintained.

So to “go high,” as Michelle Obama once advised, is often read as a sign of cowardice in this culture. As Mr. Polisena told us, if you are high-minded, it can suggest “weakness,” and “then they’ll just roll over you.”

Mr. Biden has often followed this code of honor when campaigning in their world. In New Hampton, Iowa, when a man accused Mr. Biden of being too old and abusing his political power, Mr. Biden [*shot back*](https://ballotpedia.org/Pivot_Counties:_The_counties_that_voted_Obama-Obama-Trump_from_2008-2016), “You’re a damned liar.” He also challenged him to a push-up contest.

Critics in the media reported on the exchange as another Biden gaffe. But that’s not how many people there in New Hampton read it: They gave Mr. Biden a spirited round of applause.

Even so, Mr. Biden must walk a difficult cultural tightrope. An alumnus of the genteel Senate, he is running for president to defend our national political culture, which depends on softer, more deliberative norms. These norms have been badly frayed by Mr. Trump.

But in many places, the honor culture persists. In fact, it’s enjoying a revival. Mr. Trump was the first modern presidential candidate to respect this culture of honor — and in 2016 that created a collision between these Democrats’ partisan loyalties and their class-based ones.

So Mr. Biden must be a custodian of our embattled national political culture while also appealing to voters who are sometimes enthralled by a president who relentlessly attacks that same culture.

The good news is that Democrats have nominated someone capable of walking that tightrope. In the first presidential debate and on the hustings, Mr. Biden must appeal to these cultural sensibilities without going low, as Mrs. Obama put it.

As he attempts this delicate balance, observers should consider the possibility that Mr. Biden’s next “gaffe” is not necessarily another sign of his clumsiness — it just might be evidence of his cultural finesse.

Stephanie Muravchik, an associate fellow at the Institute for Advanced Studies in Culture at the University of Virginia, and Jon A. Shields, associate professor of government at Claremont McKenna College, are the authors of the forthcoming “[*Trump’s Democrats*](https://ballotpedia.org/Pivot_Counties:_The_counties_that_voted_Obama-Obama-Trump_from_2008-2016).”

The Times is committed to publishing [*a diversity of letters*](https://ballotpedia.org/Pivot_Counties:_The_counties_that_voted_Obama-Obama-Trump_from_2008-2016) to the editor. We’d like to hear what you think about this or any of our articles. Here are some [*tips*](https://ballotpedia.org/Pivot_Counties:_The_counties_that_voted_Obama-Obama-Trump_from_2008-2016). And here’s our email: [*letters@nytimes.com*](https://ballotpedia.org/Pivot_Counties:_The_counties_that_voted_Obama-Obama-Trump_from_2008-2016).

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PHOTO: Joe Biden campaigning last week in Michigan. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Amr Alfiky/The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** September 16, 2020

**End of Document**



[***5 Restaurants in Naples Where You Can Forget About Pizza***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68PC-04B1-JBG3-6004-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Section:** TRAVEL

**Length:** 1450 words

**Byline:** Seth Sherwood

**Highlight:** Fried zucchini, classic ziti with Neapolitan ragù, mussel soup and artichoke hearts filled with mountain truffle cream: When it comes to food, there’s more to this coastal Italian city than pizza.

**Body**

Fried zucchini, classic ziti with Neapolitan ragù, mussel soup and artichoke hearts filled with mountain truffle cream: When it comes to food, there’s more to this coastal Italian city than pizza.

The worldwide culinary fame of Italy’s third-largest city boils down to one word: pizza. You can hardly hurl a tomato in the food’s purported birthplace — a scruffy, graffiti-stained port city of monumental Baroque buildings and narrow cobbled passageways — without hitting a gaggle of culinary pilgrims jockeying to enter one of the hundreds (or thousands, by some counts) of pizzerias.

But a slew of top-notch trattorias, osterias and ristoranti exist right alongside pizza titans like [*Sorbillo*](https://www.instagram.com/sorbillo/) and [*Da Michele*](https://www.damichele.net/). Drawing on the cornucopia of livestock and produce from the fertile fields and coastal waters of the Campania region — cattle, goats, shellfish, wheat, artichokes, zucchini, figs, citrus fruits and more — these eateries dish out local inventions from mussel soup to homegrown pastas to limoncello.

So when you’re ready to foray beyond the overcrowded dens of dough and red sauce, here are five addresses in five neighborhoods offering both traditional and creative takes on beloved Neapolitan recipes and ingredients. Buon appetito.

Osteria della Mattonella

History suffuses this [*homey, family-run restaurant*](https://www.osteriadellamattonella.com/) tucked into the tight grid of streets that forms the ***working-class*** Quartieri Spagnoli district, a hillside zone where laundry seems to hang from every rusted wrought-iron balcony.

As opera arias and sentimental Italian ballads echo off the swirly, hand-painted, 18th-century wall tiles, a succession of time-honored Neapolitan dishes passes from the open kitchen to the worn wooden tables, where a mainly Italian clientele gobbles them down: fried eggplant, fried zucchini, fried rice balls, myriad meatballs and ziti under generous ladles of thick, tomato-beef Neapolitan ragù (also on sale in jars for 8.50 euros, or about $9.25).

The seafood offerings are equally worthy, including tender anchovies and cod drenched in a dense sauce of tomatoes, capers and olives. For a coda, you can balance salty with sweet thanks to a sticky baba au rhum — a favorite Franco-Polish dessert adopted in Napoli in the 18th century.

Osteria della Mattonella, [*Via Giovanni Nicotera 13*](https://goo.gl/maps/AAaJsZFrPCVaRLb97). A three-course meal costs around 25 euros per person.

Tripperia O’Russ

Centuries ago, women from Napoli’s lower classes would gather outside royal residences in hopes of being granted the discarded entrails of the animals slaughtered for aristocrats’ banquets.

These days you need only go to one of the city’s tripe restaurants to taste this enduring favorite, traditionally referred to as cucina povera — the food of the poor — which is made variously from pigs’ feet, veal snout and bovine stomachs.

Begun as a pushcart business in 1945, [*Tripperia O’Russ*](https://www.facebook.com/Trippa1945/) has for decades occupied a simple, brightly lit white dining room on a middle-class residential street near the city’s botanical gardens, earning a reputation as Naples’s top temple of tripe. Amid the sound of hacking, a mix of local folks from all walks of life gather to dine on simple soups, pastas and stews loaded with slow-cooked innards.

The Tris Trippa sampler, ideal for the uninitiated, is a trio of tripe preparations: with potatoes and a thin sauce of olive oil, onions, peppers and tomato; with heavy tomato sauce; and with a mix of tomato sauce and beans. Those with more daring palates can enjoy carpaccio-ish slices of cooked veal tripe with just a lemon wedge as accompaniment. The restaurant serves no desserts, but big bottles of Peroni beer (2.50 euros) complement the onslaught.

Tripperia O’Russ, [*Via San Eframo Vecchio 68*](https://goo.gl/maps/w9S67XM3RU1EkvjS8). A tripe medley and beer cost 12.50 euros.

La Locanda Gesù Vecchio

Despite its rustic décor and location in Naples’s historic center, this cozy and popular spot is no relic. Loaded with craft beers (including a mild, easy-drinking house I.P.A.) and a secondary menu of gluten-free options, [*the four-year-old restaurant*](https://www.lalocandagesuvecchionapoli.it/) is run by a young, tattooed staff and serves a clientele of in-the-know international foodies.

Nonetheless, the reverent, old-school menu would have your Neapolitan grandmother smiling with recognition at items like eggplant parmigiana and pasta with potatoes and provolone cheese.

Among the antipasti, the mozzarella in carrozza demonstrates that the classic Campania cheese can be melted into tasty variations that require no pizza oven. Heated to stretchiness and spread on thick slices of egg-dipped grilled bread, the mozzarella becomes the star of a bubbly, gooey sandwich. The cheese makes another cameo in the crispy fried paccheri — a beloved Neapolitan noodle stuffed with a combination of tomato sauce, beef, pork, pork lard, raisins, pine nuts and mozzarella.

If you can (and it will be a challenge), save room for the meaty, tomato sauce-drenched chunks of rabbit cacciatore — a favorite dish from the nearby island of Ischia.

La Locanda Gesù Vecchio, [*Via Giovanni Paladino 26*](https://goo.gl/maps/9X58Mv6Q51arvuSQ8). A three-course meal costs around 30 euros per person.

Seafront Pasta Bar

Plenty of onions and lots of time. Those are the secrets to Genovese sauce, a Naples specialty despite its Genoa-derived name. Concocted mainly from finely sliced onions — slow-cooked over a low flame for several hours — along with olive oil and tender slivers of beef, the sauce is so emblematic of Naples that it probably deserves a towering monument in the grand square that the restaurant overlooks, Piazza Municipio.

The chunky, chewy ziti with Genovese sauce is just one of the flavorful noodle creations at [*Seafront Pasta Bar*](https://eu.pastadimartino.it/pages/sea-front-pasta-bar), a minimalist Scandinavian-chic dining room above the boutique for the [*Di Martino pasta manufacturer*](https://eu.pastadimartino.it/), which also operates the restaurant. Like the ziti, the dry noodles sold in the shop and served upstairs are made at the company’s factory in the nearby town of Gragnano, a pasta mecca in Italy thanks to its long history of pasta-making and the many top brands still based there.

Rich local flavors also come together in the spaghetti alle vongole — a swirl of buttery noodles larded with tender, sweet clams and charred garlic that arrive under a glass dome of olive-oil smoke — and bucatini with an Ischia-inspired tomato sauce containing tender shredded rabbit.

Noodles even contribute to certain desserts, notably “pastamisù,” a classic tiramisù topped with coffee-soaked pasta shards that have been baked to crispiness.

Sea Front Pasta Bar, [*Piazza Municipio 1*](https://goo.gl/maps/kpAUay2iyxt6Ua2U7). For two pastas and dessert, expect to pay around 60 to 70 euros.

Sustanza

To find the new [*Sustanza*](http://sustanzanapoli.it/) restaurant, cross the street from the national archaeological museum; enter the soaring, glass-covered arcades of the 19th-century Galleria Principe di Napoli; slip past the potted palms and white-coated bartenders that fill the Art Nouveau-style Scotto Jonno cocktail bar; and climb the carpeted stone steps until you reach elegant dining rooms decorated with swirling Liberty-esque wallpaper and real Tiffany lamps.

Opened in May, this hidden-away restaurant serves intricate dishes of southern Italian and Mediterranean ingredients accompanied by natural wines. The menu comes courtesy of the chef Marco Ambrosino, a native of the nearby island of Procida who previously made a name for himself at [*28 Posti*](https://www.28posti.org/) in Milan.

On a recent evening, his concoctions featured several imaginative deployments of classic Campania ingredients, notably an artichoke heart filled with mountain truffle cream, and succulent mutton in a light sauce of jus and fermented butter. Dessert might be an herbaceous fig-leaf sorbet in laurel oil.

For a nightcap, consider returning to the ground-floor lounge. The Strega del Vesuvio cocktail (15 euros), as red and potent as the volcano it is named for, blends Scotch, gin, coffee liqueur and a cordial of tomatoes grown on Vesuvio’s slopes into a tangy, smoky digestivo.

Sustanza, [*Galleria Principe di Napoli*](https://goo.gl/maps/NHZ1fY4EeHFrTCRg9). The five-course tasting menu is 80 euros.

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PHOTOS: Top, meatballs with ragù sauce. Above, Osteria della Mattonella, left, and arancini, or fried rice balls.; Top, La Locanda Gesù Vecchio. Above, crispy fried paccheri.; Sea Front Pasta Bar, left, and linguine with clams.; Top, Tripperia O’ Russ, in the Arenaccia district. Above, tripe on display, left, and the Tris Trippa sampler plate.; Top, artichoke with truffle cream. Above, mutton with light sauce. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY ROBERTO SALOMONE FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page C8.

**Load-Date:** July 21, 2023

**End of Document**



[***3 Young Irish Writers and Their ‘Difficult Second Books’***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68V6-N4M1-JBG3-63YV-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Section:** BOOKS

**Length:** 1396 words

**Byline:** Imogen West-Knights

**Highlight:** Exciting debuts from Naoise Dolan, Megan Nolan and Nicole Flattery suggested a new direction in Irish literature. Now, where will they take it?

**Body**

Exciting debuts from Naoise Dolan, Megan Nolan and Nicole Flattery suggested a new direction in Irish literature. Now, where will they take it?

In recent years, Irish novelists, and particularly Irish women novelists, have published some of the most compelling English-language literary fiction.

Not just [*Sally Rooney*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/09/01/books/review-sally-rooney-beautiful-world-where-are-you.html), whose three novels to date have sold millions of copies worldwide, but a whole host of women have written books which, taken together, suggest a new contemporary Irish literature that focuses on the precarity of modern working life, as well as intimacy and its failings.

Naoise Dolan, 31, Megan Nolan, 33, and Nicole Flattery, 33, are three of the better-known members of this cohort. Dolan’s 2020 debut novel “[*Exciting Times*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/02/books/review/exciting-times-naoise-dolan.html)” was the story of a love triangle set in Hong Kong; “[*Acts of Desperation*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/03/09/books/review/the-kindest-lie-nancy-johnson.html),” from Nolan and published in 2021, charted the life of a young woman in an abject relationship; and Flattery also published her debut, “[*Show Them A Good Time*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/28/books/review/nicole-flattery-show-them-a-good-time-imaginary-museums-nicolette-polek-adults-and-other-children-miriam-cohen.html),” a collection of deadpan and appealingly peculiar short stories, in 2020.

All three have also released a second book this year: Dolan’s is an acerbic comedy of errors about an impending wedding called “The Happy Couple,” Nolan’s “Ordinary Human Failings” follows an Irish family after one of its members is accused of a terrible crime, and “[*Nothing Special*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/07/08/books/review/nicole-flattery-nothing-special.html)” is Flattery’s tale of a young woman who gets a job as a typist at Andy Warhol’s Factory.

In a recent video interview, the trio discussed what feels different the second time and how Irishness affects their work. This is an edited excerpt from a round-table discussion.

Why do you think the cliché of the difficult second novel exists?

NICOLE FLATTERY I think the publishing industry has an obsession with newness, and that’s the way things are marketed. I’m not sure if it is a “difficult second album” situation, rather than an unwillingness to let writers grow. If your first book is outrageously successful, I can understand there’s stress. I avoided that by writing a story collection.

NAOISE DOLAN People imagine that the pressure comes from the expectations of readers. I didn’t feel that at all, because I figure adults should prime themselves with the expectation that they won’t like every book that they read. And they would equally hate it if someone wrote the same book twice.

MEGAN NOLAN I was very pleased with how my book went, but it wasn’t like this crazy level of success that meant I was feeling like all eyes were on me. But I was really scared about how people would read it, and whether it was any good. I don’t think it will matter whether it’s the second or 10th book that I write, I will have absolutely no ability to judge my own work at all.

Where did the ideas for your second books come from?

FLATTERY I read Olivia Laing’s “[*The Lonely City*](https://www.nytimes.com/2016/03/20/books/review/the-lonely-city-by-olivia-laing.html)” a few years ago, and there was a mention in that about Warhol’s Factory and “a, A Novel,” so I read it. I liked the idea of working on a book about producing a work of art that has nothing to do with you, almost.

NOLAN There is an anecdote in Gordon Burn’s book “Somebody’s Husband, Somebody’s Son” about a tabloid journalist approaching the family of Peter Sutcliffe, the British serial killer known as the Yorkshire Ripper, and offering them a hotel as a kind of “safe space.” In reality it was intended as a sequestered space where they could keep these very vulnerable ***working class*** people and offer them a load of alcohol and pocket money, hoping that they would uncover some juicy stuff about the murders. And so I thought that was a very striking idea.

DOLAN I wrote two books before the book that is actually my second published book. And in the second book of those books there was a wedding, which became the second published book.

Did you do anything differently when you were writing this book, as opposed to the last time?

FLATTERY My life throughout the period of writing this novel was a lot more stable than it was in my 20s, when I was writing the stories, which just felt chaotic. The move for me was just being like: I have to do this every single day. It felt way more like a job to me than the stories did.

NOLAN The first one I was only doing late at night. This one, I worked proper days. I treated it a little bit more like work, because I could afford to.

DOLAN This time around I showed bits of it to my editor before it was properly finished. Generally I had this fear that because I am so easily influenced, that it would steer me in some way that I would later regret. But it was helpful.

How do you feel you’ve developed?

DOLAN When I was writing my first novel, the aim was just to write something that fulfilled the requirements of being a novel. Now, I feel a lot more confident that I’ve got the form down, and I can use it to express things within that container.

NOLAN I haven’t read it since it came out. By the time it did come out, I felt quite alienated from it. But that was an inevitable consequence of what I wanted the book to be, which was an exorcism. I think even as I was writing it, I was sort of nauseating myself with it.

FLATTERY My feeling when I reread the stories recently was a lot of sympathy for my younger self, like, “Oh, it’s not so bad.” I feel like with your first book, you’re very conscious that you have to be impressive. I’m not as interested in impressing anyone, which I think just comes with age.

Do you think being Irish is a key part of who you are as a writer? Or is it just a convenient way for the industry to categorize you?

NOLAN I didn’t feel like “Acts of Desperation” was an especially Irish book. But this new one is decisively Irish. The first time around, I did feel a bit frightened about being referred to in a group with already extremely brilliant and successful writers, like Naoise and Sally Rooney. I didn’t want to be put in that room because I will only suffer by comparison. But I don’t have much feeling about it anymore.

DOLAN In terms of the Irishness of my work, it’s probably not inherent, it’s more that I am fascinated by language. If you’re an Irish person who writes for international publications, you cannot but think constantly about Irish English.

FLATTERY My work has been noted as not very Irish. I don’t often describe place. I don’t have a hold on one county, like [*Colin Barrett*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/04/30/books/review/colin-barrett-homesickness.html) writing about Mayo or [*Mike McCormack*](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/01/05/books/review/solar-bones-mike-mccormack.html) writing about Mayo, Sally Rooney writing about Mayo. Is anyone not writing about Mayo? But the next book will be more Irish. It’s never really bothered me being grouped as an Irish female writer. I feel quite proud. I always feel very proud when an Irish person does well in anything.

Other than reading and writing, what else contributes to your creative process?

NOLAN I’m an intensely social person. I find people so interesting and wonderful, and want to find out how they feel. Obviously, it’s true that you have to dedicate time and concentration to do any serious work. But my time spent with other people is not a distraction. It’s a part of the way that I write, and why I write.

FLATTERY Yes, I was gonna say hanging out, which I think is so integral to creativity. I’m not joking. Just going for a drink with your friends and talking, and listening to how people talk, is reflected in my writing, I think.

DOLAN My main thing besides writing is that I’m an avid language learner. I find it really helpful to have something that I have absolutely no talent at, but still pursue enthusiastically.

What are you currently working on?

FLATTERY I’m working on something about a couple. I’ve never written really about couples, my first attempt at romantic love. It’s set in a spa hotel.

DOLAN I’m working on a novel. It’s set between Berlin and Dublin, but I don’t really want to say anything else yet.

NOLAN I went to an event at MoMA last October where they were showing these old home movies an actor and artist made, and his son was presenting them. I started thinking about this idea of adults who have become the estate keepers of their artist parents. And also there’s a couple involved.

FLATTERY We’re all doing couples. Couples are huge.

PHOTOS: From left, the writers Megan Nolan, Naoise Dolan and Nicole Flattery. “I think the publishing industry has an obsession with newness, and that’s the way things are marketed,” Flattery said. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY FROM LEFT: SOPHIE DAVIDSON; MARIA BIANCHI; MARIA RÓDENAS SÁINZ DE BARANDA) This article appeared in print on page C6.

**Load-Date:** August 4, 2023

**End of Document**



[***Toxic Train Wreck Puts Trump-Backed Senator From Ohio in Spotlight***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67MP-W3T1-JBG3-648K-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** By Jazmine Ulloa

**Body**

J.D. Vance, the freshman senator from Ohio, is in the spotlight for the first time in his tenure as he responds to the train derailment and its aftermath.

EAST PALESTINE, Ohio -- As Donald J. Trump criticized the federal response to the train derailment that has shaken this Ohio town, there was one leader in Washington he praised repeatedly -- the man he helped propel to Congress, Senator J.D. Vance.

''J.D. Vance has been incredible,'' Mr. Trump told reporters and local officials on Wednesday at an East Palestine firehouse, as Mr. Vance stood behind him.

While a fight brews between Democrats and Republicans over the role of the federal government in the derailment's aftermath, Mr. Vance, 38, has been at the center of it all. Some of his actions have been the conventional response of any seasoned politician. He has drafted letters calling on federal officials for more oversight and met with some of the residents most affected by the derailment and chemical spill. But he also has joined far-right Republican figures in depicting the deep-red village in northeastern Ohio as a forgotten place, taking a page from Mr. Trump's grievance-politics playbook.

''I grew up in a town that was neglected by the national media and was affected by a lot of dumb policies,'' Mr. Vance said in a brief interview, as he briskly left the firehouse on Wednesday. ''I worry that unless we keep the pressure on the federal policymakers and the corporations that caused this problem, a lot of people are going to be forgotten and left behind.''

The White House has pushed back on such criticism from Republicans, accusing both the Trump administration and Republican lawmakers of dismantling the Obama-era rail safety measures meant to prevent episodes like the East Palestine derailment. And at least one media critic has accused Mr. Vance of fanning the flames of white grievance by attacking the Biden administration as deserting white Americans.

For Mr. Vance, the response to the derailment could serve as a pivot point. It is the first major crisis in his tenure as a newly elected senator and it has provided him with the chance to show the voters who viewed him with skepticism during his campaign that he has not strayed far from his humble Ohio roots.

The derailment has also given him an opening to tap into a theme that first brought national attention to his Senate ambitions: speaking up for ***working-class*** Ohioans, many of them white, who he has suggested have been victimized by the politics of the left.

In one of his first campaign ads, he bluntly played to white grievance, looking at the camera and asking voters a question: ''Are you a racist?'' He argued in the ad that Democratic voters were ''pouring into this country'' through unchecked borders, echoing the ''great replacement theory,'' the far-right notion that undocumented immigrants are coming to America to usurp the political power of native-born white voters.

In a red state that Mr. Trump won in both 2016 and 2020, many residents in East Palestine and its surrounding towns were not following the national back-and-forth over the government response as they worried about the potential effects of the spill. But they had followed Mr. Vance's attempts to bring attention to their plight on local media outlets and approved of his handling of the crisis, even as some said there was more work to be done.

''I think a lot of people are watching him right now to see how he is handling it,'' said Kayla Miller, 31, who owns a farm in nearby Negley. ''I think he genuinely cares about our situation and cares about our town.''

Mr. Vance, a venture capitalist turned first-time politician, became a sought-after voice on the white ***working-class*** after the release of his memoir ''Hillbilly Elegy,'' which explored his family ties to Appalachia and traced his path from humble origins in southwestern Ohio to the military and later to Yale Law School.

When he returned to Ohio, he was initially viewed as an outsider. He was funded by Peter Thiel, the tech billionaire, and had spent much of his time in San Francisco after leaving his home state. Ahead of the state's Republican primary in May 2022, more than three dozen Republican county and state committee leaders urged Mr. Trump in a letter to not endorse Mr. Vance. They questioned his Republican credentials and noted he had often denounced Mr. Trump during the 2016 presidential campaign.

Mr. Vance has been a sharp critic of the Biden administration on inflation and border policies, largely falling in line with Republicans pushing for isolationism as the answer to loss of U.S. manufacturing jobs.

As residents coped with the derailment, Mr. Vance sent letters to the company that operated the freight train, Norfolk Southern, asking it to broaden its criteria for reimbursements to residents beyond a one-mile radius of the derailment zone.

He has worked with Republicans and Democrats -- including two of the region's top Democrats, Senators Sherrod Brown of Ohio and John Fetterman of Pennsylvania -- to call on federal public health officials to provide resources to help the state monitor people's health. They have also pressed federal environmental agencies to monitor the hazardous chemical compounds, or dioxins, that the derailment released into the region's air and soil. (On Friday, Mr. Biden said he had no plans to visit the derailment site.)

Mr. Vance has met with business owners and affected residents. He also visited a creek near the derailment site, releasing a video in which he used a stick to stir a filmy substance in the water that he described as evidence of possible contamination.

''I've just been doing a lot of talking to people on the ground here,'' he said, speaking to reporters in downtown East Palestine last week. ''Obviously, I am more concerned about the public safety component of this here. Is the air breathable? Is the water drinkable?''

On Wednesday, Mr. Vance reinforced his loyalty to the former president even as some of Mr. Trump's staunchest supporters now privately worry about his grip on the party and his chances of winning the presidency again. Mr. Vance and Donald Trump Jr., Mr. Trump's son, followed the former president as he made stops at local businesses to shake hands with customers and pass out Make America Great Again hats. In short remarks at the fire station, Mr. Vance thanked Mr. Trump for visiting and bringing national attention with him.

''The most important thing that we can take from this visit is that we can't forget about the people of East Palestine,'' Mr. Vance told reporters.

He said later that he believed Mr. Trump's presence would help keep the pressure on federal officials to take action. Asked about criticism from the White House on the Republican opposition to rail safety measures, Mr. Vance said attempts to politicize the issue would not help East Palestine residents. According to the website PolitiFact, a rail safety rule repealed as part of a broad regulatory rollback under the Trump administration would have had no impact on the East Palestine derailment.

Mr. Vance and other Republicans have subtly evoked white disaffection by portraying a largely white, rural and conservative area as neglected by federal officials. On a Fox News interview this month, he accused Pete Buttigieg, the transportation secretary, of focusing on ''how we have too many white male construction workers'' instead of talking about the frequency of train derailments and railroad safety.

On Wednesday, he rejected the notion that he was playing to racial grievance. ''I don't know how I am doing that or anybody else is doing that,'' Mr. Vance said outside the firehouse. ''This is a community that has been affected by the problem, and they deserve help.''

At the same time, far from East Palestine, Mr. Vance has used his brief time in the Senate to go on the offensive on race, accusing Democrats of injecting it into politics.

This month, he criticized Gigi B. Sohn, Mr. Biden's nominee to the Federal Communications Commission, for playing into ''this weird racialization of American political rhetoric in the last few years.'' And in his campaign ad on the border, he criticized Democrats for calling people racists because they wanted to talk about Mr. Biden's border policies and the impact those policies were having on the opioid crisis, which has ravaged largely white, rural parts of the industrial Midwest and across the nation.

East Palestine residents said that before the freight train derailed on Feb. 3, many Ohioans seemed to know little about their hometown, which sits just below the manufacturing hub of Youngstown, near the Pennsylvania border. Now, the village of 4,761 in a red county Mr. Vance handily won has been under the national glare.

The crisis has spurred complicated feelings among residents about the necessity of government oversight, but many said federal agencies should take on a greater role holding Norfolk Southern accountable.

In interviews this week, several residents said they had developed coughs or odd rashes, and some had farm animals die. Ms. Miller and her husband, Chase Miller, said that they had lost two chickens and three rabbits and that more farm animals had fallen ill. One of the main side effects of a gas released, vinyl chloride, they read, is cancer.

''So, in five years, am I going to have liver cancer? Am I going to be able to see my kids graduate?'' she said.

Her husband added, ''My biggest worry is that they are going to forget about Negley, they are going to forget about the local towns where the water runs to.''

State and federal officials have said that they have yet to detect dangerous levels of chemicals in the air or municipal water, and tests are continuing.

Leaving a grocery store with stacks of water bottles on Monday, Butch Foster, 76, a farmer and former school custodian, said he refused to leave his home after the spill until federal officials declared the air safe to breathe. But after spending some time outside, he noticed black mucus coming out of his nose, so he did not want to drink the municipal water.

Mr. Foster had watched the video of Mr. Vance stirring the waters in the creek. He said the senator he had done a good job of calling attention to his and other residents' concerns.

''I just know they need to do more,'' he said.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/02/24/us/politics/east-palestine-ohio-jd-vance.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/02/24/us/politics/east-palestine-ohio-jd-vance.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Senator J.D. Vance reinforced his loyalty to Donald J. Trump on Wednesday in East Palestine, Ohio. (PHOTOGRAPH BY MADDIE MCGARVEY FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A12.

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**End of Document**



[***How Soaring Child Care Costs Are Crushing New Yorkers***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:694X-XPY1-JBG3-64BY-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Byline:** Eliza Shapiro, Asmaa Elkeurti and Maansi Srivastava

**Highlight:** As the city’s affordability crisis worsens for nearly everyone, even upper-middle-class New Yorkers are struggling to pay for child care. The workers who provide it are struggling too.

**Body**

Not long after Crystal Springs started her new job at a large insurance company in Midtown Manhattan earlier this year, she realized that a much bigger chunk of her paycheck than she expected was going directly to child care for her 5-year-old daughter.

Ms. Springs had dreamed that the job, which allowed her and her husband to make about $200,000 a year combined, would help provide a comfortable middle-class life for her family in Ozone Park, Queens. But as bills mounted and her daughter’s routine days off turned into emergencies, she felt stuck. Exasperated, she left the job she had fought so hard to get.

Around the same time, in the Castle Hill section of the Bronx, Doris Irizarry was struggling to sustain the day care center she ran out of her home. Expenses were rising every month, and she said she was making only about $3 an hour for each of the six children who attended. She finally closed for good this summer after 25 years.

“This industry is going to die,” she said. “We cannot survive without the parents, and the parents cannot survive without us. We’re a unit.”

In a notoriously stratified city experiencing its [*worst affordability crisis in decades*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/04/25/nyregion/affordable-housing-nyc.html), the skyrocketing cost of child care is one of the few issues that connects working families across geography, race and social class.

All but the wealthiest New Yorkers — even the upper middle class and especially mothers — are scrambling to afford care that will allow them to keep their jobs. Median prices for nearly every type of child care in New York City have shot up since 2017, [*according to state*](https://ocfs.ny.gov/main/reports/2019-Child-Care-Market-Rate-Survey.pdf) [*surveys of providers*](https://ocfs.ny.gov/main/reports/2022-Child-Care-Market-Rate-Survey.pdf). Montessori preschool programs can cost more than $4,000 a month in affluent neighborhoods, and ***working-class*** families are stretching their budgets to pay at least $2,000 a month for day care.

And the workers who provide child care are reeling from high costs and are leaving the industry. Many make just over minimum wage, leaving them barely able to afford to stay in New York City or pay for care for their own children.

Interviews with more than three dozen parents, nannies, day care providers and experts revealed a potentially devastating crisis for the future of New York City. In recent years, only the astronomical cost of housing has presented a greater obstacle to working families than the cost of child care, experts said.

A New York City family would have to make more than $300,000 a year to meet the federal standard for affordability — which recommends that child care take up no more than 7 percent of total household income — to pay for just one young child’s care. In reality, a typical city family is spending over a quarter of their income to pay for that care, [*according to the U.S. Department of Labor*](https://www.dol.gov/agencies/wb/topics/childcare/median-family-income-by-age-care-setting).

Though families and providers across the country face the same issues, few cities confront affordability challenges as profound as New York’s. In a city where a second income is all but required for most families, soaring costs strain a patchwork child care system made up of day care centers in family homes, preschool and after-school sites in public school buildings and nannies working in private apartments.

“If people can’t go to work knowing your child is safe, and not break your financial back to do it, then people can’t be here,” said Richard R. Buery Jr., the chief executive of the Robin Hood Foundation, a charity focused on fighting poverty in New York City. “If people can’t be here, they can’t pay taxes, and if people can’t be here, employers won’t be here.”

More than half of New York City families are spending more than they can afford on child care, including both lower-income and higher-income families, according to a [*recent study*](https://www.robinhood.org/annual-robin-hood-poverty-tracker-report-finds-government-initiatives-cut-nycs-child-poverty-rate-by-68-percent-many-of-these-policies-are-no-longer-in-effect/) by Mr. Buery’s organization.

Losing families with young children

Though Mayor Eric Adams and Gov. Kathy Hochul have each taken some action, the mayor’s decision to [*cut some funding for a free preschool program for 3-year-olds*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/22/nyregion/prekindergarten-adams-nyc-3k.html) and [*his administration’s consistent delays*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/01/06/nyregion/nyc-public-preschool-system.html) in paying city-funded day care providers have exacerbated the issue. The [*end of pandemic-era federal funds*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/21/upshot/child-care-daycare-disruptions.html) to support child care providers later this month has left workers scrambling.

The long-term consequences for the health of the city are only beginning to be felt, but it is clear that there is a profound economic cost. Parents leaving New York or cutting work hours because of child care cost the city $23 billion in 2022, according to the city’s [*Economic Development Corporation*](https://edc.nyc/sites/default/files/2023-03/Childcare-Toolkit.pdf).

New York is losing families with young children. Between 2019 and the end of 2022, there was a significant drop in the number of families with children under 5 living in the city, according to [*a recent analysis by New School researchers*](http://www.centernyc.org/reports-briefs/nycs-unsettled-covid-19-era-labor-market). Data has shown that [*Black families in particular have left*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/01/31/nyregion/black-residents-nyc.html) in significant numbers, citing concerns about affordability. The city has also seen a sharp decline in its public school population.

Brittany Dietz and her husband were not planning to leave when they started researching day care centers near their Greenpoint, Brooklyn, home. They considered hiring a nanny or sharing a nanny with another family to reduce costs. Ms. Dietz, who works in advertising, was not impressed with the options, some of which would have amounted to a second rent. The cost of raising a child in New York helped persuade her and her husband to make their recent move to Cleveland, Ms. Dietz’s hometown.

There, she found six day care centers near their new home, all with space for her 18-month-old, and chose one that costs about $50 a day. Moving, she said, has “opened up a world of possibilities” for her family.

“Nothing really pushes you to leave the city until you have a kid,” she said. “If we could have made it work, we probably would have stayed.”

Rising costs, shrinking supply

The costs of care have risen as supply has contracted.

The issues that have [*long plagued the industry*](https://tcf.org/content/report/building-high-quality-child-care-early-learning-infrastructure-new-york-city/) — high staff turnover and a shortage of workers caused by stubbornly low wages, and supply lagging behind parent demand — have only become more acute in the wake of the pandemic.

Some workers have moved to other low-wage industries that have been able to raise pay in recent years, and parents are feeling increasingly squeezed on costs.

The city lost at least a third of its child care workers since the start of the pandemic, and more than half of those who remain [*qualify for child care subsidies*](https://comptroller.nyc.gov/reports/nyc-under-three-a-plan-to-make-child-care-affordable-for-new-york-city-families/#_ednref45) for their own children. The industry’s median hourly rate in the city is just $16.78, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, and home-based workers make only $10.61 an hour. A quarter of child care workers in the city [*live in poverty*](https://www.robinhood.org/public-policy/child-care-now/#:~:text=1%20in%204%20employed%20child%20care%20workers%20in%20NYC%20live%20in%20poverty.), and the vast majority are women of color.

Gaping pay disparities between child care workers and public schoolteachers have [*been an issue for the last two mayoral administrations*](https://ny.chalkbeat.org/2023/6/28/23777529/nyc-prek-teacher-shortage-salary-disparity-union-negotiations).

Ms. Hochul added $500 million in the most recent state budget to provide bonuses for child care staff and to help bolster recruiting efforts for centers, along with $100 million to expand child care in areas with few options, and has earmarked nearly $16 million to add new child care centers on city and state university campuses.

And Mr. Adams’s administration has used state funding for child care to provide subsidized vouchers that significantly reduce the cost of care for about 22,000 low-income children, a small fraction of the city’s roughly half a million young children. Starting next month, families of four must make less than $100,000 a year to qualify and must demonstrate that they need child care because they are working or are pursuing employment or school.

But experts say that none of those efforts have tackled the core issue of extremely low wages for child care employees. Beyond raising pay rates, they said, the city and state could fully fund child care for 3-year-olds, ensure that providers are paid on time and give them more training, and make it easier for New Yorkers to open child care centers, including in their own homes, through tax credits and property tax abatements.

A burden on mothers

In interviews, several parents whose combined household income was $200,000 a year or more said nannies or day care ranked second on their monthly budget, after rent or mortgage. Many said they were unsure if they would stay in the city if they had a second child, especially those without family nearby to help with babysitting.

One family that earns more than $400,000 began making preliminary plans to leave the city after finding a day care in their Williamsburg, Brooklyn, neighborhood that would cost over $4,700 a month for one of their children to attend full-time in fall 2024.

[*The burden*](https://interactives.americanprogress.org/childcarecosts/) has fallen [*especially hard on mothers,*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2021/02/04/parenting/working-moms-coronavirus.html) many of whom said they had cut back their work hours, moved jobs to have more flexibility to work remotely or stared in disbelief at budgeting spreadsheets that showed well over half — and in some cases nearly all — of their monthly take-home pay going to babysitters or day care centers.

“I found myself apologizing for having to be a mother,” Ms. Springs, the Queens mother, who is now building her notary business, said of her time at the insurance company.

Her first week at that job coincided with her daughter’s school vacation, and she sensed her boss’s mounting frustration as she kept asking to work from home.

Some day care providers said they were deeply sympathetic to the parents they served and have created sliding-scale programs for some families who were struggling to pay day care costs.

Silvia Reyes, a full-time nanny, was making $19 an hour working for a family when she started eight years ago. Since then, everything in her life has gotten more expensive even as she has become the sole financial provider for her mother, her teenage brother and her toddler. Her rent in Sunset Park, Brooklyn, is about $2,000 a month and is set to rise again.

She asked the family she works for in Park Slope, Brooklyn, for a raise to $33 an hour, and they agreed. But even that rate, which is more than many other nannies receive, will not cover the cost of full-time day care, added Ms. Reyes, who is a member of a child-care worker cooperative at the Carroll Gardens Association, a neighborhood advocacy organization.

She has set aside her hopes of having her son socialize with other children during the day, and he now stays at home with his grandmother while Ms. Reyes is at work.

“I can’t have the luxury of sending my kid to a day care if it would cost more than my rent,” she said. “If I don’t get paid well, I can’t afford living here and I can’t afford having my baby and my mom and my brother, and I have to look for another job.”

Irineo Cabreros contributed reporting.

Audio produced by Sarah Diamond.

Irineo Cabreros contributed reporting. Audio produced by Sarah Diamond.

PHOTOS: Doris Irizarry, who had to shut down her day care center in the Bronx after 25 years, looking after her grandson and grandniece.; Both parents, like Crystal Springs, left, and child-care providers, like Ms. Irizarry, center, and Silvia Reyes, a nanny, right, are reeling from the high costs of finding and providing such care.; “I found myself apologizing for having to be a mother,” Ms. Springs said, about telling her employer about child-care issues. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY MAANSI SRIVASTAVA/THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A14.

**Load-Date:** September 20, 2023

**End of Document**



[***Shopping for 'Woke-Free' Beer? Read This.***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:684J-S361-JBG3-6013-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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Late Edition - Final

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**Length:** 1140 words

**Byline:** By Matthew Walther

**Body**

A considerable number of Americans appear to believe that Bud Light, a beer owned since 2008 by the Belgian multinational corporation Anheuser-Busch InBev, stands for a distinct set of values. They further appear to believe that those values do not include -- are, indeed, directly opposed to -- being represented by people who are transgender. This became clear this month after the transgender activist Dylan Mulvaney posted on Instagram an informal video advertisement for Bud Light that featured a photo of a promotional tallboy can sporting an image of Ms. Mulvaney's face.

You may have caught wind of what followed: widespread outrage from social conservatives, calls for boycotts of the beer by country stars and rappers (including Kid Rock, who released a video in which he destroyed cases of Bud Light with an assault weapon), a significant drop in Bud Light's sales in one week and the loss of about $5 billion in market capitalization. This week, Bud Light's owner announced that two of its executives were taking a leave of absence.

Other than some passing discomfort for shareholders, everything about what I hope no one will be tempted to call Bud Light-gate has an air of unreality. In addition to Bud Light, InBev owns Corona, Stella Artois, Michelob, Beck's, Modelo and many other beer brands. Given the sweeping homogenization of global corporate culture and business practices, InBev's politics are roughly the same as those of all major companies: a combination of cutthroat economic libertarianism and progressive human resources-style ''sensitivity'' with which few Americans wholly identify.

Despite the passionate claims about its unique identity and its conservative political profile, the only value driving Bud Light, or any other consumer good available on a global scale, is the remorseless logic of shareholder value. That makes it hard to coherently express your politics with your beer preferences.

This was not always the case. In the 1970s, when Burt Reynolds and Jerry Reed set out from Texarkana to Atlanta to deliver a truckload of Coors Banquet in the movie ''Smokey and the Bandit'' and the country singer Johnny Paycheck was composing dithyrambs in praise of ''Colorado Kool-Aid'' (''Well, it's a can of Coors brewed from a mountain stream / It'll set you head on fire an' make your kidneys scream''), there was a real sense in which Coors was a right-wing beer.

The Coors family, which generally considered Richard Nixon an embarrassing squish, opposed unionization of its breweries, supported Ronald Reagan and donated large sums to the nascent Heritage Foundation. Unpasteurized, lacking preservatives and unavailable in Eastern states, Coors was alternately regarded as raffish and déclassé, promoted by cowboy stars and denounced by the gay rights leader Harvey Milk. In the words of a television spot from 1979: ''It's not city beer. It's Coors.''

My maternal grandfather, a toolmaker at Buick, would no more have allowed someone to drink Coors in his presence in defiance of a union boycott than he would have tolerated a foreign car parked in his driveway. For some of my other older male relations in Michigan, Coors was embraced as an exotic symbol of Western manliness, a welcome alternative not only to Pabst Blue Ribbon and other staid Midwestern brands but also to the United Auto Workers and what they saw as its feckless paternalism. A friend who grew up in Washington confirms my impression that during the 1980s, serving Coors was unthinkable in respectable middle-class liberal social circles.

Nowadays there are few widely available consumer products that can plausibly be identified as right wing. Even Chick-fil-A, whose charitable foundation has funded groups in favor of conversion therapy and criminalizing homosexuality, announced in 2019 that it would stop such funding.

Rather than acknowledge Bud Light's place in a faceless globalized chain of ownership, advertisements for the beer attempt to underscore its supposedly distinctive American and ***working-class*** character. Some years ago a series of advertisements featured the Bud Knight, a character who figured in faux-medieval settings alongside a royal personage known as the Dilly Dilly King. In one spot, the king enters a tavern and orders ''Bud Lights for everyone,'' eliciting cries of approval from the assembled crowd. A lone man informs his majesty that he would prefer a ''nice mead,'' an order that is amended, with ascending fussiness, to an ''autumnal mead'' that must be ''malty and full-bodied.'' Instead of being served his preferred beverage, the man is placed in a pillory by the Bud Knight. The implication is that Bud Light is for ordinary decent people who just want to have a good time with their friends, not smug effete connoisseurs.

These commercials no doubt served as a winking affirmation of what some Bud Light customers perceive as their anti-elitist worldview. But the ads do not represent InBev -- its stated or implied commitments -- in any detectable way. It is marketing all the way down. To use the language of computer programming, Bud Light is a ''skin,'' a user interface that overlays the underlying software and hardware of generic large-scale corporate profit-seeking. This state of affairs is often obscured, perhaps because it is not human-scaled. (It's telling that when Kid Rock expressed his opposition to the Mulvaney spot, he denounced not InBev but Anheuser-Busch.)

Of all the responses to the Mulvaney affair, the most clueless was an advertisement for something called Ultra Right Beer, an astonishingly expensive alternative to Bud Light -- $20 for a six-pack -- that bills itself as ''100 percent woke-free'' beer for people ''who know which restroom to use.'' On its website, the purveyors of Ultra Right urge customers to cease ''giving money to companies who hate our values.'' But in our homogenized corporate culture, all major companies ''hate'' the ostensible ''values'' espoused by the creators of Ultra Right -- or are completely indifferent to them.

In the world envisioned by Ultra Right, one in which corporations had political identities that transcended profit-seeking and liability minimization, InBev would have responded to its critics either by immediately firing the executives responsible for the marketing campaign or by swiftly offering an unconditional defense of transgender rights. Instead, InBev did neither: It left it to the market to decide.

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[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/04/29/opinion/bud-light-sales.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/04/29/opinion/bud-light-sales.html)

**Graphic**

This article appeared in print on page A19.

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**End of Document**



[***East Palestine Crisis Tests a Trump-Backed Senator***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67MH-6Y01-DXY4-X3W6-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** Jazmine Ulloa

**Highlight:** J.D. Vance, the freshman senator from Ohio, is in the spotlight for the first time in his tenure as he responds to the train derailment and its aftermath.

**Body**

J.D. Vance, the freshman senator from Ohio, is in the spotlight for the first time in his tenure as he responds to the train derailment and its aftermath.

EAST PALESTINE, Ohio — As Donald J. Trump criticized the federal response to the train derailment that has shaken this Ohio town, there was one leader in Washington he praised repeatedly — the man he helped propel to Congress, Senator J.D. Vance.

“J.D. Vance has been incredible,” Mr. Trump told reporters and local officials on Wednesday at an East Palestine firehouse, as Mr. Vance stood behind him.

[*While a fight brews between Democrats and Republicans*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/02/23/us/politics/east-palestine-politics.html) over the role of the federal government in the derailment’s aftermath, Mr. Vance, 38, has been at the center of it all. Some of his actions have been the conventional response of any seasoned politician. He has drafted letters calling on federal officials for more oversight and met with some of the residents most affected by the derailment and chemical spill. But he also has joined far-right Republican figures in depicting the deep-red village in northeastern Ohio as a forgotten place, taking a page from Mr. Trump’s grievance-politics playbook.

“I grew up in a town that was neglected by the national media and was affected by a lot of dumb policies,” Mr. Vance said in a brief interview, as he briskly left the firehouse on Wednesday. “I worry that unless we keep the pressure on the federal policymakers and the corporations that caused this problem, a lot of people are going to be forgotten and left behind.”

The White House has pushed back on such criticism from Republicans, accusing both the Trump administration and Republican lawmakers of dismantling the Obama-era rail safety measures meant to prevent episodes like the East Palestine derailment. And [*at least one media critic*](https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2023/02/21/east-palestine-train-derailment-tucker-carlson-jd-vance-fox-news/) has accused Mr. Vance of fanning the flames of white grievance by attacking the Biden administration as deserting white Americans.

For Mr. Vance, the response to the derailment could serve as a pivot point. It is the first major crisis in his tenure as a newly elected senator and it has provided him with the chance to show the voters who viewed him with skepticism during his campaign that he has not strayed far from his humble Ohio roots.

The derailment has also given him an opening to tap into a theme that first brought national attention to his Senate ambitions: speaking up for ***working-class*** Ohioans, many of them white, who he has suggested have been victimized by the politics of the left.

In one of his first campaign ads, he bluntly played to white grievance, looking at the camera and asking voters a question: “Are you a racist?” He argued in the ad that Democratic voters were “pouring into this country” through unchecked borders, echoing the [*“great replacement theory,”*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/16/us/politics/republicans-great-replacement.html) the far-right notion that undocumented immigrants are coming to America to usurp the political power of native-born white voters.

In a red state that Mr. Trump won in both 2016 and 2020, many residents in East Palestine and its surrounding towns were not following the national back-and-forth over the government response as they worried about the potential effects of the spill. But they had followed Mr. Vance’s attempts to bring attention to their plight on local media outlets and approved of his handling of the crisis, even as some said there was more work to be done.

“I think a lot of people are watching him right now to see how he is handling it,” said Kayla Miller, 31, who owns a farm in nearby Negley. “I think he genuinely cares about our situation and cares about our town.”

Mr. Vance, a venture capitalist turned first-time politician, became a sought-after voice on the white ***working-class*** after the release of his memoir “Hillbilly Elegy,” which explored his family ties to Appalachia and traced his path from humble origins in southwestern Ohio to the military and later to Yale Law School.

When he returned to Ohio, he was initially viewed as an outsider. He was funded by Peter Thiel, the tech billionaire, and had spent much of his time in San Francisco after leaving his home state. Ahead of the state’s Republican primary in May 2022, more than three dozen Republican county and state committee leaders urged Mr. Trump in a letter to not endorse Mr. Vance. They questioned his Republican credentials and noted he had [*often denounced Mr. Trump*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/08/08/us/politics/jd-vance-trump-ohio.html) during the 2016 presidential campaign.

Mr. Vance has been a sharp critic of the Biden administration on inflation and border policies, largely falling in line with Republicans pushing for isolationism as the answer to loss of U.S. manufacturing jobs.

As residents coped with the derailment, Mr. Vance sent letters to the company that operated the freight train, Norfolk Southern, asking it to broaden its criteria for reimbursements to residents beyond a one-mile radius of the derailment zone.

He has worked with Republicans and Democrats — including two of the region’s top Democrats, Senators Sherrod Brown of Ohio and John Fetterman of Pennsylvania — to call on federal public health officials to provide resources to help the state monitor people’s health. They have also pressed federal environmental agencies to monitor the hazardous chemical compounds, or dioxins, that the derailment released into the region’s air and soil. (On Friday, Mr. Biden said he had no plans to visit the derailment site.)

Mr. Vance has met with business owners and affected residents. He also visited a creek near the derailment site, releasing [*a video*](https://twitter.com/JDVance1/status/1626305927207854089?ref_src=twsrc%5Egoogle%7Ctwcamp%5Eserp%7Ctwgr%5Etweet) in which he used a stick to stir a filmy substance in the water that he described as evidence of possible contamination.

“I’ve just been doing a lot of talking to people on the ground here,” he said, speaking to reporters in downtown East Palestine last week. “Obviously, I am more concerned about the public safety component of this here. Is the air breathable? Is the water drinkable?”

On Wednesday, Mr. Vance reinforced his loyalty to the former president even as some of Mr. Trump’s staunchest supporters now privately worry about his grip on the party and his chances of winning the presidency again. Mr. Vance and Donald Trump Jr., Mr. Trump’s son, followed the former president as he made stops at local businesses to shake hands with customers and pass out Make America Great Again hats. In short remarks at the fire station, Mr. Vance thanked Mr. Trump for visiting and bringing national attention with him.

“The most important thing that we can take from this visit is that we can’t forget about the people of East Palestine,” Mr. Vance told reporters.

He said later that he believed Mr. Trump’s presence would help keep the pressure on federal officials to take action. Asked about criticism from the White House on the Republican opposition to rail safety measures, Mr. Vance said attempts to politicize the issue would not help East Palestine residents. According to the [*website PolitiFact*](https://www.politifact.com/factchecks/2023/feb/17/occupy-democrats/obama-era-safety-rule-high-hazard-trains-was-repea/), a rail safety rule repealed as part of a broad regulatory rollback under the Trump administration would have had no impact on the East Palestine derailment.

Mr. Vance and other Republicans have subtly evoked white disaffection by portraying a largely white, rural and conservative area as neglected by federal officials. On [*a Fox News interview*](https://twitter.com/wsmartin218/status/1625877607643316224?s=20) this month, he accused Pete Buttigieg, the transportation secretary, of focusing on “how we have too many white male construction workers” instead of talking about the frequency of train derailments and railroad safety.

On Wednesday, he rejected the notion that he was playing to racial grievance. “I don’t know how I am doing that or anybody else is doing that,” Mr. Vance said outside the firehouse. “This is a community that has been affected by the problem, and they deserve help.”

At the same time, far from East Palestine, Mr. Vance has used his brief time in the Senate to go on the offensive on race, accusing Democrats of injecting it into politics.

This month, he criticized Gigi B. Sohn, Mr. Biden’s nominee to the Federal Communications Commission, for playing into “this weird racialization of American political rhetoric in the last few years.” And in his campaign ad on the border, he criticized Democrats for calling people racists because they wanted to talk about Mr. Biden’s border policies and the impact those policies were having on the opioid crisis, which has ravaged largely white, rural parts of the industrial Midwest and across the nation.

East Palestine residents said that before the freight train derailed on Feb. 3, many Ohioans seemed to know little about their hometown, which sits just below the manufacturing hub of Youngstown, near the Pennsylvania border. Now, the village of 4,761 in a red county Mr. Vance handily won has been under the national glare.

The crisis has spurred complicated feelings among residents about the necessity of government oversight, but many said federal agencies should take on a greater role holding Norfolk Southern accountable.

In interviews this week, several residents said they had developed coughs or odd rashes, and some had farm animals die. Ms. Miller and her husband, Chase Miller, said that they had lost two chickens and three rabbits and that more farm animals had fallen ill. One of the main side effects of a gas released, vinyl chloride, they read, is cancer.

“So, in five years, am I going to have liver cancer? Am I going to be able to see my kids graduate?” she said.

Her husband added, “My biggest worry is that they are going to forget about Negley, they are going to forget about the local towns where the water runs to.”

State and federal officials have said that they have yet to detect dangerous levels of chemicals in the air or municipal water, and tests are continuing.

Leaving a grocery store with stacks of water bottles on Monday, Butch Foster, 76, a farmer and former school custodian, said he refused to leave his home after the spill until federal officials declared the air safe to breathe. But after spending some time outside, he noticed black mucus coming out of his nose, so he did not want to drink the municipal water.

Mr. Foster had watched the video of Mr. Vance stirring the waters in the creek. He said the senator had done a good job of calling attention to his and other residents’ concerns.

“I just know they need to do more,” he said.

PHOTOS: Senator J.D. Vance reinforced his loyalty to Donald J. Trump on Wednesday in East Palestine, Ohio. (PHOTOGRAPH BY MADDIE MCGARVEY FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A12.

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**End of Document**



[***A Former Slaughterhouse Becomes a Showroom***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:684C-P151-JBG3-64GG-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** By Aileen Kwun

**Body**

In its fifth year, Alcova, the independent design fair, offered an alternative to Milan Design Week, the largest festival of its kind in the world.

At this year's Milan Design Week, the world's largest design festival, held each April, one outlier to the typical venues -- and ''typical'' has meant palazzos, villas and theaters, as well as a desacralized church, a tennis club and an outdoor pool -- was a former slaughterhouse. This is where Alcova, an annual independent fair, staged an exhibition in a set of industrial spaces in the Calvairate district, just east of the city center.

This year ''has somehow gone even beyond,'' said the curator Joseph Grima, who founded Alcova with Valentina Ciuffi in 2018. On the tails of their fifth year, which wrapped up last weekend, the duo are eyeing a move to expand Alcova's presence (further details to be confirmed and announced) with a debut at Miami Art Week in December.

For design devotees, Alcova has become a must-see destination, and a palate cleanser of sorts from the sheer extravagance of Milan Design Week.

A scrappy upstart known for taking over derelict structures from Milan's industrial past -- including a bakery, a cashmere factory and a military hospital complex -- Alcova recorded more than 90,000 visitors this year, or nearly a third of registered visitors to Salone del Mobile, the trade fair and commercial juggernaut around which Milan Design Week's many offshoot events, Alcova included, revolve.

''It's a young energy there, almost like a music festival vibe,'' said the lighting designer Lindsey Adelman. ''They've created a real magnet of a show that everybody makes a point to go to.'' Ms. Adelman, a fixture of New York's independent design scene, showed at Alcova in 2021 and returned this year to present works from LaLAB, her new collection of experimental lighting works.

Alyse Archer-Coité, a New York-based design researcher, noted how the vastness of the ''sprawling, overgrown and sometimes spooky'' venue made for ''a truly unique environment.''

Mr. Grima, 46, and Ms. Ciuffi, 44, met several years ago as former editors at two Milanese design magazines -- Mr. Grima had been at Domus, and Ms. Ciuffi at Abitare. Mr. Grima is the creative director of the Design Academy Eindhoven in the Netherlands and runs a studio practice, Space Caviar, with Sofia Pia Belenky; Ms. Ciuffi is the founder and director of Milan's Studio Vedèt, a graphic design and branding studio that also curates FAR, a capsule of experimental work shown each year at Nina Yashar's esteemed Nilufar Gallery, one of the city's top spaces for contemporary design.

With Alcova, they have sought to provide a space for emerging and independent design that -- because of, say, commercial viability or financial and artistic reasons -- might not have the chance to show in the existing landscape of events at the larger fair.

What Alcova prioritizes are works that move beyond aesthetics to ''somehow question the way things are done,'' Mr. Grima said. Some of the projects on display, he added, ''are not products or furniture per se, but processes or materials'' that consider the full life cycle of an object, from what it takes to create it to the aftermath of its use.

The research platform Atelier Luma, based in Arles, France, for example, shared an installation of prototypes, created from various agricultural byproducts such as salt, algae and rice straw, that supported ''circular design,'' a regenerative approach that makes continual reuse of materials. An injection-molded chair by the California-based Prowl Studio, made of compostable hemp and paper pulp -- two byproducts of industrial cannabis processing -- challenged the notion that good design should last forever with the tag line: ''Expect death.''

A specially curated section of the show, Alcova Project Space, explored emerging themes, including ''digital ornamentalism,'' an aesthetic shaped by NFTs and video games and meticulously rendered into physical forms, as seen in the work of Ryan Decker, Hannah Lim and Isabel Rower.

''What we really set out to build was more of a social network,'' Ms. Ciuffi said. ''We curate the list of participants, but then they curate their own space.''

Over the years, that network, which began with a group of 20 or so like-minded colleagues and friends at their first edition in 2018, has steadily grown (the physical fair was canceled and replaced with digital content in 2020 because of the pandemic).

Alcova has also served as a launchpad of sorts for new talent. One breakout star, Maximilian Marchesani, made a splash last year with his debut collection of experimental lighting designs that ruminated on the tenuous relationship between nature and man-made artifice, combining gnarled hazel branches and LED lights.

In the space of a year, Mr. Marchesani has become the subject of a solo show, with Ms. Ciuffi's endorsement, at Nilufar Gallery. For Mr. Marchesani, it's a major leap that still feels a bit surreal to him.

''You want to be a protagonist in some way, and you are always a guest,'' said Mr. Marchesani, who moved to Milan over a decade ago as a student. ''Now, suddenly, I am not a guest anymore.''

Like many start-ups that have gone on to achieve scale and critical attention, Alcova has not been immune to criticism. Last week, in an opinion essay in The Architect's Newspaper, Andrea Bagnato, a writer and researcher in Milan who has worked with Mr. Grima, pointed to the show's itinerant presence throughout the city's historic ***working-class*** neighborhoods as an agent of gentrification and real-estate speculation.

In a letter this week to The Architect's Newspaper, Mr. Grima and Ms. Ciuffi said Mr. Bagnato's argument was ''problematic in that it confuses causation with correlation.'' Alcova, the founders noted, never remains in one location for more than two years, to avoid contributing to an area becoming something of a design district that treads on local neighborhoods. Mr. Grima and Ms. Ciuffi also make sure potential sites are not for sale. The current site, they pointed out, had already been slated for a major redevelopment before they procured it.

''You can't allow the perfect to be the enemy of good, and urbanism is complicated,'' Mr. Grima said. ''We will try to make moments of joy and generosity towards the city. That is something that we can and will do.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/04/26/style/alcova-slaughterhouse-showroom.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/04/26/style/alcova-slaughterhouse-showroom.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Right, Joseph Grima and Valentina Ciuffi, Alcova co-founders and curators, at this year's site, once a slaughterhouse. Above, experimental lighting works by Lindsey Adelman. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY DELFINO SISTO LEGNANI VIA ALCOVA

MATTEO IMBRIANI VIA LINDSEY ADELMAN) This article appeared in print on page ST11.

**Load-Date:** April 30, 2023

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[***The People Who See Bernie Sanders as Their Only Hope***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5YCV-R9D1-JBG3-61TS-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

April 8, 2020 Wednesday 11:48 EST

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**Section:** US; politics

**Length:** 1781 words

**Byline:** Jennifer Medina and Sydney Ember

**Highlight:** Mr. Sanders’s enduring base shows the fissures along class lines in the Democratic Party, with those struggling most eager for his promises of change.

**Body**

Mr. Sanders’s enduring base shows the fissures along class lines in the Democratic Party, with those struggling most eager for his promises of change.

[Read more: [*Bernie Sanders has officially ended his 2020 presidential campaign*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/08/us/politics/bernie-sanders-drops-out.html).]

PHOENIX — “This is a campaign of the ***working class***, by the ***working class*** and for the ***working class***!”

Senator [*Bernie Sanders*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/08/us/politics/bernie-sanders-drops-out.html) of Vermont nearly shouted those words to a raucously supportive crowd here last week. The line received thunderous applause, as it always does.

At campaign events over the past year, Mr. Sanders has spoken to tens of thousands of people who come to hear his message of political revolution — who come to imagine a country with universal health care, no student debt and a $15 minimum wage. Almost every line he says onstage rises to a crescendo, inviting cheers of appreciation. With every promise and policy proposal, the crowd becomes a sea of waving blue and white signs with the “Bernie” logo.

The Sanders campaign has exposed a class divide within the Democratic Party: His promises of a leg up are most alluring to those who need it, and most confounding to those who do not.

Six more states go to the polls on Tuesday in what is now a head-to-head matchup in the Democratic presidential race between Mr. Sanders and former Vice President [*Joseph R. Biden Jr.*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/08/us/politics/bernie-sanders-drops-out.html) The path for Mr. Sanders to retake a delegate lead is much narrower than it was a week ago, but no matter how the primaries turn out for Mr. Sanders, he has built a fierce following of voters who want and expect more from their party, from their government, from their country.

That’s how Audrey Yanos views Mr. Sanders and this political moment. Ms. Yanos, a 39-year-old medical administrator, has voted for the Democratic candidate in every presidential election in her adult life. But Ms. Yanos has misgivings: Those Democrats, she believes, have never done all that much to deliver the promise of the American dream. She has begun to feel that the country has betrayed people like her.

Mr. Sanders, she says, is different. Ms. Yanos voted for him in 2016, and did so again last Tuesday in the Colorado primary, which he won easily over Mr. Biden.

“We are struggling all the time, and what we have is not working,” she said one evening last week during a brief break between dinner and her son’s basketball practice. “We’re all scraping by, one disaster away from real catastrophe, and we need someone who understands that.”

That sentiment — that Mr. Sanders understands the catastrophe looming for so many people, and that so many other politicians do not — is central to Sanders supporters, and crucial to understanding where these voters might turn if Mr. Sanders is not the nominee. If the Democratic Party wants to keep such voters engaged and committed to showing up in the fall, leaders will have to speak more directly to them and better address their needs.

Many of his supporters know what it’s like to struggle in one way or another. They need prescription drugs but can’t afford them. They are buried under relentless student debt. They juggle jobs with caring for ailing parents or young children, or both. They want better lives, more stable lives, and need some help.

When Mr. Sanders has asked people at his town halls to tell their stories — often by prodding them to share their insurance premiums or deductibles — their voices have sometimes shaken. Sometimes there are tears.

Ms. Yanos was the first person in her family to attend college. She considers herself lucky because a scholarship paid for tuition and books, so she graduated with about $25,000 in debt, which she paid off last year. Financially, she is far better off than her parents were when she was a child. And yet she sees no evidence of a booming economy in her own life.

“I look around and see so many other people barely holding on,” Ms. Yanos said, choking back tears as her kids did their homework at the kitchen table. “It’s not that I think it will be all rainbows and sunshine if he’s elected, things won’t change overnight. But people younger than me, they are going to demand change in their lifetime.”

Everything seemed to be clicking for Mr. Sanders before last week. He had finished at the top of the nominating contests in Iowa and New Hampshire, then dominated in Nevada. But on Super Tuesday, a surging Mr. Biden all but extinguished that momentum, winning 10 of 14 states with the support of many black ***working-class*** voters. Mr. Biden and Mr. Sanders are now heading into primaries in Michigan and other major Midwestern states that are favorable in many ways to the former vice president. But Mr. Sanders also enjoys plenty of support in these states, particularly from white ***working-class*** voters.

In both of his bids for the White House, Mr. Sanders has shown that his populist message resonates in some corners, even as it repels much of the Democratic establishment, which has steadily lined up behind Mr. Biden. Rallies for Mr. Sanders often resemble rock concerts, drawing tens of thousands of people who come decked out in campaign gear, with T-shirts that proclaim “Unidos con Bernie” and signs that say “Not me, Us.”

Polling throughout the campaign has shown Mr. Sanders drawing [*some of his strongest support*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/08/us/politics/bernie-sanders-drops-out.html) from voters with household incomes under $50,000; his numbers taper off as incomes rise. A month ago, when he was leading in the polls, people with household incomes of $50,000 and under supported Mr. Sanders twice as much as any other candidate. At that time, he commanded the support of most Democratic voters making $100,000 and under.

[*Exit polls on Super Tuesday*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/08/us/politics/bernie-sanders-drops-out.html) did not ask respondents directly about their income. But in the three states where he won and exit polls were conducted — Colorado, Vermont and California — Mr. Sanders performed five to eight percentage points better among those without a college degree than those with one. In Massachusetts and Minnesota, both states he had hoped to win but ended up losing decisively to Mr. Biden, Mr. Sanders’s numbers among college graduates lagged his showing among those without degrees by double digits.

“Bernie is the only candidate I’ve ever felt a connection to, in a sense that he genuinely cares about the ***working class*** in a way that no other candidate has ever shown support to us,” said Andrew Hilbert, 26, who came to see Mr. Sanders in Phoenix.

Mr. Sanders’s support this year has proved particularly enduring in the West, where many communities remain visibly scarred by the Great Recession. And his focus on the ***working class*** helps explain part of his appeal to Latino voters, who are disproportionately young and are more likely to come from a ***working-class*** background. Many such voters point to the illusion of an “up by your bootstraps” mentality and strongly believe that the only way to create a fair economy is to drastically change the way the current one works.

“We’ve had decades of policies fail to meet our needs, and we’ve got to break that cycle,” said Antonio Arellano, the executive director of Jolt, a group in Texas that focuses on turning out young Latino voters and that endorsed Mr. Sanders. “What we’re seeing for the first time ever is the courage to break from the past and radically build the future. Not taking us as a given entity, but as a constituency that is demanding something more.”

Having spent her life in Orange County, California, Rita Xochitl Estrada, a 39-year-old fitness instructor and student at California State University, Fullerton, has seen countless examples of extreme wealth and extreme poverty. Ms. Estrada calls herself a “romantic but pragmatic” socialist, and said she was not all that optimistic that Mr. Sanders would win the primary, let alone the presidency. Her biggest hope, she said, is that he is ushering in a new era of politics with more of a focus on the poor.

“If nobody pushes it, we will never get there, which is why we are still stuck the way we are,” said Ms. Estrada, who came to the polls with her 21-year-old son, who also voted for Mr. Sanders. Like other Latino supporters of the Vermont senator, Ms. Estrada views herself as part of a movement that will live on regardless of his political fate, and that harks back to the Chicano movement of the 1960s and ’70s. “This is a country that wants the current class structure to stay in place, and it’s really hard to fight against that.”

Many ***working-class*** supporters point to Mr. Sanders’s opposition to the Iraq war as the initial issue that drew them into his orbit. Having watched many friends sign up for the military as a path to the middle class only to come back with traumatic mental and physical injuries, they are deeply skeptical of American intervention overseas, as Mr. Sanders has been for his entire career.

There are also voters who are drawn to Mr. Sanders’s consistency in a chaotic, punishing world.

Originally from El Salvador, Ruth Trujillo-Acosta, 59, and her husband, Gustavo Acosta, 61, are just trying to make things work. They worry about retiring, afraid that they have no savings. They worry that their children are not even thinking about college because it’s too expensive. They both went to college as adults, but still have student loans to pay off.

The two now live in Holyoke in western Massachusetts. She is a mental health clinician. He is an academic adviser at a community college. They consider themselves independents, but are unequivocal about supporting Mr. Sanders.

“We really are paycheck to paycheck and this is the guy — he really is going to be able to change that,” she said as the couple waited for Mr. Sanders to begin a rally last month in Springfield, Mass.

She was cleareyed that Mr. Sanders might not be able to carry out all of his policy proposals — “I don’t think that he’s going to create a complete revolution right away,” she said — but she said he at least provided hope, and it was worth giving him a shot.

Their support of Mr. Sanders, she said, comes down to this: “Our values are with this guy.”

Sydney Ember reported from Phoenix, and Jennifer Medina reported from Denver. Giovanni Russonello contributed reporting from New York.

PHOTOS: Audrey Yanos, left, voted for Bernie Sanders in Colorado’s primary. “It’s not that I think it will be all rainbows and sunshine if he’s elected,” she said. “Things won’t change overnight.” Right, supporters of the Vermont senator at a rally in Phoenix last week. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY DANIEL BRENNER FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES; KITRA CAHANA FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES); “This is a campaign of the ***working class***, by the ***working class*** and for the ***working class***!” Mr. Sanders proclaimed to enthusiastic supporters at the Phoenix campaign rally. (PHOTOGRAPH BY KITRA CAHANA FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** July 13, 2020

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[***Consider This the Next Time Your Beer Betrays You; Guest Essay***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6845-H7H1-JBG3-63J1-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

April 29, 2023 Saturday 13:25 EST

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 1137 words

**Byline:** Matthew Walther

**Highlight:** All major companies now have roughly the same politics.

**Body**

A considerable number of Americans appear to believe that Bud Light, a beer owned since 2008 by the Belgian multinational corporation Anheuser-Busch InBev, stands for a distinct set of values. They further appear to believe that those values do not include — are, indeed, directly opposed to — being represented by people who are transgender. This became clear this month after the transgender activist Dylan Mulvaney posted on Instagram an informal video advertisement for Bud Light that featured a photo of a promotional tallboy can sporting an image of Ms. Mulvaney’s face.

You may have caught wind of what followed: widespread outrage from social conservatives, calls for boycotts of the beer by country stars and rappers (including Kid Rock, who released a video in which he destroyed cases of Bud Light with an assault weapon), a significant drop in Bud Light’s sales in one week and the loss of about $5 billion in market capitalization. This week, Bud Light’s owner [*announced*](https://www.wsj.com/articles/anheuser-busch-shake-up-after-transgender-influencer-was-featured-on-beer-can-a0ed8009) that two of its executives were taking a leave of absence.

Other than some passing discomfort for shareholders, everything about what I hope no one will be tempted to call Bud Light-gate has an air of unreality. In addition to Bud Light, InBev owns Corona, Stella Artois, Michelob, Beck’s, Modelo and many other beer brands. Given the sweeping homogenization of global corporate culture and business practices, InBev’s politics are roughly the same as those of all major companies: a combination of cutthroat economic libertarianism and progressive human-resources-style “sensitivity” with which few Americans wholly identify.

Despite the passionate claims about its unique identity and its conservative political profile, the only value driving Bud Light, or any other consumer good available on a global scale, is the remorseless logic of shareholder value. That makes it hard to coherently express your politics with your beer preferences.

This was not always the case. In the 1970s, when Burt Reynolds and Jerry Reed set out from Texarkana to Atlanta to deliver a truckload of Coors Banquet in the movie “Smokey and the Bandit” and the country singer Johnny Paycheck was composing dithyrambs in praise of “[*Colorado Kool-Aid*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dx9UE-g0Yvc)” (“Well, it’s a can of Coors brewed from a mountain stream / It’ll set you head on fire an’ make your kidneys scream”), there was a real sense in which Coors was a right-wing beer.

The Coors family, which generally considered Richard Nixon an embarrassing squish, opposed unionization of its breweries, supported Ronald Reagan and donated large sums to the nascent Heritage Foundation. Unpasteurized, lacking preservatives and unavailable in Eastern states, Coors was alternately regarded as raffish and déclassé, promoted by cowboy stars and denounced by the gay rights leader Harvey Milk. In the words of a television spot from 1979: “It’s not city beer. It’s Coors.”

My maternal grandfather, a toolmaker at Buick, would no more have allowed someone to drink Coors in his presence in defiance of a union boycott than he would have tolerated a foreign car parked in his driveway. For some of my other older male relations in Michigan, Coors was embraced as an exotic symbol of Western manliness, a welcome alternative not only to Pabst Blue Ribbon and other staid Midwestern brands but also to the United Auto Workers and what they saw as its feckless paternalism. A friend who grew up in Washington confirms my impression that during the 1980s, serving Coors was unthinkable in respectable middle-class liberal social circles.

Nowadays there are few widely available consumer products that can plausibly be identified as right wing. Even Chick-fil-A, whose charitable foundation has funded groups in favor of conversion therapy and criminalizing homosexuality, [*announced*](https://www.cnbc.com/2019/11/18/chick-fil-a-drops-donations-to-christian-charities-after-lgbt-protests.html) in 2019 that it would stop such funding.

Rather than acknowledge Bud Light’s place in a faceless globalized chain of ownership, advertisements for the beer attempt to underscore its supposedly distinctive American and ***working-class*** character. Some years ago a series of advertisements featured the Bud Knight, a character who figured in faux-medieval settings alongside a royal personage known as the Dilly Dilly King. In [*one spot*](https://www.ispot.tv/ad/dDwM/bud-light-bud-lights-for-everyone), the king enters a tavern and orders “Bud Lights for everyone,” eliciting cries of approval from the assembled crowd. A lone man informs his majesty that he would prefer a “nice mead,” an order that is amended, with ascending fussiness, to an “autumnal mead” that must be “malty and full-bodied.” Instead of being served his preferred beverage, the man is placed in a pillory by the Bud Knight. The implication is that Bud Light is for ordinary decent people who just want to have a good time with their friends, not smug effete connoisseurs.

These commercials no doubt served as a winking affirmation of what some Bud Light customers perceive as their anti-elitist worldview. But the ads do not represent InBev — its stated or implied commitments — in any detectable way. It is marketing all the way down. To use the language of computer programming, Bud Light is a “skin,” a user interface that overlays the underlying software and hardware of generic large-scale corporate profit-seeking. This state of affairs is often obscured, perhaps because it is not human-scaled. (It’s telling that when Kid Rock expressed his opposition to the Mulvaney spot, he denounced not InBev but Anheuser-Busch.)

Of all the responses to the Mulvaney affair, the most clueless was an advertisement for something called Ultra Right Beer, an astonishingly expensive alternative to Bud Light — $20 for a six-pack — that bills itself as “100 percent woke-free” beer for people “who know which restroom to use.” On its website, the purveyors of Ultra Right urge customers to cease “giving money to companies who hate our values.” But in our homogenized corporate culture, all major companies “hate” the ostensible values espoused by the creators of Ultra Right — or are completely indifferent to them.

In the world envisioned by Ultra Right, one in which corporations had political identities that transcended profit seeking and liability minimization, InBev would have responded to its critics either by immediately firing the executives responsible for the marketing campaign or by swiftly offering an unconditional defense of transgender rights. Instead, InBev did neither: It left that to the market to decide.

The Times is committed to publishing [*a diversity of letters*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/01/31/opinion/letters/letters-to-editor-new-york-times-women.html) to the editor. We’d like to hear what you think about this or any of our articles. Here are some [*tips*](https://help.nytimes.com/hc/en-us/articles/115014925288-How-to-submit-a-letter-to-the-editor). And here’s our email: [*letters@nytimes.com*](mailto:letters@nytimes.com).

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The editor of The Lamp, a Catholic literary journal, and a contributing Opinion writer.

This article appeared in print on page A19.

**Load-Date:** May 1, 2023

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[***The Resentment Fueling the Republican Party Is Not Coming From the Suburbs; Guest Essay***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67D4-3FG1-DXY4-X0M2-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

January 25, 2023 Wednesday 13:10 EST

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 2830 words

**Byline:** Thomas B. Edsall

**Highlight:** The anger felt by rural voters toward the Democratic Party is driving a regional realignment.

**Body**

Rural America has become the Republican Party’s life preserver.

Less densely settled regions of the country, crucial to the creation of congressional and legislative districts favorable to conservatives, are a pillar of the party’s strength in the House and the Senate and a decisive factor in the rightward tilt of the Electoral College. Republican gains in such sparsely populated areas are compensating for setbacks in increasingly diverse suburbs where growing numbers of well-educated voters have renounced a party led by Donald Trump and his loyalists.

The anger and resentment felt by rural voters toward the Democratic Party are driving a regional realignment similar to the upheaval in the white South after Democrats, led by President Lyndon Johnson, won approval of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

Even so, Republicans are grasping at a weak reed. In a 2022 article, “[*Rural America Lost Population Over the Past Decade for the First Time in History*](https://carsey.unh.edu/publication-rural-america-lost-population-over-past-decade-for-first-time-in-history),” [*Kenneth Johnson*](https://carsey.unh.edu/person/kenneth-johnson), the senior demographer at the Carsey School of Public Policy and a professor of sociology at the University of New Hampshire, notes: “Between 2010 and 2020, rural America lost population for the first time in history as economic turbulence had a significant demographic impact. The rural population loss was due to fewer births, more deaths and more people leaving than moving in.”

The shift to the right in rural counties is one side of a two-part geographic transformation of the electorate, according to “[*The Increase in Partisan Segregation in the United States*](http://congress-files.s3.amazonaws.com/2022-07/Brown_Cantoni_Enos_Pons_Sartre%2520%25282022%2529_0.pdf),” a 2022 paper by [*Jacob R. Brown*](https://jacobrbrown.com/) of Princeton, [*Enrico Cantoni*](https://www.unibo.it/sitoweb/enrico.cantoni/en) of the University of Bologna, [*Ryan D. Enos*](https://www.ryandenos.com/) of Harvard, [*Vincent Pons*](https://www.hbs.edu/faculty/Pages/profile.aspx?facId=736825) of Harvard Business School and [*Emilie Sartre*](https://sites.google.com/view/emiliesartre/home) of Brown.

In an email, Brown described one of the central findings of the study:

In terms of major factors driving the urban-rural split, our analysis shows that rural Republican areas are becoming more Republican predominantly due to voters in these places switching their partisanship to Republican. This is in contrast to urban areas becoming increasingly more Democratic largely due to the high levels of Democratic partisanship in these areas among new voters entering the electorate. These new voters include young voters registering once they become eligible and other new voters registering for the first time.

There are few, if any, better case studies of rural realignment and the role it plays in elections than the 2022 Senate race in Wisconsin. The basic question there is how Ron Johnson — a [*Trump acolyte*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/01/12/opinion/ron-johnson-wisconsin-trump.html) who [*derided*](https://thehill.com/homenews/senate/561805-ron-johnson-climate-change-is-bullsh/) climate change with an epithet, who [*described*](https://www.politico.com/news/2021/03/13/ron-johnson-black-lives-matter-antifa-capitol-riot-475727) the Jan. 6 insurrectionists as “people that love this country, that truly respect law enforcement” and who [*proposed*](https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/2022/08/03/ron-johnson-medicare-social-security/) turning Social Security and Medicare into discretionary programs subject to annual congressional budget cutting — got re-elected in Wisconsin.

In 2016, Johnson rode Trump’s coattails and the Republican trail blazed by the former governor Scott Walker to a 3.4 point (50.2 to 46.8) victory and swept into office, in large part by running up [*huge margins*](https://www.politico.com/2016-election/results/map/senate/wisconsin/) in Milwaukee’s predominantly white suburbs. That changed in 2022.

[*Craig Gilbert*](https://law.marquette.edu/faculty-and-staff-directory/craig-gilbert), a fellow at Marquette Law School and a former Washington bureau chief of The Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, conducted a [*detailed analysis*](https://www.jsonline.com/story/news/politics/analysis/2022/12/19/wisconsin-remains-politically-purple-but-the-way-to-win-is-changing/69734911007/) of Wisconsin voting patterns and found that Johnson

performed much worse in the red and blue suburbs of Milwaukee than he did six years earlier in 2016. Johnson lost Wauwatosa by 7 points in 2016, then by 37 points in 2022. He won Mequon in Ozaukee County by 28 points in 2016 but only by 6 in 2022. His victory margin in Menomonee Falls in Waukesha County declined from 32 points six years ago to 14 points.

So again, how did Johnson win? The simple answer: white rural Wisconsin.

As recently as 17 years ago, rural Wisconsin was a battleground. In 2006, Jim Doyle, the Democratic candidate for governor, won rural Wisconsin, about 30 percent of the electorate, by 5.5 points. “Then came the rural red wave,” Gilbert writes. “Walker carried Wisconsin’s towns by 23 points in 2010 and by 25 points in 2014.” In 2016, Johnson won the rural vote by 25 points, but in 2022, he pushed his margin there to 29 points.

In her groundbreaking study of Wisconsin voters, “[*The Politics of Resentment*](https://press.uchicago.edu/ucp/books/book/chicago/P/bo22879533.html): Rural Consciousness in Wisconsin and the Rise of Scott Walker,” Katherine Cramer, a political scientist at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, prompted a surge of interest in this declining segment of the electorate. She summed up the basis for the discontent among these voters, saying, “It had three elements: (1) a belief that rural areas are ignored by decision makers, including policymakers, (2) a perception that rural areas do not get their fair share of resources and (3) a sense that rural folks have fundamentally distinct values and lifestyles, which are misunderstood and disrespected by city folks.”

[*David Hopkins*](https://www.bc.edu/bc-web/schools/mcas/departments/political-science/people/faculty-directory/david-hopkins.html), a political scientist at Boston College, described how the urban-rural partisan divide was driven by a conflation of cultural and racial controversies starting in the late 1980s and accelerating into the 1990s in his book “[*Red Fighting Blue*](https://www.cambridge.org/core/books/red-fighting-blue/5BED65A27BC1399564B4A5863A1E899C): How Geography and Electoral Rules Polarize American Politics.”

These controversies included two Supreme Court abortion decisions, [*Webster v. Reproductive Health Services*](https://www.oyez.org/cases/1988/88-605) (in 1989) and [*Planned Parenthood of Southeastern Pennsylvania v. Casey*](https://www.oyez.org/cases/1991/91-744) (in 1992); the [*1989 appointment*](https://www.npr.org/1997/06/11/1039576/christian-coalition-leadership) of Ralph Reed as executive director of the Christian Coalition; the [*fire-breathing speeches*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_E9sZqunJ_M) of Pat Robertson and Pat Buchanan at the 1992 Republican Convention (Buchanan: “There is a religious war going on in this country. It is a cultural war for the soul of America”); and the 1993 debate about [*gays in the military*](https://www.politico.com/story/2014/10/clinton-documents-gays-in-the-military-111784), to name just a few.

“The 1992 election represented a milestone,” Hopkins writes, adding:

For the first time in the history of the Democratic Party, its strongest electoral territory was located exclusively outside the South, including Massachusetts, New York, New Jersey and Maryland in the Northeast; Illinois in the metropolitan Midwest; and the Pacific Coast states of Washington, Oregon and California — all of which have supported the Democratic candidate in every subsequent presidential election.

In retrospect it is clear, Hopkins goes on to say, that “the 1992 presidential election began to signal the emerging configuration of ‘red’ and ‘blue’ geographic coalitions that came to define contemporary partisan competition.”

Hopkins compares voter trends in large metro areas, small metro areas and rural areas. Through the three elections from 1980 to 1988, the urban, suburban and rural regions differed in their vote by a relatively modest five points. That begins to change in 1992, when the urban-rural difference grows to roughly 8 percentage points and then keeps growing to reach nearly 24 points in 2016.

“For the first time in American history, the Democratic Party now draws most of its popular support from the suburbs,” Hopkins writes in a 2019 paper, “[*The Suburbanization of the Democratic Party, 1992-2018*](https://www.cookpolitical.com/sites/default/files/2019-09/Hopkins%20Suburbanization%20APSA%202019.pdf).” Democratic suburban growth, he continues, “has been especially concentrated in the nation’s largest metropolitan areas, reflecting the combined presence of both relatively liberal whites (across education levels) and substantial minority populations, but suburbs elsewhere remain decidedly, even increasingly, Republican in their collective partisan alignment.”

The same process took place in House elections, Hopkins observes:

The proportion of House Democrats representing suburban districts rose from 41 percent after the 1992 election to 60 percent after 2018, while the share of Democratic-held seats located in urban areas remained fairly stable over time (varying between 33 percent and 41 percent of all party seats) and the share of rural districts declined from 24 percent to 5 percent of all Democratic seats.

Hopkins pointedly notes that “the expanded presence of suburban voters and representatives in the Democratic Party since the 1980s was accompanied by a dramatic contraction of Democratic strength in rural areas.”

[*Justin Gest*](https://schar.gmu.edu/profiles/jgest), a political scientist at George Mason University whose research — presented in “[*The White* ***Working Class***](https://global.oup.com/academic/product/the-white-working-class-9780190861407?cc=us&amp;lang=en&amp;)” and “[*Majority Minority*](https://academic.oup.com/book/41486/chapter-abstract/352889533?redirectedFrom=fulltext)” — focuses on cultural and class tensions, has a different but complementary take, writing by email that the rising salience of cultural conflicts “was accelerated when the Clinton administration embraced corporate neoliberalism, free trade and moved Democrats toward the economic center. Many differences persisted, but the so-called third way made it harder to distinguish between the economic approaches of Democrats and Republicans.”

The diminution of partisan economic differences resulted in the accentuation of

the very cultural differences that Gingrich-era Republicans sought to emphasize — on issues like homosexuality, immigration, public religion, gun rights and minority politics. These issues are more galvanizing to the Upper Midwest regions adjacent to the South (West Virginia, Ohio and Indiana) — which are trending more conservative.

The Upper Midwest, Gest continued, is

a region unto itself — defined by manufacturing, unions and social conservatism. As the manufacturing industry has moved offshore, union power declined, and one of the richest, most stable parts of America became uniquely precarious inside a single generation. It is now subject to severe depopulation and aging, as younger people who have upskilled are more likely to move to cities like Chicago or New York. They have total whiplash. And Trump’s nostalgic populism has resonated with the white population that remains.

Gest is outspoken in his criticism of the Democratic Party’s dealings with rural communities:

Democrats have effectively redlined rural America. In some corners of the Democratic Party, activists don’t even want rural and white ***working-class*** people in their coalition; they may even deride them. Rural and white ***working-class*** Americans sense this.

One of the dangers for Democrats, Gest continued, is that “Republicans are now beginning to attract socioeconomically ascendant and white-adjacent members of ethnic minorities who find their nostalgic, populist, nationalist politics appealing (or think Democrats are growing too extreme).”

[*Nicholas Jacobs*](https://web.colby.edu/nfjacobs/) and [*Kal Munis*](https://kalmunis.com/), political scientists at Colby College and Utah Valley University, argue that mounting rural resentment over marginalization from the mainstream and urban disparagement are driving forces in the growing strength of the Republican Party in sparsely populated regions of America.

In their 2022 paper “[*Place-Based Resentment in Contemporary U.S. Elections*](https://static1.squarespace.com/static/580ab33829687f686ad6cbb1/t/6319051814f1302127e75b39/1662584089724/JacobsMunis2022-place-resentment-elections-vote-choice-urban-rural-divide.pdf): The Individual Sources of America’s Urban-Rural Divide,” Jacobs and Munis contend that an analysis of voting in 2018 and 2020 shows that while “place-based resentment” can be found in cities, suburbs and rural communities, it “was only consistently predictive of vote choice for rural voters.”

In this respect, conditions in rural areas have worsened, with an exodus of jobs and educated young people, which in turn increases the vulnerability of the communities to adverse, negative resentment.

“Rural America,” Jacobs and Munis write,

continues to grow older, poorer and sicker — urban America wealthier and more diverse. These stark material divisions have contributed to partisan schisms, as individuals increasingly live in places that are politically homogeneous. A consequence of this is that, as Bill Bishop concludes, Americans “have become so ideologically inbred that we don’t know, can’t understand and can barely conceive of ‘those people’ who live just a few miles away.”

In their 2022 paper “[*Symbolic Versus Material Concerns of Rural Consciousness in the United States*](https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0962629822000725),” [*Kristin Lunz Trujillo*](https://krissylunz.wixsite.com/main), a postdoctoral research fellow at Harvard’s Kennedy School, and [*Zack Crowley*](https://cla.umn.edu/political-psychology/people/graduate-students), a Ph.D. candidate in political science at the University of Minnesota, sought to determine the key factor driving rural voters to the Republican Party: anger at perceived unfair distribution of resources by government, a sense of being ignored by decision makers or the belief that rural communities have a distinct set of values that are denigrated by urban dwellers.

Trujillo and Crowley conclude that “culture differences play a far stronger role in determining the vote than discontent over the distribution of economic resources.” Stands on what they call symbolic issues “positively predict Trump support and ideology while the more material subdimension negatively predicts these outcomes, if at all.”

While rural America has moved to the right, Trujillo and Crowley point out that there is considerable variation: “poorer and/or farming-dependent communities voted more conservative, while amenity- or recreation-based rural economies voted more liberal in 2012 and 2016,” and the “local economies of Republican-leaning districts are declining in terms of income and gross domestic product, while Democratic-leaning districts are improving.”

The Trujillo-Crowley analysis suggests that Democratic efforts to regain support in rural communities face the task of somehow ameliorating conflicts over values, religion and family structure, which is far more difficult than lessening economic tensions that can be addressed through legislation.

The hurdle facing Democrats is reflected in a comment [*James Gimpel*](https://gvpt.umd.edu/facultyprofile/gimpel/james), a political scientist at the University of Maryland, emailed to me, describing the roots of rural discontent with Democratic urban America:

The disrespect is felt most acutely by the fact that dominant cultural institutions, including mass media, are predominantly urban in location and orientation. Smaller towns and outlying areas see themselves as misunderstood and mischaracterized by these media, as well as dismissed as out of touch and retrograde by urban populations. There is a considerable amount of truth in their perceptions.

A May 2018 Pew Research Center report, “[*What Unites and Divides Urban, Suburban and Rural Communities*](https://www.pewresearch.org/social-trends/2018/05/22/what-unites-and-divides-urban-suburban-and-rural-communities/),” found large differences in the views and partisanship in these three constituencies. Urban voters, according to Pew, were, for example, 62 percent Democratic and 31 percent Republican — the opposite of rural voters, 54 percent Republican and 38 percent Democratic. Fifty-three percent of those living in urban areas said rural residents have “different values,” and 58 percent of those living in rural communities said urban residents do not share their values. Sixty-one percent of those living in rural communities said they have “a neighbor they would trust with a set of keys to their home” compared with 48 percent in urban areas.

I asked [*Maria Kefalas*](https://www.mariakefalas.com/), a sociologist at Saint Joseph’s University who wrote “[*Hollowing Out the Middle*](https://shop.harvard.com/book/9780807006146): The Rural Brain Drain and What It Means for America” with her husband, Patrick J. Carr, who died in 2020, to describe the state of mind in rural America. She wrote back by email:

My best guess would be that it comes down to brain drain and college-educated voters. It has always been about the mobility of the college educated and the folks getting left behind without that college diploma. Not one high school dropout we encountered back when we wrote about Iowa managed to leave the county (unless they got sent to prison), and the kids with degrees were leaving in droves.

Those whom Kefalas and Carr defined as “stayers” shaped “the political landscape in Ohio, Iowa, etc. (states where the public university is just exporting its professional class).” The result: “You see a striking concentration/segregation of folks on both sides who are just immersed in MAGA world or not,” Kefalas wrote, noting that “people who live in rural America are surrounded by folks who play along with a particular worldview, yet my friends from Brooklyn and Boston will tell you they don’t know anyone who supports Trump or won’t get vaccinated. It’s not open warfare. It’s more like apartheid.”

Urban-rural “apartheid” further reinforces ideological and affective polarization. The geographic separation of Republicans and Democrats makes partisan crosscutting experiences at work, in friendships, in community gatherings, at school or in local government — all key to reducing polarization — increasingly unlikely to occur.

Geographic barriers between Republicans and Democrats — of those holding traditional values and those choosing to reject or reinterpret those values — reinforce what scholars now call the [*calcification*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/11/12/opinion/election-midterm-pattern.html) of difference. As conflict and hostility become embedded in the structure of where people live, the likelihood increases of seeing adversaries as less than fully human.

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PHOTO: (PHOTOGRAPH BY Taylor Glascock for The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

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[***Panel Backs Change to Democratic Primaries***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:670T-9841-DXY4-X006-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** By Katie Glueck

**Body**

A key panel supported President Biden's plan, which would remove Iowa as the first presidential nominating state. States with more diverse, ***working-class*** and in some cases more moderate constituencies are being elevated.

WASHINGTON -- Over objections from some Democratic state leaders, the Democratic National Committee on Friday moved one step closer to enacting President Biden's vision for drastically overhauling the party's 2024 presidential primary process, as a key committee voted to recommend sweeping changes to the calendar.

At a daylong gathering of the D.N.C.'s Rules and Bylaws Committee in a Washington hotel ballroom, members voted to recommend supporting a 2024 Democratic presidential primary calendar that would begin in South Carolina on Feb. 3, followed by New Hampshire and Nevada on Feb. 6, Georgia on Feb. 13 and then Michigan on Feb. 27.

That plan reflected a framework Mr. Biden delivered to the committee on Thursday that emphasized racial and geographic diversity. Representatives from Iowa and New Hampshire voted against the proposal, and officials emphasized that the move by the Rules Committee was one step in what might still be a prolonged and contentious process. The proposed early states have until Jan. 5 to confirm that they can hold a primary on their assigned date.

The recommendation, which upends the traditional Democratic order of Iowa, New Hampshire, Nevada and South Carolina, must be affirmed by the full D.N.C. at a meeting in early February, but Mr. Biden's preferences carry enormous weight with the party committee.

The proposed new order rewards some of the states that powered his political rise in 2020, elevating diverse, ***working-class*** and in some cases more moderate constituencies that were vital to Mr. Biden's primary victory. At the same time, smaller states that have long emphasized retail politics -- Iowa and New Hampshire -- would be diminished.

''Given the president's strong interest in the design of the 2024 primaries, and the dates for them, I think it's clear that he's running,'' said James Roosevelt Jr., a co-chairman of the Rules and Bylaws Committee, who said he had spoken with Mr. Biden this week about the early-state order.

Mr. Biden has said that he intends to run again but plans to discuss the race with his family. If he does not run, the schedule, if adopted, would help other candidates with strong support from the voters of color who make up the backbone of the Democratic Party.

Black voters accounted for more than half of the Democrats who voted in the South Carolina primary in 2020, according to exit polling. And they make up a significant share of the primary electorates in Georgia and Michigan. Latino voters play an especially central role in Nevada.

But the shift could also hurt candidates without the campaign cash to compete quickly in early states with expensive media markets -- like Nevada, Georgia and even New Hampshire, where Boston television stations drive up rates. The fast pacing of the proposed calendar could force contenders with smaller bank accounts to choose to compete in just one or two of the first three states.

''One of the things that New Hampshire is known for is our retail politics, and candidates having the opportunity to engage the electorate face to face,'' said Joanne Dowdell, a D.N.C. member from New Hampshire who opposed the proposal. ''By having three states, one on top of the other, I think causes a little bit of conflict for candidates trying to vie for the attention, get name recognition and also raise money.''

Jeff Link, a longtime Des Moines operative, said cutting Iowa's caucuses out of the Democratic presidential nominating process would diminish the importance of organizing, which is central to the state's political culture.

That could prove detrimental to the party nationally, he said, by eliminating a critical proving ground for Democratic field operatives.

''Rather than having a big field operation, they're going to have a big social media operation,'' Mr. Link said. ''There's going to be less people talking to other people in the campaign. One of the benefits of having a caucus early is that for three decades, we've trained campaign staff on how to organize person to person.''

Other objections have been far louder, especially from the two states accustomed to being at the front of the line.

New Hampshire has long held the nation's first primary as a matter of state law, and state officials have said they intend to follow that law rather than any party decision. And the chairman of the Iowa Democratic Party noted in a statement that the country's longtime leadoff caucus state has a law that ''requires us to hold a caucus before the last Tuesday in February, and before any other contest.'' The decision on timing would be up to the state central committee and elected officials, said Scott Brennan, a member of the Rules Committee from Iowa.

More than political clout and bragging rights is at stake: Studies of the economic impact of past caucuses in Iowa and New Hampshire primaries have found that spending was in the hundreds of millions of dollars, much of that on TV ads, though the figures were a drop in the bucket of each state's annual economic activity.

The party has powerful tools with which to compel states to fall in line.

D.N.C. rules agreed upon earlier this year stipulated notable consequences for any state that jumps ahead to operate outside the party's agreed-upon early window, including cuts to the number of pledged delegates and alternates for the state in question. Significantly, candidates who campaign in such states would face repercussions as well.

''If a candidate chose to campaign in a state that operated outside the window, they would lose the delegates from that state,'' Mr. Roosevelt said. ''They could have other penalties, because the chair is empowered to go beyond that.''

Some officials have suggested they are willing to take those risks.

''For decades we have said we will bear any sanctions,'' said Raymond Buckley, the chairman of the New Hampshire Democratic Party.

Republican willingness, or lack thereof, to change dates may also be relevant in several states, including in Republican-controlled Georgia. A spokesman for Gov. Brian Kemp did not respond to a question on Friday afternoon about his reaction to the Democratic proposal. The primary date is set by Georgia's secretary of state, Brad Raffensperger, who declined to comment on the Democrats' process on Friday.

''Our focus is on the security and integrity of the election that's currently underway, and we will be looking at the entire process for possible improvements once this one is successfully complete,'' said Jordan Fuchs, the deputy secretary of state, as Georgia hosts a Senate runoff. But, she noted in a statement, ''Our legal team has continuously stated that both parties' primaries must be on the same day and must not cost anyone any delegates.''

Republicans have already agreed to their own early-state lineup of Iowa, New Hampshire, South Carolina and Nevada.

The Rules and Bylaws committee's vote came a day after Mr. Biden sent a letter to members laying out his criteria for the early-voting window. In it, he rejected caucuses -- effectively dealing a mortal blow to the troubled Iowa caucuses, which struggled for days to deliver results in 2020.

After Mr. Biden came in fourth place in Iowa and fifth in New Hampshire, two states with high percentages of white voters, he showed new signs of political life in Nevada. And it was South Carolina's primary, with large numbers of Black voters, that revived his candidacy and propelled him through Super Tuesday and to the nomination.

''Defense, education, agriculture, manufacturing -- South Carolina is a perfect laboratory,'' said Representative James E. Clyburn, the South Carolina Democrat whose endorsement of Mr. Biden in 2020 played a vital role in the president's victory in the state. ''That's why the people who do well in South Carolina end up doing pretty good in the general.''

Mr. Clyburn said that he had urged Mr. Biden to keep South Carolina in the early-state window -- ''first, second, third or fourth, didn't matter to me'' -- but that he had learned of the state's possible elevation to the kickoff primary on Thursday from the president.

Jaime Harrison, the chairman of the D.N.C., who is also from South Carolina, said he had found out at Thursday night's state dinner.

Mr. Biden has urged the Rules and Bylaws Committee to review the calendar every four years, and the committee embraced an amendment to get that process underway.

''Nevada still has the strongest argument for being the first-in-the-nation primary,'' Catherine Cortez Masto and Jacky Rosen, the state's senators, said in a joint statement. ''We will keep making our case for 2028.''

Reid J. Epstein contributed reporting from New Orleans, Lisa Lerer from New York, and Trip Gabriel from Des Moines.Reid J. Epstein contributed reporting from New Orleans, Lisa Lerer from New York, and Trip Gabriel from Des Moines.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2022/12/02/us/politics/democrats-south-carolina-primary-2024.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/12/02/us/politics/democrats-south-carolina-primary-2024.html)

**Graphic**

This article appeared in print on page A16.

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[***On Campaign Trail, Erdogan Entices His Base and Bashes His Rivals***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68B3-WPK1-DXY4-X4CP-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Length:** 1184 words

**Byline:** By Ben Hubbard and Gulsin Harman

**Body**

President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has rock star appeal at his election rallies, promising to lead Turkey to claim its rightful place as a global power if he is re-elected in a runoff on Sunday.

ISTANBUL -- His campaign addresses begin softly, drawing the audience in. A devout Muslim, President Recep Tayyip Erdogan frequently says he seeks to please not just the Turkish people, but also God. Playing to the crowds, he sings folk songs, recites lines from local poets or drapes the sash of the local soccer team over his shoulders.

He sometimes wades into the throngs of supporters for photos or greets children, who kiss his hands. Then he takes the podium to speak, dressed in a suit or a plaid sports coat.

To the cheers and whistles of hundreds of transportation workers at a campaign rally last week, he laid out why they should keep him in power in a runoff on Sunday. He boasted that he had improved the country's roads and bridges, raised wages and offered tax breaks to small businesses.

He also vowed to keep fighting forces that he deemed enemies of the nation, including gay rights activists, to make Turkey ''stronger in the world.'' And he bashed the leaders of the opposition who are seeking to unseat him, accusing them of having entered ''dark rooms to sit and bargain'' with terrorists because they won the support of Turkey's main pro-Kurdish party.

''We take refuge only in our God and we take our orders from our nation,'' the president said. The crowd roared and men leaped to their feet, chanting, ''Turkey is proud of you!''

Mr. Erdogan, 69, came out ahead in the toughest political fight of his career on May 14 -- the first round of the presidential election. Since then, he has kept a busy schedule in the run-up to final vote.

In multiple appearances a day and in speeches that sometimes last 40 minutes, he has stuck to themes that have served him well during his two decades as Turkey's leading politician. He bills himself on the campaign trail as the leader needed to shepherd a rising nation struggling to beat back multiple threats so it can claim its rightful place as a global power.

In the first round of voting, Mr. Erdogan failed to win the majority he needed for an outright victory. But with 49.5 percent of the vote, he did beat his main challenger, the opposition leader Kemal Kilicdaroglu, who got 44.9 percent.

Many analysts predict Mr. Erdogan will win on Sunday given his strong showing in the first round and his subsequent endorsement by the third-place candidate, Sinan Ogan, who received 5.2 percent of the vote and was eliminated from the race.

In grand terms, the president casts Turkey as being in a great struggle to rise in spite of forces conspiring to keep it down, and he invites voters to join him in this heroic national cause.

He vows to fight ''imperialists,'' a code word for the West that recalls the fight for independence from European powers that led to Turkey's founding 100 years ago. He warns of ''traps'' and ''plots'' against the nation, like the attempted coup against him in 2016. He speaks out against ''economic hit men'' and ''loan sharks in London,'' hinting at foreign hands behind Turkey's economic struggles. And he blasts terrorist organizations, pointing to decades of bloody battles between the government and militants from Turkey's Kurdish minority.

To tout his government's accomplishments, he lauds the infrastructure, calling out airports, tunnels and bridges by name and reminding voters how new highways have cut drive times between cities. Other oft-cited points of pride are the drones, warships and satellites produced by Turkey's growing defense industry.

Mr. Erdogan spends little time on the country's economic woes, including annual inflation that peaked above 80 percent last year and remained stubbornly high at 44 percent last month, greatly reducing the purchasing power of ordinary citizens. Nor has he hinted that in victory he would revise policies that some economists say have left the economy vulnerable to a possible currency crisis or recession.

The president particularly relishes belittling his challenger, Mr. Kilicdaroglu, who pitched himself to voters as less imperious and more in touch with the concerns of common people. Mr. Kilicdaroglu promised to strengthen Turkish democracy following years of a slide toward autocracy, and to repair relations with the West.

In nearly every speech, Mr. Erdogan dismisses his rival as incompetent and as a servant of Western powers. But his most potent line of attack has been to link the opposition, in voters' minds, with terrorism.

Turkey has fought for decades with Kurdish militants seeking autonomy from the state. Turkey, the United States and the European Union consider them terrorists. The Turkish government has also often accused the country's main pro-Kurdish party of collaborating with the militants, and many party members and leaders have been jailed or removed from elected posts in parliament or city councils.

In the run-up to the election, the pro-Kurdish party endorsed Mr. Kilicdaroglu, and Mr. Erdogan pounced, leveling terrorism accusations and even showing videos at campaign rallies that falsely showed militant leaders singing along to an opposition campaign song.

''Can any benefit come to my nation from those who are going around hand in hand with terrorists?'' Mr. Erdogan said at one rally in Hatay Province, one of the areas hardest hit by the February earthquakes that killed more than 50,000 people in southern Turkey.

For his staunchest supporters, who tend to be ***working class***, rural, religious or from smaller cities away from the coasts, Mr. Erdogan has rock star appeal.

His campaign anthems blare as his supporters crowd into stadiums to await his appearance. The orange and blue flags of his governing Justice and Development Party are often strung up overhead.

During appearances in the quake-hit region, campaign organizers flooded audiences with Turkish flags, turning otherwise drab expanses of temporary shelters into seas of red and white.

Mr. Erdogan acknowledged some criticisms that his government was initially slow to respond. Calling the quakes the ''disaster of the century,'' he spoke of a newly built hospital and his government's plans to build hundreds of thousands of homes in the area in the next year.

''With your support and your prayers, we will bring you to your new homes,'' he told supporters in Hatay.

In recent appearances, Mr. Erdogan has put his connection with voters in almost romantic terms.

''Don't forget, we are together not until Sunday, but until the grave,'' he told supporters in the central province of Sivas, where he won more than two-thirds of the vote in the first round.

Even opposition supporters acknowledge Mr. Erdogan's strong bond with his constituents.

''He has been in power for a very long time and he is very good at delivering a message,'' said Gulfem Saydan Sanver, a Turkish political consultant who has advised members of the opposition. ''Over the years, he has built trust with his voters, and they believe whatever he says.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/26/world/europe/turkey-erdogan-election.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/26/world/europe/turkey-erdogan-election.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Above, President Recep Tayyip Erdogan of Turkey campaigning in Ankara last month. Right, a campaign poster in Istanbul of the opposition leader Kemal Kilicdaroglu. The runoff election is Sunday. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY ADEM ALTAN/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE -- GETTY IMAGES

SEDAT SUNA/EPA, VIA SHUTTERSTOCK) This article appeared in print on page A12.

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[***Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez on How She’s Changed***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:692C-KSH1-DXY4-X0NV-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** Lulu Garcia-Navarro

**Highlight:** The congresswoman from New York says she’s different from when she first took office. But she’s not ready to call herself an insider.

**Body**

The congresswoman from New York says she’s different from when she first took office. But she’s not ready to call herself an insider.

Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez is used to being a lightning rod. Since her election in 2018, she has been celebrated and vilified by both parties, sometimes simultaneously. Ms. Ocasio-Cortez, though, is no longer the freshman outsider. Now in her third term, with a high-ranking position on a powerful House committee, she has learned to maneuver in Congress, making allies on the left and working with her political adversaries. She says that might make the progressive wing of her party “suspicious,” but she’s comfortable having more influence on the inside.

We recently sat down to talk about this stage of her political career, as well as immigration, social media and how she feels about finding common ground with her right-wing colleagues. This interview has been edited and condensed for length and clarity.

So, how would you describe A.O.C. at 33?

Wow, what a question. I think that perhaps some of the things that would describe me in this moment might be: evolving, learning, challenging myself, but also rooted and grounded in who I am and why I’m here.

For a lot of people, 33 is a time when they are already established in a career and making plans about the future. You use these words — evolving, but rooted — and it kind of captures that tension. So I want to explore that with you. You are in your third term now. Your job’s not new. A lot has changed since you were first elected in 2018. What is the thing that has changed the most about you since you first took office?

I think I have a sense of steadiness and confidence in what I’m doing. My election was characterized by so much upheaval, both nationally and personally. We were in a time of great political upheaval when President Trump was elected. The Democratic Party at that time was kind of lost in many ways. We were in transition between an older party and a newer one, in terms of where we were coming from ideologically.

Then also myself. I was waitressing up until — I don’t know, March? And I won my primary just a few short months later. And even coming into Washington, not just figuring out how I orient myself politically, coming from a background of direct action and activism, but then also adding on the entire profession of legislating at a federal level.

And then also the class dynamics, the gender dynamics that come from being a poor or ***working-class*** person going into an environment of extraordinary privilege. There were years of learning ahead of me.

When you say things have changed for you personally —

When I first came into office, I was unproven in a way that I think many other people may not be, right? There are a lot of people that are elected with a history of legislating. And I very much felt that I had to prove two things at the same time that were often at odds with one another.

I had to prove to the people that elected me that I am committed and very well grounded in all of the values and issues and fights — from taking on a party establishment that can be very calcified to continuing to fight for landmark progressive issues like Medicare for all, and comprehensive changes to our immigration system or criminal justice reform.

And the second was that I had to prove to this world of Washington that I was serious and skilled, and that I wasn’t just here to make a headline, but that I was here to engage in this process in a skilled and sophisticated way. That I did my homework, so to speak.

You built your brand as this political outsider, but now you’re the vice ranking member on the powerful House Oversight Committee, the No. 2 spot for Democrats on that committee. So clearly you have proved at some point that you do mean business. Do you see yourself as more of an insider now?

I don’t think so. I mean, on a certain level, once you are engaged as a legislator, you are on the inside. That is a function of the role. And that grants myself or anyone else in a similar position the tools to be able to translate this outside energy into internal change.

I’m curious if you understood in 2018, when you were first elected, that holding power and having relationships was going to be vital to how you moved the party?

When I first came in, I came into an environment that I sensed was never going to give me a chance, and into a party that was extremely hostile to my presence, extremely hostile to my existence. That’s one of the reasons I dug so powerfully into my work.

I think a lot of women and people of color — and especially women of color — have heard time and time again, “You have to work twice as hard to get half as far.” And I felt like I had to work way, way harder to not even get half as far, you know? I knew that relationships and expertise, of course, were important, but I also felt that door was closed to me at that moment. And so the best thing that I could do is just work as hard as I possibly could to get to a point where I had earned the benefit of the doubt.

One of my first hearings ever was questioning Michael Cohen, and I remember the commentary at that time was, “She’s just going to put on a show.” And I knew that I was capable of more than that. I think anyone who is used to being underestimated can relate to that experience.

I want to read you two recent headlines from New York magazine. They were written within a week of each other. The first is “[*A.O.C. Is Just a Regular Old Democrat Now*](https://nymag.com/intelligencer/2023/07/alexandria-ocasio-cortez-is-just-a-regular-old-democrat-now.html),” and that accuses you of compromising on your progressive ideals as you work within the party system. And then came the rebuttal, which was “[*The ‘A.O.C. Left’ Has Achieved Plenty,*](https://nymag.com/intelligencer/2023/07/the-aoc-left-has-achieved-plenty.html)” which argued that your wing has pushed the party leftward. Why do you think your role is still being parsed this way by Democrats and by those on the left?

Part of it is because we haven’t really had a political presence like this in the United States before. I think very often you had this consummate insider that was bankrolled by corporate money and advancing this, frankly, very neoliberal agenda. And those were the people that we were used to seeing in power. And so I think over time there’s been an inherent association between power, ascent and quote-unquote selling out.

I often say to my grass-roots companions that the left, for a very long time, was not used to having power in the United States. And so when we encounter power, we’re so bewildered by it —

Suspicious of it?

Suspicious of it — that there’s no way in this country you can accrue any kind of power without there being some Faustian compromise.

I want to ask you about an unlikely political marriage. In the spring, you teamed up with Republican Matt Gaetz of Florida, an extremely controversial right-wing member of Congress, to ban fellow Congress people from trading stocks. Are you two friends now?

I think that is a generous characterization. I’d also like to add that the Republican lead on that legislation is Brian Fitzpatrick of Pennsylvania, a moderate Republican. And you know, I think many of us worked very hard on this legislation, because it speaks to a secondary or maybe a third dimensional cleave in both parties.

In order to get elected to the House, it requires just an absolutely ridiculous sum of money and access to capital that most people do not have. And this issue of banning members of Congress from trading an individual stock, I think, speaks to the class realities. Those members who are resistant to it, as well as members who are supportive of it, speaks to a very clear class difference in the U.S. Congress and is actually an area of common interest between Republicans and Democrats that come from a similar place on that issue.

I guess what I’m asking is if you are willing, then, to work with your ideological enemies if it’s for what you consider to be the greater good?

Of course. And I think the oversight committee has opened many windows to that. There are elements of the libertarian right, or the Freedom Caucus, that oppose the level of defense contracting in the military budget. Civil rights and privacy violations are another area where I have discovered some elements of common interest. They’re very few and far between, but where we identify them, I think it’s important to burrow in on them and see what is possible.

I want to ask you about the way that you politically engage, because you’ve defined a certain style. You’re extremely effective at using social media. We are now, though, in a different moment than we were when you first ran. There’s a real backlash to social media. Has your thinking on your use of it shifted?

Well, I do think that our media environment, including our social media environment, has changed dramatically over the last five years. Elon Musk taking over Twitter has dramatically changed the media environment. You’ve had this mass exodus from the platform. It’s become much more difficult for me, myself, to use. And that I think is reflected in my presence on some of these platforms.

What would make you get off X, formerly known as Twitter?

You know, this is a conversation that I’ve had. If one monitors my use of that platform, it has fallen precipitously. I think what would constitute a formal break is something that we actively discuss — whether it would require an event or if it’s just something that may one day happen.

You have 13 million followers there, so it’s a huge audience. It’s your largest audience on social media.

Absolutely. And that’s why it’s not something to be taken lightly.

I guess what I’m curious about is, for someone like you who has integrated the use of social media so much into the way that you engage with people, and especially young people — how you see your participation in a platform like Twitter or X, and how Elon Musk has been using it. It seems antithetical to what you have said you fundamentally believe in. Your being on the platform, it could be argued, somehow supports his platform.

It’s a legitimate point. It’s something that I have absolutely struggled with. I’ve certainly pulled back on my activity on the platform due to those concerns, and I do wrestle with that.

Something that I’ve been focusing on a lot more is building audiences in alternative places. But, even now, when there are extraordinary events that happen, like natural disasters in the state of New York, I do think it’s important to be able to have access to a messaging platform that people may trust. But it’s uncomfortable. We’ve seen the media take different approaches to this — the differences between NPR or The Washington Post or whatever it may be, contending with these same questions.

You recently took a trip to Latin America with other progressive Latino colleagues. You went to Chile, Brazil and Colombia, all countries led by recently elected leftist leaders. And you spoke about how important it is to have a growing number of Latinos now in Congress who are interested in the region. But there was something else you said that struck me, and it made me wonder about this new era for you. You said, “We are here because fascist movements are global, and as a result, progressive movements also have to be global if we’re going to rise to the challenges of these times.” Do you see that as the natural progression of your work? Moving your ideas internationally, even if they might conflict with the foreign policy of the leader of your own party?

I wouldn’t necessarily characterize my foreign policy goals as oppositional to the president’s or to the United States. I am a member of Congress. I have sworn an oath to this country, and I take that oath very seriously. But I do believe that those progressive foreign policy goals do represent a departure from the inertia of our Cold War past.

Let’s say you were from a very different part of the political spectrum than I am, and you believe that we have to take this very strong, realpolitik approach, that we must be countering China in the most aggressive terms possible. Let’s say you believe all of those things. I still think that even if you were motivated by that, we would still come to similar conclusions, which is that we must reckon with our interventionist past in Latin America because it has created a trust problem among our neighbors in the Western Hemisphere.

When a country has had a history of interventionism, of supporting coups, of spying on our neighbors, why would you trust them now? And so whether you’re doing it for moral reasons or realpolitik reasons, it’s not just about it being the right thing to do. I think it’s a smart thing to do in order for us to reset and build trust and relationships with our hemispheric partners.

In the Republican debate, you had Ron DeSantis say that perhaps an invasion of Mexico might be in order to stop drug trafficking.

Such a suggestion is so reckless that it’s difficult to even capture. But the political incentive for Ron DeSantis to say something like that speaks to the lack of real attention that we pay domestically to our role as a member of this hemisphere. Part of our increased engagement in the region is not just about how we are thought of in Latin America, but also domestically, how we understand our closest neighbors.

Speaking of our closest neighbors, I want to talk about immigration. Under Biden, more asylum seekers are being held in private detention centers than under Trump. Families are still being separated. The Biden administration kept Trump-era policies that sped up deportations and made it harder for legitimate claimants to come to the U.S. So, what grade do you give the administration on immigration?

Immigration is arguably this administration’s weakest issue. This is one area where our policy is dictated by politics, arguably more so than almost any other. There are very clear recommendations and suggestions that we have made to the administration to provide relief on this issue, and it’s my belief that some of the hesitation around this has to do with a fear around just being seen as approving or providing permission structures, or really just the Republican narratives that have surrounded immigration.

We also need to examine the root causes of this migration and address that this problem doesn’t start at our border, but it starts with our foreign policy.

I mean, it doesn’t start at our border. And I know that this has been a right-wing talking point, but I do want to understand your thinking here. Why haven’t you used your considerable clout as a Latina leader to visit the border and highlight the ongoing issues there now, like you did during the Trump administration?

Well, this is something that we’re actively planning on. What I have done is tours of our New York-area facilities. Right now, this crisis is in our own backyard, and we have toured the Roosevelt Hotel, and I think it’s been very important for us to — especially to my constituents, who are demanding accountability on this — to look at that front line that is right here in New York City.

I want to get to New York, but we’re two and a half years into this administration, the crisis has been burgeoning, and you have been a self-declared and widely viewed leader on this issue.

Yes, yes. Well, I mean, again, I think that this is something that we have been working on. But when this crisis is right here in our own backyard, I have absolutely prioritized having that visitation presence. And I also think that there’s a very, very, very dangerous understanding of the frontline of our migration crisis being just our border. And if we only think of the immigration crisis as a border issue and only understand our border as a southern border and not John F. Kennedy Airport, that constitutes a lack of imagination when it comes to immigration.

But under the Trump administration, you did make the southern border an issue.

Yes. And again, I will be visiting the border.

Let me ask you this: 100,000 migrants, as you have pointed to, have come to New York City, which your district is a part of. The city estimates it will spend $5 billion on caring for new arrivals this year. Some of this crisis is because migrants are being bused to New York by certain governors, but it’s a real crisis, and a lot of New Yorkers don’t like it. Sixty-two percent of registered voters in New York City, [*one poll found*](https://www.politico.com/news/2023/08/22/new-york-voters-down-on-democrats-over-migrant-crisis-poll-finds-00112158), support relocating migrants to other parts of the state. You’ve said New Yorkers would welcome migrants, but they’re actually protesting. Have you misread your constituents’ feelings about this?

I don’t think so. I think that we’re still willing, but what we need is partnership from the federal government. And I have not been shy around criticism of how the Biden administration has handled this issue. New York City is the front line on this, and we have regularly asked the administration for many, many different avenues of relief.

I think the issue that New Yorkers have is not that there are immigrants coming to New York City, but that immigrants are being prevented from sustaining and supporting themselves. We have New Yorkers, and we have New York businesses, that want to receive migrants and want to employ migrants. And that includes across the state. We have a robust agricultural sector that wants to hire migrants — they have said this repeatedly. A hospitality sector that wants to do the same. And the Biden administration’s refusal to open up work authorizations or extend temporary protective status really prevents us from doing what we do best, which is allowing and creating an environment where immigrants from all over the world can create a livelihood here.

Don’t you think, though, that this is having an impact on the way the Democrats are viewed and their ability to argue that they’re good stewards of governance? I mean, you have the mayor of New York City, a Democrat, fighting with the governor of New York, also a Democrat, and blaming the federal government, led by a Democrat.

Well, Mayor Adams and I certainly have had our differences in the past, and perhaps present, in terms of how we handle this issue. But I do believe that this adds to the pressure. This is absolutely a message that we have communicated to the president, that we must handle this issue when it comes to work authorizations, when it comes to temporary protective status, because it is absolutely having an impact.

Would you like someone to run against Mayor Adams in 2025?

Well, I was elected in a primary election against a very established Democrat. I believe that primaries are healthy for the party. I believe that primary elections are part of what keep us a robust and accountable party. So I certainly think that an election without any choice would be something that many New Yorkers would feel kind of uncertain about.

That sounds like a yes — you’d like someone to run.

It’s important for us to have choices, and I say this as a person who has had elements of our party mount primary challenges against me, and I don’t take it personally.

Do you feel more comfortable in the Democratic Party now? The way you described it initially was fraught. They rejected you, and you were definitely trying to change the party. You have said you’ve pushed the party leftward. Many would agree. So is it OK to be a regular Democrat now?

The activist in me always seeks to agitate for more. I think despite there being progress, many people are still woefully underserved in this country. But the Democratic Party has changed dramatically in the last five years. Even if you just look at the numbers, I believe it’s something around 50 percent of House Democrats have been elected since 2018. And so what is considered center and moderate now is dramatically different than what it was five years ago.

We started this conversation talking about how you entered politics at a particular moment, and not a good one. And you acknowledged that your tenure has been tumultuous, with attacks on democracy and on your own person. Do you like your job?

I certainly think I like it a lot more than I used to.

There have been times where this work has been extremely challenging, and I didn’t know if I would survive in this position. But I see myself as having a very great responsibility, because at the end of the day, the representation of ***working-class*** people in our Congress is still extremely low. Women still only constitute 27 percent of our Congress. People of color, Latinas — there have only been, I don’t know, two to three dozen Latinas that have been elected in the history of the United States. And so I’m motivated by an extraordinary sense of responsibility, not just for representation, but to deliver on policy.

At 33 years old, first winning my election at 28 — this has taken a large degree of learning. I’m also very hard on myself, and I have to sometimes put into perspective that I am comparing myself to the skill set and performance of people 20, 30, 40 years my senior. But again, it’s something that is very important, and I maintain that one of my responsibilities is to hold the door open for those who are to come.

PHOTOS: Now in her third term, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez says that from the outset, she has worked as hard as possible to earn the benefit of the doubt. (PHOTOGRAPH BY CHIP SOMODEVILLA/GETTY IMAGES); PHOTOS (PHOTOGRAPHS BY ERIC GAY/ASSOCIATED PRESS; HAIYUN JIANG /THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A16.

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[***U.S. News Releases New Rankings for Top Law and Medical Schools, Despite a Boycott***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:680G-8Y11-JBG3-6323-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Section:** US

**Length:** 990 words

**Byline:** Anemona Hartocollis

**Highlight:** After more than a dozen elite schools decided not to participate, the publication tweaked its methodology. And the ratings looked … not that different.

**Body**

After more than a dozen elite schools decided not to participate, the publication tweaked its methodology. And the ratings looked … not that different.

U.S. News &amp; World Report issued new rankings on Tuesday for the nation’s Top 14 law schools and Top 15 medical schools, just months after many of the schools dropped out of the rankings, saying they were unreliable and unfair.

Although U.S. News said it was addressing some of the criticism with new methodology, the outcomes remained strikingly similar.

Yale Law School, which ignited the exodus [*when it dropped out in November*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/11/16/us/yale-law-school-us-news-rankings.html), kept its No. 1 status, though it is now tied with Stanford, which was previously No. 2. The University of Chicago retained its No. 3 spot, Columbia dropped to No. 8 from No. 4, tied with the University of Virginia.

In medicine, the changes were more mercurial. Johns Hopkins University was ranked first for research, rising from No. 3, supplanting Harvard, which is now third. The University of Pennsylvania was second, replacing New York University, which dropped to 13th place.

Harvard [*was the first medical school*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/01/18/us/harvard-medical-school-us-news-rankings.html) to exit the rankings, joined by schools including Columbia, Stanford, the University of Pennsylvania, [*Cornell*](http://news.weill.cornell.edu/news/2023/01/weill-cornell-medicine-statement-on-medical-school-rankings), [*Duke*](https://medschool.duke.edu/news/school-medicine-withdraws-us-news-world-report-rankings) and the [*University of Chicago*](https://pritzker.uchicago.edu/news/us-news-rankings).

Heather Gerken, dean of Yale Law, was not mollified by the new rankings.

“Yale Law School has never paid attention to the U.S. News &amp; World Report rankings, and after everything we have seen over the last year it has only cemented our decision to walk away,” she said in a statement.

The boycott eventually spread to 12 of the Top 14 law schools, all except Cornell and the University of Chicago.

Despite the march out of the rankings, universities could have a hard time making a dent in their influence. The U.S. News ratings have become something of an institution, with many students relying on them to make educational choices. Lesser known universities — outside of the marquee 14 or 15 — also rely on them as a form of advertising and recruitment.

In a recent public-relations campaign, the publication accused the schools of trying to avoid accountability on admissions and outcomes for students, and it connected the boycott to a looming Supreme Court decision [*that could end affirmative action*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/01/15/us/affirmative-action-admissions-scotus.html).

“Some law deans are already exploring ways to sidestep any restrictive ruling by reducing their emphasis on test scores and grades — criteria used in our rankings,” Eric J. Gertler, the executive chairman and chief executive of U.S. News, wrote in an [*opinion essay*](https://www.wsj.com/articles/why-elite-schools-cant-stand-us-news-law-medical-affirmative-action-ranking-diversity-transparency-supreme-court-29170776) in The Wall Street Journal.

But U.S. News also made conciliatory moves, incorporating several of the criticisms of the old system levied by both law and medical administrators. The law schools, led by Yale, said the rankings were unreliable and skewed educational priorities by devaluing the efforts of their schools to recruit poor and ***working class*** students. They also said the rankings penalized schools whose students chose to go into low-paid public service law after graduation.

The publication will provide more detail on the latest methodology when the full rankings are released next week, Kate O’Donnell, a spokeswoman, said. She said she would not comment on any of the shifts in position by particular schools but added, “There has been a significant change in the methodology that focuses on the outcomes.”

Robert Morse, chief data strategist for U.S. News, said in a public statement that the changes to the rankings “reflect the insights and input of more than 100 law school deans as well as other experts in the legal field across the country.”

Given that many of the top schools have stopped cooperating with the rankings, U.S. News had to reconsider the sources of its data, and in some cases turn to publicly available data rather than data provided by the universities themselves. In announcing the new medical school rankings, U.S. News said it had used data from statistical surveys that was submitted in 2023 — or in 2022 if later data was not available — and included “publicly available metrics from the National Institutes of Health.”

The boycott generated a great deal of soul searching and debate among universities and students about the value of the rankings. Some critics of the boycott said that while it was easy for brand-name schools like Harvard and Yale to quit cooperating with the rankings, they were a valuable tool for students applying to lesser-known or less-celebrated schools.

Peter B. Rutledge, dean of the University of Georgia law school, said his school would continue to participate in the rankings because they were a source of consumer information and actually helped gain positive recognition for his school.

In its announcement, U.S. News said it had incorporated methodological changes including a significant increase in the weight of the bar passage rate and a significant increase in the weight assigned to employment 10 months after graduation.

In a change particularly sought by the law schools, it gave full credit for full-time, long-term fellowships — including those that are school-funded — and for graduate studies.

It also reduced the emphasis on institutional reputation and on median LSAT or GRE test scores and grade point averages.

For medical schools, the changes included the addition of National Institutes of Health grant awards as a measure of research quality, as well as reducing the emphasis on institutional reputation and MCAT test scores and grade point averages.

U.S. News released only a short “preview” list of the Top 14 law schools and Top 15 medical schools on Tuesday — because, it said, those had been receiving the most attention — and said it would release a full rankings report on April 18.

PHOTO: Yale Law School was the first to announce it was no longer participating in the ratings. After standing alone at No. 1 last year, it shared the spot with Stanford. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Christopher Capozziello for The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** April 11, 2023

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[***On Erdogan Campaign Trail, Invoking God, Reciting Poetry, Bashing Foes***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:689X-D341-JBG3-63PW-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Byline:** Ben Hubbard and Gulsin Harman

**Highlight:** President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has rock star appeal at his election rallies, promising to lead Turkey to claim its rightful place as a global power if he is re-elected in a runoff on Sunday.

**Body**

President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has rock star appeal at his election rallies, promising to lead Turkey to claim its rightful place as a global power if he is re-elected in a runoff on Sunday.

ISTANBUL — His campaign addresses begin softly, drawing the audience in. A devout Muslim, President Recep Tayyip Erdogan frequently says he seeks to please not just the Turkish people, but also God. Playing to the crowds, he sings folk songs, recites lines from local poets or drapes the sash of the local soccer team over his shoulders.

He sometimes wades into the throngs of supporters for photos or greets children, who kiss his hands. Then he takes the podium to speak, dressed in a suit or a plaid sports coat.

To the cheers and whistles of hundreds of transportation workers at a campaign rally last week, he laid out why they should keep him in power in a runoff on Sunday. He boasted that he had improved the country’s roads and bridges, raised wages and offered tax breaks to small businesses.

He also vowed to keep fighting forces that he deemed enemies of the nation, including gay rights activists, to make Turkey “stronger in the world.” And he bashed the leaders of the opposition who are seeking to unseat him, accusing them of having entered “dark rooms to sit and bargain” with terrorists because they won the support of Turkey’s main pro-Kurdish party.

“We take refuge only in our God and we take our orders from our nation,” the president said. The crowd roared and men leaped to their feet, chanting, “Turkey is proud of you!”

Mr. Erdogan, 69, [*came out ahead*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/15/world/middleeast/turkey-election-polls-erdogan.html) in the toughest political fight of his career on May 14 — the first round of the presidential election. Since then, he has kept a busy schedule in the run-up to final vote.

In multiple appearances a day and in speeches that sometimes last 40 minutes, he has stuck to themes that have served him well during his two decades as Turkey’s leading politician. He bills himself on the campaign trail as the leader needed to shepherd a rising nation struggling to beat back multiple threats so it can claim its rightful place as a global power.

In the first round of voting, Mr. Erdogan failed to win the majority he needed for an outright victory. But with 49.5 percent of the vote, he did beat his main challenger, the opposition leader Kemal Kilicdaroglu, who got 44.9 percent.

Many analysts predict Mr. Erdogan will win on Sunday given his strong showing in the first round and his subsequent endorsement by the third-place candidate, [*Sinan Ogan*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/09/world/europe/turkey-election-erdogan.html), who received 5.2 percent of the vote and was eliminated from the race.

In grand terms, the president casts Turkey as being in a great struggle to rise in spite of forces conspiring to keep it down, and he invites voters to join him in this heroic national cause.

He vows to fight “imperialists,” a code word for the West that recalls the fight for independence from European powers that led to Turkey’s founding 100 years ago. He warns of “traps” and “plots” against the nation, like the attempted coup against him in 2016. He speaks out against “economic hit men” and “loan sharks in London,” hinting at foreign hands behind Turkey’s economic struggles. And he blasts terrorist organizations, pointing to decades of bloody battles between the government and militants from Turkey’s Kurdish minority.

To tout his government’s accomplishments, he lauds the infrastructure, calling out airports, tunnels and bridges by name and reminding voters how new highways have cut drive times between cities. Other oft-cited points of pride are the drones, warships and satellites produced by Turkey’s growing defense industry.

Mr. Erdogan spends little time on the country’s economic woes, including annual inflation that peaked above 80 percent last year and remained stubbornly high at 44 percent last month, greatly [*reducing the purchasing power*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/12/05/world/europe/turkey-inflation-erdogan.html) of ordinary citizens. Nor has he hinted that in victory he would revise policies that some economists say have left the economy vulnerable to a [*possible currency crisis or recession*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/23/world/middleeast/turkey-election-economy-president.html).

The president particularly relishes belittling his challenger, Mr. Kilicdaroglu, who pitched himself to voters as less imperious and more in touch with the [*concerns of common people*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/23/world/middleeast/turkey-election-economy-president.html). Mr. Kilicdaroglu promised to strengthen Turkish democracy following years of a slide toward autocracy, and to repair relations with the West.

In nearly every speech, Mr. Erdogan dismisses his rival as incompetent and as a servant of Western powers. But his most potent line of attack has been to link the opposition, in voters’ minds, with terrorism.

Turkey has fought for decades with Kurdish militants seeking autonomy from the state. Turkey, the United States and the European Union consider them terrorists. The Turkish government has also often accused the country’s main pro-Kurdish party of collaborating with the militants, and many party members and leaders have been jailed or removed from elected posts in parliament or city councils.

In the run-up to the election, the pro-Kurdish party endorsed Mr. Kilicdaroglu, and Mr. Erdogan pounced, leveling terrorism accusations and even showing videos at campaign rallies that falsely showed militant leaders singing along to an opposition campaign song.

“Can any benefit come to my nation from those who are going around hand in hand with terrorists?” Mr. Erdogan said at one rally in Hatay Province, one of the areas hardest hit by the February earthquakes that killed more than 50,000 people in southern Turkey.

For his [*staunchest supporters*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/09/world/europe/turkey-election-erdogan.html), who tend to be ***working class***, rural, religious or from smaller cities away from the coasts, Mr. Erdogan has rock star appeal.

His campaign anthems blare as his supporters crowd into stadiums to await his appearance. The orange and blue flags of his governing Justice and Development Party are often strung up overhead.

During appearances in the quake-hit region, campaign organizers flooded audiences with Turkish flags, turning otherwise drab expanses of temporary shelters into seas of red and white.

Mr. Erdogan acknowledged some criticisms that his government was initially slow to respond. Calling the quakes the “disaster of the century,” he spoke of a newly built hospital and his government’s plans to build hundreds of thousands of homes in the area in the next year.

“With your support and your prayers, we will bring you to your new homes,” he told supporters in Hatay.

In recent appearances, Mr. Erdogan has put his connection with voters in almost romantic terms.

“Don’t forget, we are together not until Sunday, but until the grave,” he told supporters in the central province of Sivas, where he won more than two-thirds of the vote in the first round.

Even opposition supporters acknowledge Mr. Erdogan’s strong bond with his constituents.

“He has been in power for a very long time and he is very good at delivering a message,” said Gulfem Saydan Sanver, a Turkish political consultant who has advised members of the opposition. “Over the years, he has built trust with his voters, and they believe whatever he says.”

PHOTOS: Above, President Recep Tayyip Erdogan of Turkey campaigning in Ankara last month. Right, a campaign poster in Istanbul of the opposition leader Kemal Kilicdaroglu. The runoff election is Sunday. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY ADEM ALTAN/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE — GETTY IMAGES; SEDAT SUNA/EPA, VIA SHUTTERSTOCK) This article appeared in print on page A12.

**Load-Date:** May 27, 2023

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[***‘Cheap as Chips’ No Longer True in U.K. as Prices Soar for a Favorite Meal***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:656G-0CJ1-JBG3-6520-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** Stephen Castle

**Highlight:** The costs for fish and chips, a ***working-class*** staple in Britain for well over a century, have rocketed as the war in Ukraine has made the main ingredients scarcer. Of 10,000 shops, 3,000 may close.

**Body**

The costs for fish and chips, a ***working-class*** staple in Britain for well over a century, have rocketed as the war in Ukraine has made the main ingredients scarcer. Of 10,000 shops, 3,000 may close.

HARTLEPOOL, England — When it opened in 2020, business was booming at Chunks, a store serving dozens of portions each day of Britain’s best known takeout meal: battered and deep-fried cod with fries, or chips as they are known here.

But even before the war in Ukraine further pushed up the shop’s bills for energy, fish and cooking oil, inflation had already forced the owners, Sayward and Michael Lewis, to raise their prices twice.

Now, with another spike in prices driving away customers, Chunks is on the brink of failing.

“We might not be able to make it to the end of the month,” said Ms. Lewis, sitting in the back of the store in Hartlepool, a port town in northeastern England where her husband, Michael, was raised.

The fighting in Ukraine is, Ms. Lewis added, “the straw that broke the camel’s back” — and not just for Chunks, but possibly for thousands of other fish-and-chips shops up and down the country.

The war, which has devastated cities in Ukraine and killed thousands, has in Britain piled more pressure on a sector that was already struggling with pandemic-related inflation. Costs of gas and electricity have surged. The price of cod has risen after countries announced plans to ban or penalize Russian fish imports, making North Sea supplies scarcer and pricier.

Ukraine and Russia are large producers of sunflower oil, used by many fish-and-chips shops, and that is running out. And even potatoes are destined to become more expensive, as rising gas prices push up the cost of fertilizer.

“My industry is directly affected by the Ukraine issue because all our four main ingredients are directly affected, and we use a lot of them,” said Andrew Crook, the president of the National Federation of Fish Friers, referring to fish, oil, flour (for batter) and potatoes.

As a result, Britain stands to lose perhaps as many as 3,000 of its approximately 10,000 fish-and-chips shops, according to Mr. Crook, who describes the situation as the industry’s biggest crisis since such stores first opened in the 1860s.

More than 150 years later, at least one store — or “chippy” — is to be found in most towns of any size, churning out an inexpensive takeout meal that inspired the British idiom “cheap as chips.”

Not any more.

To add to the gloom, and higher prices, the government recently ended a reduced rate of sales tax on takeout food that it had applied as a pandemic measure.

When the Lewises opened Chunks, they assumed a fish-and-chips business was a safe bet. After all, it was a product deemed so important to morale that it was never rationed during World War II — a culinary combination referred to by Winston Churchill as the “good companions.”

But as inflation squeezes their incomes, some of their customers have reacted to the increased prices with anger or even abuse, while others have stayed away. Costs have even risen for preparing mushy peas, a gooey green side dish. After the last price hike, sales at Chunks fell by 1,000 pounds, or about $1,300, in a week.

“I feel as though the things that are happening externally are now going to stop us because it’s out of our control: The only thing we can do is to raise prices but people won’t pay,” said Mr. Lewis, who went back to his old job as an electrical inspector to keep money coming in.

A short drive away, things are even worse for Peter Weegram, who, after a quarter-century, recently closed his store and laid off two workers.

Mr. Weegram said he felt sick when he shuttered his shop, The Chippy, concluding that he could no longer make a living. He still hopes that fish prices will fall enough for him to reopen.

“I’m climbing up the walls now — I’ve never been unemployed in my life,” he said at his empty shop.

Within two weeks, the cost for boxes of cod he bought increased to £185 from £141, while his gas and electricity bill almost doubled, meaning he would have had to raise his prices for a single serving to about £9 from £5.60 just to break even.

“People around here wouldn’t have paid it,” he said, adding that fish and chips “used to be a cheap meal and now it will end up as a luxury.”

A few miles south, in the seaside town of Redcar, Nicola Atkinson is determined that her store, Seabreeze, will survive, but she is also feeling the pinch.

“I’ve been doing this for 25 years — I have never seen anything like it,” she said as she explained how she had raised prices for the fourth time since the beginning of last year.

“How do you keep explaining that to customers?” she asked. “People don’t have the disposable income, so what are they going to do? Are they going to come less? We can’t afford not to put the prices up because we would be running at a loss, and then we would not be here for tomorrow. But there is a cap on what people can afford to spend.”

Some customers in England’s northeast still think fish and chips is worth the higher price.

“It’s a British staple,” said El Jepson, a nail technician who frequents Chunks. “Who doesn’t eat fish and chips?”

But in Redcar, David Bell was less sanguine. “Two pounds fifty for a bag of chips? You could buy a sack of potatoes for that.”

A staple of ***working-class*** life across their long history, fish-and-chips shops are expected to be cheap but must compete with chains whose primary offerings — burgers, fried chicken and pizza — are typically less costly than fish.

“Prices are already at a record high, they’re going up between 5 and 10 percent each week,” said Mr. Crook, of the federation of fish friers. Britain buys relatively few fish from Russia — and has threatened to add significant tariffs on those — but Mr. Crook said that a United States ban on Russian fish imports had increased competition for supplies from Iceland and Norway, which fish-and-chip shops rely on.

Mr. Crook runs a chippy in Euxton in Lancashire where his last supplies of Ukrainian sunflower oil are stacked in the front. When that runs out, he might opt for palm oil, but other food producers are also seeking supplies, sending prices up.

While Mr. Crook is confident he can survive financially, he is certain many other store owners will not. And he said Britain would lose more than takeout meals if thousands of neighborhood chippies disappeared.

“There’s a bit of theater in a fish-and-chip shop, it’s bit like being behind a bar,” Mr. Crook said. “I’ve got customers that just come in for the banter and, for some of the older people, we might be the only people they speak to all day.”

He added, “It’s something special, it’s part of the culture of the nation.”

PHOTOS: Peter Weegram had to close the fish and chip shop he ran in Hartlepool, England, for 25 years after food and energy prices spiked.; The owner of Seabreeze, a restaurant in Redcar, England, had to raise prices on the menu four times since the beginning of 2021.; “It’s a British staple,” said El Jepson, right, in Hartlepool. Winston Churchill referred to fish and chips as “good companions.” (PHOTOGRAPHS BY ANDREW TESTA FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

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[***Longer Commutes, Shorter Lives: The Costs of Not Investing in America***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69DM-6N01-DXY4-X0N0-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Body**

Every morning in 21st-century America, thousands of people wake up and prepare to take a cross-country trip. Some are traveling for business. Others are visiting family or going on vacations. Whether they are leaving from New York or Los Angeles, Atlanta or Seattle, their trips have a lot in common.

They leave their homes several hours before their plane is scheduled to depart. Many sit in traffic on their way to the airport. Once they arrive, they park their cars and make their way through the terminal, waiting in a security line, taking off their shoes, removing laptops and liquids from their bags. When they finally get to the gate, they often wait again because their flight is delayed. The flight itself typically lasts about six hours heading west, and the travelers then need to find ground transportation to their destination. Door to door, cross-country journeys often last 10 or even 12 hours.

In the sweep of human history, these trips remain a marvel of ingenuity. For centuries, long-distance travel required weeks or months and could be dangerous. Today, somebody can eat breakfast on one end of the continental United States and dinner on the other. If you narrow the focus to recent decades, however, you will notice another striking fact about these trips: Almost none of the progress has occurred in the past half-century. A cross-country trip today typically takes more time than it did in the 1970s. The same is true of many trips within a region or a metropolitan area.

Compare this stagnation with the progress of the previous century. The first transcontinental railroad was completed in 1869, and passenger trains ran on its route days later, revolutionizing a journey that had taken months. People could suddenly cross the country in a week. Next came commercial flight. In the 1930s, an airplane could beat a train across the country by hopscotching from city to city. Finally, the jet age arrived: The first regularly scheduled nonstop transcontinental flight occurred on Jan. 25, 1959, from Los Angeles to New York, on a new long-range Boeing jet, the 707.

The poet Carl Sandburg was among the passengers on the return American Airlines flight that first day. “You look out of the window at the waves of dark and light clouds looking like ocean shorelines,” [*he wrote about the trip*](https://www.nytimes.com/2009/01/26/nyregion/26american.html), “and you feel as if you are floating away in this pleasantly moving room, like the basket hanging from the balloon you saw with a visiting circus when you were a boy.” Sandburg was born in 1878, when crossing the country took almost a week. His cross-country flight took five and a half hours.

In the more than 60 years since then, there has been no progress. Instead, the scheduled flight time between Los Angeles and New York has become about 30 minutes longer. Aviation technology has not advanced in ways that speed the trip, and the skies have become so crowded that pilots reroute planes to avoid traffic. Nearly every other part of a cross-country trip, in airports and on local roads, also lasts longer. All told, a trip across the United States can take a few more hours today than in the 1970s.

The speed at which people can get from one place to another is one of the most basic measures of a society’s sophistication. It affects economic productivity and human happiness; academic research has found that commuting makes people more unhappy than almost any other daily activity. Yet in one area of U.S. travel after another, progress has largely stopped over the past half-century.

In 1969, [*Metroliner trains*](https://www.nytimes.com/1969/07/16/archives/after-6-months-metroliner-seems-to-be-way-to-run-a-railroad.html) made two-and-a-half-hour nonstop trips between Washington and New York. Today, there are no nonstop trains on that route, and the fastest trip, on Acela trains, takes about 20 minutes longer than the Metroliner once did. Commuter railroads and subway lines in many places have also failed to become faster. When I ride the New York City subway, I don’t go from Point A to Point B much faster than my grandparents did in the 1940s. For drivers — a majority of American travelers — trip times have increased, because traffic has worsened. In the California metropolitan area that includes Silicon Valley, a typical rush-hour drive that would have taken 45 minutes in the early 1980s took nearly 60 minutes by 2019.

The lack of recent progress is not a result of any physical or technological limits. In other parts of the world, travel has continued to accelerate. Japan, China, South Korea and countries in Europe have built [*high-speed train lines*](https://www.nytimes.com/2014/08/29/upshot/fifty-years-ago-and-today-japan-blazes-trails-with-trains.html) that have tangibly improved daily life. Because the United States is less densely populated, high-speed trains would not work in much of this country. But they could transform travel in California, the Northeast and a few other regions — and it is not as if this country has been improving its highways and airline network instead of its rail system. All have languished.

Why has this happened? A central reason is that the United States, for all that we spend as a nation on transportation, has stopped meaningfully investing in it. Investment, in simple terms, involves using today’s resources to make life better in the long term. For a family, investment can involve saving money over many years to afford a home purchase or a child’s college education. For a society, it can mean raising taxes or cutting other forms of spending to build roads, train lines, science laboratories or schools that might take decades to prove their usefulness. Historically, the most successful economic growth strategy has revolved around investment. It was true in ancient Rome, with its roads and aqueducts, and in 19th-century Britain, with its railroads. During the 20th century, it was true in the United States as well as Japan and Europe.

Investments are certainly not guaranteed to pay off: Just as families sometimes buy houses that decline in value, governments sometimes waste taxpayer dollars on programs that accomplish little. Still, successful people and societies have always understood that these risks are unavoidable. Failing to invest enough resources in the future tends to be the bigger mistake.

Investment is not simply a synonym for a bigger government. For decades, liberals and conservatives have been arguing over the size of government. Liberals prefer that the public sector play a larger role, and conservatives prefer a smaller one, in one realm after another: health care, retirement, environmental protection, business regulation and more. Investment has often been swept up in that debate. Some of the steepest declines in government spending on research and development — a crucial form of investment — occurred after Ronald Reagan won the presidency in 1980 with a message that less government was the solution to the country’s economic troubles. Government investment has never recovered. In recent years, federal spending on research and development has been less than half as large, relative to the size of the economy, as it was in the mid-1960s.

In truth, investment is consistent with both a conservative and a liberal economic philosophy, as American leaders dating to Alexander Hamilton and Thomas Jefferson have recognized. Conservatives believe that the government should do the minimum necessary to create a flourishing society, and investment passes both tests: minimum and necessary. It passes the “minimum” test because many investments are surprisingly inexpensive compared with social insurance programs or the military. Last year, Social Security cost six times as much money as federal R.&amp;D., and spending on the military and veterans was five times as large as R.&amp;D. spending. Investment also passes the “necessary” test — because the private sector tends to do less of it than a healthy economy needs.

Investments are expensive for a private company, and only a fraction of the returns typically flows to the original investors and inventors. Despite patents, other people find ways to mimic the invention. Often, these imitators build on the original in ways that are perfectly legal but would not have been possible without the initial breakthrough. Johannes Gutenberg did not get rich from inventing the printing press, and neither did Tim Berners-Lee from creating the World Wide Web in 1989.

The earliest stages of scientific research are difficult for the private sector to support. In these stages, the commercial possibilities are often unclear. An automobile company, for example, will struggle to justify spending money on basic engineering research that may end up being useful only to an aerospace company. Yet such basic scientific research can bring enormous benefits for a society. It can allow people to live longer and better lives and can lay the groundwork for unforeseen commercial applications that are indeed profitable. A well-functioning capitalist economy depends on large investments in research that the free market, on its own, usually will not make. The most obvious recent example was the crash program to create a Covid-19 vaccine.

During the laissez-faire years leading up to the Great Depression, the United States invested relatively little money in scientific research, and the country fell behind. Europe dominated the Nobel Prizes during this period, and European countries, including Nazi Germany, began World War II with a technological advantage over the United States. The scariest evidence could be seen in the North Atlantic Ocean and Gulf of Mexico, where German U-boats sank more than 200 ships — sometimes visible from U.S. soil — early in the war and killed 5,000 Americans. Recognizing the threat from this technological gap, a small group of American scientists and government officials began an urgent effort to persuade Franklin Roosevelt to support an investment program larger than anything before. The result, called the National Defense Research Committee, funded research into radar, sonar, planes, ships, vehicles and guns. It included a race to develop an atomic bomb before the Nazis did.

That effort arguably won World War II. American factories learned how to build a ship in less than three weeks, down from eight months at the war’s start. “We were never able to build a tank as good as the German tank,” Lucius Clay, an American general, said. “But we made so many of them that it didn’t really matter.”

Clay’s boss, the American military officer overseeing this productive effort, was Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower. He and the people around him absorbed the lesson about the awesome power of American investment. After becoming president in 1953, Eisenhower recognized that if government did not make vital investments, nobody would. “The principal contradiction in the whole system comes about because of the inability of men to forgo immediate gain for a longtime good,” he once wrote. “We do not yet have a sufficient number of people who are ready to make the immediate sacrifice in favor of a long-term investment.”

The Eisenhower investment boom has no peer in U.S. history, at least not outside a major war. Its best-known achievement, [*the Interstate System,*](https://www.richmondfed.org/publications/research/econ_focus/2021/q2-3/economic_history) allowed people and goods to move around the country much more quickly than before. That highway system was one example among many. The Cold War — especially after the 1957 launch of Sputnik raised fears that the Soviet Union had become scientifically dominant — offered a rationale. As a share of the country’s total economic output, federal spending on research and development roughly tripled between the early 1950s and early 1960s. This measure did not even capture highway construction and some other programs.

Eisenhower’s agenda demonstrated the relative affordability of government investment. He had run for president as a conservative promising to rein in the excesses of the Democratic Party’s 20-year hold on the White House. And he did restrain some forms of federal spending, balancing the budget for parts of his presidency. Still, the federal government was easily able to afford a much larger investment budget. Eisenhower was able to be both a fiscal conservative and the president who nearly tripled R.&amp;D. spending.

It is worth pausing to reflect on how many global industries were dominated by American companies by the late 20th century. It happened in aviation (Boeing, American, United and Delta) and automobiles (General Motors, Ford and, later, Tesla), as well as energy (Exxon and Chevron), telecommunications (AT&amp;T and Verizon) and pharmaceuticals (Pfizer, Johnson &amp; Johnson, Eli Lilly and Merck). The United States built the world’s best system of higher education, with its universities occupying more than half of the top spots in various rankings of top research institutions. American citizens dominated the scientific Nobel Prizes too.

None of this was inevitable. While there were multiple causes — including the country’s large consumer market and a vibrant private sector shaped by a national ethos that celebrates risk-taking — the postwar investment boom was vital. That boom fit the historical pattern of successful government investments. First, the government paid for basic scientific research that the private sector was not conducting. Then the government helped create an early market for new products by buying them. Boeing, for example, got its start during World War I selling planes to the Navy. Later, the government paid for research that facilitated jet-airline technology and, by extension, the Boeing 707, the plane that launched transcontinental jet travel.

One of the clearest case studies is the computer industry, the same industry that would become known for a cadre of libertarian-leaning executives who dismissed the importance of government. In reality, American dominance in the digital economy would not exist without decades of generous government investment, partly because the private sector failed to see its potential in the industry’s early days.

In the 1930s, a Harvard physics graduate student named Howard Aiken designed one of the world’s first computers, nicknamed the Mark, with help from IBM engineers. But IBM’s top executives, then focused on a mundane punch-card system that helped other companies keep track of their operations, were so unimpressed that they allowed Aiken to take the computer to a laboratory at Harvard University. During World War II, the U.S. Navy took over the lab. The Mark — 51 feet long and eight feet tall, weighing nearly five tons and with 750,000 parts, including visible gears, chains and an electric motor — helped the military perform complex calculations to make weapons more efficient. The New York Times described the computer as [*the Algebra Machine,*](https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1944/08/07/83987824.html?pageNumber=17) and a Boston newspaper called it the Robot Brain. The military came to rely on it so heavily that the lab operated 24 hours a day. The lab had a phone connected directly to the Navy’s Bureau of Ordnance in Washington so the officers could demand immediate solutions to their most pressing problems.

“We used to shake every time that darn thing rang,” recalled Grace Hopper, a former math professor at Vassar College who worked in the lab as a Navy officer and would become a pioneering computer scientist. “The pressure was terrific.” At one point, the mathematician John von Neumann arrived at the lab bearing a long set of complex problems. He did not say why he needed them solved. After he and the team there solved them, von Neumann left to continue secretly working on the atomic-bomb project.

Despite the role that computers played in winning the war, most of corporate America still did not recognize their importance afterward. Into the 1950s, IBM executives — focused on their lucrative punch-card business — remained wary of investing in the development of any large new computer. “It didn’t move me at all,” Thomas Watson Jr., IBM’s chairman, wrote in 1990. “I couldn’t see this gigantic, costly, unreliable device as a piece of business equipment.”

Watson and other executives were not ignorant or uncreative. They were among the most successful businesspeople in the country. Their failure was structural, stemming from the resources at their disposal and the financial incentives that constrained them. Only one organization had enough money and a sufficient long-term horizon to bankroll the creation of the computer industry: the federal government.

It could afford the inevitable setbacks that basic research involved. The federal government could insist that researchers build on one another’s ideas, rather than working in separate laboratories, unaware of related breakthroughs. The government could patiently finance research that was making progress but not yet ready for commercial applications. As soon as an invention was shown to be useful to the largest organization in the country — the military — the federal government could guarantee huge amounts of revenue through military contracts. As late as 1959, federal agencies financed about 85 percent of the country’s electronics research.

The military even made possible IBM’s belated entrance into computing: After its top executives realized their company would otherwise fade, they made it their top priority to win a bidding competition to create the computers needed for a network of radar stations across Alaska and Canada that would watch for a Soviet attack. Watson would later say that the contract was a watershed for the company.

Without a doubt, government officials make plenty of mistakes when choosing which projects to fund. They misjudge an idea’s potential or allow political considerations to influence decisions. Some of these mistakes turn into symbols of government’s supposed fecklessness, like Solyndra, a doomed clean-energy company that the Obama administration funded. Yet these failures tend to be cheap relative to the size of the federal budget, at least in the United States. (The risks of overinvestment are more serious in an authoritarian system like the old Soviet Union or contemporary China.) Even more important, a few big investment successes can produce returns, in economic growth and the resulting tax revenue, that cover the costs for dozens of failures. IBM and Google can pay for a lot of Solyndras.

Just as important, government can reduce its involvement as an industry matures and allow the market system to take over. After the government creates the initial demand for a new product, the sprawling private sector — with its reliance on market feedback and the wisdom of crowds — often does a better job allocating resources than any bureaucratic agency. When a company makes a better version of a product, it gains market share. The incentives for selling goods that improve people’s lives can be enormous. Market capitalism may not do an adequate job of subsidizing basic scientific research, but it is very efficient at spreading the eventual fruits of that research. Government-funded research led to the development of penicillin, cortisone, chemotherapy, vaccines and cardiac treatments, which the private sector then produced and distributed. In transportation, the government built the air-traffic and Interstate-highway systems, which private companies used. Government funding helped develop the satellite, the jet engine, the snowmobile and the microwave oven.

By the end of the 1960s, the United States had become the most broadly prosperous country the world had ever known. Incomes had risen markedly for rich, middle class and poor alike — and more for the poor and middle class than the rich. The [*Black-white wage gap*](https://eml.berkeley.edu/~webfac/card/Bayer-Charles-Divergent-Paths.pdf) fell markedly during these decades, even in the presence of virulent racism. Americans had faith during these years that the future could be better than the past, and they forged that future.

Not every form of investment is as tangible as a highway or computer. Education also fits the definition of a program that requires spending money today mostly to improve the quality of life tomorrow. In the middle of the 20th century, education was the investment that turbocharged many other investments.

Even before the Eisenhower investment boom, the United States took a relatively inclusive approach to education. Several of the country’s founders believed that the success of their new democracy depended on an educated citizenry. The Massachusetts Constitution, which John Adams drafted, called for “spreading the opportunities and advantages of education.” The country obviously did not come close to achieving these ideals. It generally denied formal education to Black Americans, and many schools excluded girls. White boys from modest backgrounds often began working at young ages. But the early United States was nonetheless ahead of many other countries in the breadth of its grade schools. By the middle of the 19th century, the American population had surpassed Germany’s as the world’s most widely educated.

When parts of Europe began to catch up, the United States raced ahead again, opening public high schools in the early 1900s. Britain did not enact a law making it possible for many low-income students to attend high school until 1944. That same year, the United States Congress passed the G.I. Bill of Rights, and the postwar investment boom helped make good on the bill’s promise by increasing spending on both K-12 schools and universities.

Education has always had its skeptics. Europe was slow to educate its masses because its leaders believed that doing so was a waste of resources: They didn’t see why the ***working class*** needed to read literature, study history and learn mathematics. In the United States today, many people still believe that only a narrow subset of the population benefits from college — that its benefits are overrated and that most Americans would be better off pursuing immediate employment. And different people are indeed best served by different kinds of education. Education is also not a cure-all for the American economy. Tax rates, antitrust policy, workers’ bargaining power and many other areas matter enormously.

But downplaying the importance of education is a mistake, a mistake that the United States avoided during much of its rise to global pre-eminence. Relative to its economic rivals, the country could call on more college graduates to fill its professional ranks and more high-school graduates to fill its blue-collar ranks. IBM, Boeing, Pfizer, General Motors and other leading companies benefited from government investments in both basic science and in mass schooling. As Claudia Goldin (the latest Nobel laureate in economics) and Lawrence Katz have argued, the 20th century was the American century in large part because it was the [*human-capital century.*](https://www.hup.harvard.edu/catalog.php?isbn=9780674035300) Education — knowledge — can help people live better by allowing them to learn from past errors and make new discoveries. It can help companies and workers accomplish tasks more effectively and produce goods that other people want to buy.

The evidence is everywhere. Today, high school graduates earn more and are less likely to be out of work than people without a high school diploma, as has been the case for more than a century. College graduates earn more yet. Not only does mass education increase the size of the economic pie; it also evens out the distribution. The spread of American high schools and then colleges meant that graduates were no longer an elite group. The wage premium that they earned was spread among a larger group of workers.

The benefits extend far beyond economic measures. [*Life expectancy for Americans without a college degree*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/10/03/opinion/life-expectancy-college-degree.html) has fallen to its lowest level since at least the early 1990s, the scholars Anne Case and Angus Deaton have shown, while it is only slightly below its pre-Covid peak for college graduates. In 2021, the average American with a bachelor’s degree could expect to live eight years longer than somebody without one. More-educated Americans also report being more satisfied with their lives. They are less likely to suffer from chronic pain or to abuse alcohol and drugs. They are more likely to be married and to live with their young children.

Yes, the relationship between education and well-being is partly correlation rather than causation. Talented, hardworking people are more likely to finish school partly because of those characteristics, and they might have thrived even if they dropped out. But academic research has found that much of the relationship is causal. A clever study in Florida compared students whose grades and scores barely earned them admission to a public four-year college with students who just missed the cutoff; those students who were admitted fared significantly better in later life.

Although the rest of the world was slow to do so, it eventually came to recognize the benefits of the American approach to mass education and to copy it. In the 1970s, educational attainment began to surge in Europe and Asia. Political leaders effectively acknowledged that their elitist approach to education had been wrong. They understood that the amount of education that people need to thrive tends to rise over the course of history. The economy becomes more complex, thanks to technological change, and citizens need new knowledge and skills to take advantage of that technology, or else their labor will be replaced by it. When you think about education in these terms, you start to realize that the appropriate amount of schooling for a typical citizen changes over time. If 13 years — kindergarten through 12th grade — made sense a century ago, it surely is not enough today.

The chaos of the 1960s and 1970s helped end the era of great American investment. Crime rose rapidly during those decades. The country fought a losing war in Vietnam. Political leaders were murdered. A president resigned in scandal. And the economy seemed to break down, with both unemployment and inflation soaring. The causes were complex — including wars in the Middle East that upended global energy markets — but Americans understandably came to question their own government’s competence.

In their frustration, many embraced a diagnosis that a group of conservative intellectuals had been offering for decades, mostly without winning converts. It held that the post-New Deal United States had put too much faith in government regulation and not enough in the power of the market to allocate resources efficiently. These intellectuals included Milton Friedman and Robert Bork, while the politician who successfully sold their vision was Reagan. The new consensus has become known as neoliberalism, a word that in recent years has turned into a catchall epithet to describe the views of moderate Democrats and conservatives. But the word is nonetheless meaningful. The neoliberal revolution in economic policy changed the country’s trajectory. After 1980, regulators allowed companies to grow much larger, often through mergers. The government became hostile to labor unions. Tax rates on the affluent plummeted. And Washington pulled back from the major investments it had been making.

Federal spending on research and development, which had already come down from its post-Eisenhower high, declined in the 1980s and 1990s. In recent years, it has accounted for less than half as large a share of G.D.P. as it did 60 years ago. The country’s roads, bridges, rail networks and air-traffic system have all atrophied — hence the lengthening of travel times. The share of national income devoted to government spending on education stopped rising in the 1970s and has remained stagnant since. Less selective colleges, which tend to educate ***working-class*** students, tend to be [*especially lacking in resources.*](https://www.insidehighered.com/quicktakes/2019/04/25/report-community-colleges-are-significantly-underfunded) Other countries, meanwhile, have passed by the United States. Every American generation born between the late 1800s and mid-1900s was the most educated in the world. Americans under age 50 no longer hold this distinction. The lack of progress among American men has been especially stark. Men’s wages, not coincidentally, have risen extremely slowly in recent decades.

The stagnation of investment does not stem only from the size of government. It also reflects the priorities of modern government, as set by both Republicans and Democrats. The federal government has grown — but not the parts oriented toward the future and economic growth. Spending has surged on health care, Social Security, antipoverty programs, police and prisons. (Military spending has declined as a share of G.D.P. in recent decades.) All these programs are important. A decent society needs to care for its vulnerable and prevent disorder. But the United States has effectively starved programs focused on the future at the expense of those focused on the present. The country spent about twice as much per capita on the elderly as on children in recent years, according to the Urban Institute. Even the affluent elderly can receive more government help than impoverished children.

These choices help explain why the United States has fallen behind other countries in educational attainment, why our child-poverty rate is so high, why it takes longer to cross the country than it once did. As Eugene Steuerle, an economist with a long career in Washington, has said, “We have a budget for a declining nation.”

Americans have come to believe that the country is, in fact, declining. Less than 25 percent of Americans say that the economy is in good or excellent condition today. Whether the economy has been growing or shrinking during the 21st century, whether a Democrat or Republican has been in the White House, most Americans have usually rated the economy as weak.

Pundits and politicians — who tend to be affluent — sometimes express befuddlement about this pessimism, but it accurately reflects reality for most Americans. For decades, [*incomes and wealth have grown more slowly than the economy*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/02/24/opinion/income-inequality-upper-middle-class.html) for every group other than the very rich. Net worth for the typical family shrank during the first two decades of the 21st century, after adjusting for inflation. The trends in many noneconomic measures of well-being are even worse: In 1980, life expectancy in the United States was typical for an industrialized country. American life expectancy now is lower than in any other high-income country — including Canada, Japan, South Korea, Australia, Britain, France, Germany, Italy and even less-wealthy European countries like Slovenia and Greece.

This great American stagnation has many causes, but the withering of investment is a major one. The economists and other experts who advise politicians have increasingly come to this conclusion, which explains why President Biden has made investment the centerpiece of his economic strategy — even if that isn’t always obvious to outsiders. He has signed legislation authorizing hundreds of billions of dollars to rebuild the transportation system, subsidize semiconductor manufacturing and expand clean energy. These are precisely the kinds of programs the private sector tends not to do on its own. All told, Biden has overseen the largest increase in federal investment since the Eisenhower era. Notably, the infrastructure and semiconductor bill both passed with bipartisan support, a sign that parts of the Republican Party are coming to question the neoliberal consensus. As was the case during the 1950s, the threat from a foreign rival — China, this time — is focusing some policymakers on the value of government investment.

There is plenty of reason to doubt that the country has reached a true turning point. Biden’s investment program remains much smaller in scale than Eisenhower’s, relative to the size of the economy. Many Republicans continue to oppose government investment, as the recent chaos in the House of Representatives indicates. It is possible that we are now living through a short exception to the country’s long investment slump.

Whatever happens, the stakes should be clear by now. A government that does not devote sufficient resources to the future will produce a society that is ultimately less prosperous, less innovative, less healthy and less mobile than it could be. The citizens of such a society will grow frustrated, and with good reason.

This article is adapted from the book [*“Ours Was the Shining Future,”*](https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/217260/ours-was-the-shining-future-by-david-leonhardt/) which will be published on Oct. 24 by Penguin Random House.

Opening illustration: Source photographs from Underwood Archives/Getty Images; Bettmann/Getty Images; iStock/Getty Images; Gamma-Keystone, via Getty Images; Encyclopedia Britannica/Getty Images; Pictorial Parade/Getty Images.

PHOTOS: PHOTOS (PHOTOGRAPHS BY CHANTAL JAHCHAN; UNERWOOD ARCHIVES/GETTY IMAGES; BETTMANN/GETTY IMAGES; LOUISE MARTIN; ART STUDIOS/JOHN B. COLEMAN LIBRARY, PRAIRIE VIEW A&amp;M UNIVERSITY, VIA GETTY IMAGES; ISTOCK/GETTY IMAGES; ULLSTEIN BILD, VIA GETTY IMAGES; GAMMA-KEYSTONE, VIA GETTY IMAGES; ENCYCLOPAEDIA BRITANNICA/GETTY IMAGES; PICTORIAL PARADE/GETTY IMAGES) (MM26-MM27); The lounge on a Pan Am Boeing 707, the first jetliner model to make regular nonstop flights across the United States. (PHOTOGRAPH BY PICTORIAL PARADE/ARCHIVE PHOTOS/GETTY IMAGES) (MM29); Construction underway on the Golden Gate Bridge, a four-year, $34 million project, in 1936. (PHOTOGRAPH BY PETER STACKPOLE/THE LIFE PICTURE COLLECTION/SHUTTERSTOCK) (MM30-MM31); The Mark, an early computer relied upon by the U.S. Navy during World War II, in its laboratory at Harvard University in 1944. (PHOTOGRAPH BY PHOTOQUEST/GETTY IMAGES) (MM32-MM33); First graders in a new elementary school in Munster, Ind., in 1950. (PHOTOGRAPH BY BETTMANN/GETTY IMAGES) (MM34) This article appeared in print on page MM26, MM27, MM28, MM29, MM30, MM31, MM32, MM33, MM34, MM35.

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[***As the Peso Plunges, Argentines Go Out to Feast***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68H1-B271-DXY4-X051-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

June 19, 2023 Monday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; Foreign Desk; Pg. 1

**Length:** 1247 words

**Byline:** By Natalie Alcoba and Sarah Pabst

**Body**

Wine glasses clinked in an Art Nouveau culinary gem basking in its restored splendor. It was tasting night in the more than century-old coffeehouse turned restaurant at the old Buenos Aires zoo, as beet tartare, pan-seared squid and a perfect rib-eye floated out of the kitchen, chased by a velvety chocolate mousse.

''As you can see, we are betting hard on the opportunity of the food scene in Argentina,'' said Pedro Díaz Flores, on a tour of the restaurant, Águila Pabellon, that he co-owns -- the 17th food venture he has opened in Buenos Aires in the past 18 months.

In Buenos Aires, Argentina's cosmopolitan capital, a world-class culinary scene is flourishing. That would not necessarily be news if it were not for the fact that Argentina is in the middle of an extraordinary financial crisis.

Inflation is at more than 114 percent -- the fourth highest rate in the world -- and the street value of the Argentine peso has crumbled, dropping about 25 percent over a three-week period in April.

Yet it is the peso's downfall that is fueling the restaurant industry's upswing. Argentines are eager to get rid of the currency as quickly as they can, and that means the middle and upper classes are going out to eat more often -- and that restaurateurs and chefs are plunging their revenues back into new restaurants.

''Crises are opportunities,'' said Jorge Ferrari, a longtime restaurant owner who recently reopened a historic German eatery that had shut down during the pandemic. ''There are people who buy cryptocurrencies. There are people who go toward other sorts of capital markets. This is what I know how to do.''

The boom, in a way, is a facade. Everyone appears to be out having a good time. Yet, in much of the country, Argentines are scraping by and hunger is on the rise.

And in wealthier circles, the rush to go out is a symptom of a shrinking middle class that, no longer able to afford bigger purchases or travel, is choosing to live in the here and now because people do not know what tomorrow will bring -- or if their money will be worth anything.

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The city of Buenos Aires, which has been trying to promote its culinary scene, has been tracking the volume of plates sold at a sample of restaurants each month since 2015. The most recent numbers, for April, show that restaurant attendance is at one of its highest levels since tracking began, and 20 percent higher than at its highest point in 2019, before the coronavirus pandemic began.

It is not just venerable hot spots that are thriving. In Buenos Aires, under-the-radar residential zones have suddenly become destinations for foodie influencers, which then quickly leads to new crowds of porteños, as residents of the capital city are known.

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While the devaluing currency has also drawn tourists back to Buenos Aires as the pandemic has ebbed, it is the locals who are out in full force.

The restaurant boom is a phenomenon that cuts across classes, said Santiago Manoukian, an economist at a Buenos Aires consulting firm, Ecolatina, though it is largely driven by middle- and upper-income earners, many of whom have had their earnings keep up with inflation, but have still had to adjust to the crisis.

For members of the middle class in particular, expenditures like a vacation or a car have become largely out of reach, so they are indulging in other ways.

But even lower-income gig workers, who saw their earnings shrink by 35 percent since 2017, according to data gathered by Ecolatina, are dining out before their money devalues even more, Mr. Manoukian said.

''It's a product of the distortions that the Argentine economy suffers from,'' he said. ''You have extra pesos that are going up in smoke because of inflation, and you have to do something because you know the worst thing you can do is nothing.''

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Mariano Vilches and Natalia Vela, a married couple who found themselves amid hordes of people at a Sunday afternoon French food fair, came to a similar conclusion about enjoying life as much as they can despite the economic hardships.

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As a result, places like Miramar, in the ***working-class*** neighborhood of San Cristóbal, have remained packed at lunch and dinner. The iconic eatery, with salami dangling at the entrance and pictures of tango lyricists framed on the wall, has seen its share of financial crises since its doors first opened in 1950.

But now, even as Argentina enters perhaps one of its worst economic moments, Miramar is busier than ever, said Juan Mazza, the manager.

''I don't know if it's a contradiction,'' he said. ''The crisis is here. So with the little money that I have, I want to enjoy.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/18/world/americas/argentina-inflation-peso-restaurants.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/18/world/americas/argentina-inflation-peso-restaurants.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: ''You have extra pesos that are going up in smoke,'' said Santiago Manoukian, an economist at a consultancy firm.

Lupe Garcia, a restaurant owner, above. Left, patrons enjoying starters during a tasting at a restaurant.

Patrons of a trendy street food spot in a Buenos Aires alley. Despite inflation at over 114 percent, the city's culinary scene is red-hot. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY SARAH PABST FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (A9) This article appeared in print on page A1, A9.

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[***In Argentina, Inflation Passes 100% (and the Restaurants Are Packed)***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68H1-C8T1-JBG3-60T0-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

June 19, 2023 Monday 10:29 EST

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**Section:** WORLD; americas

**Length:** 1307 words

**Byline:** Natalie Alcoba and Sarah Pabst

**Highlight:** Argentina’s financial crisis has a surprising side effect: a flourishing dining scene in Buenos Aires, as residents rush to spend pesos before they lose more value.

**Body**

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[***Econ101***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:694R-TB71-DXY4-X09N-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

September 10, 2023 Sunday

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**Length:** 4548 words

**Byline:** By David Leonhardt

**Body**

Why does Duke have so few low-income students? A case study in economic diversity at elite colleges.

During the spring and fall exam periods at Duke University, Perkins Library tends to be crowded. The library is near the center of campus, and it is a building both elegant and functional. Four stories high, it resembles part of a Gothic castle on the outside. Inside, Perkins is airy and technologically advanced. In the days leading up to end-of-semester exams, the library doubles as a study space and a social hub.

On the third floor, however, there is a room that usually has open seats. It is known as the Duke LIFE room, named for an organization that represents and serves undergraduates who come from low-income families or whose parents did not attend college. The Duke LIFE room is rarely crowded. ''When every other desk in the library is taken, there is always space in that room,'' Juliana Alfonso-DeSouza, a third-year student from San Antonio and the first member of her family to attend college, told me. ''It is fairly empty most of the time,'' said Stephany Perez-Sanchez, another first-generation student from South Carolina.

In part, the room's underuse seems to reflect a perceived stigma about the space, at least among younger students. The Duke LIFE room is next to a study area that is popular among fraternity and sorority members, and the room's heavy door makes a beeping sound whenever a student uses a key card to open it. Entering the room can feel like a public declaration of a student's modest background. While many first-generation students are proud of their status, not everybody wants to make such a declaration.

But there is also a larger explanation for the room's underuse: Compared with other universities, Duke has not enrolled many low-income students. A recent academic study of 12 elite colleges -- the eight in the Ivy League, as well as Duke, Stanford, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and the University of Chicago -- found that Duke gave some of the largest advantages in the admission process to students from families making at least $250,000 a year. Only about 12 percent of Duke students in recent years have received Pell Grants, the largest federal scholarship program, which is typically available to families in the lower half of the income distribution, earning $60,000 a year or less. By comparison, the Pell shares at Harvard, Yale, Princeton, M.I.T. and Columbia have each recently hovered around 20 percent. Federal data suggests that Duke also has fewer middle-income students, coming from families that earn too much to qualify for Pell Grants but still less than $100,000 a year. The difference between Duke and its peers amounts to several hundred lower- and middle-income students who have been missing from its campus every year.

Duke, in short, is one of the least economically diverse colleges in the United States. It is also one of the nation's top-ranked universities, having been in the U.S. News & World Report Top 10 almost continuously since the ranking began in the 1980s. It has an endowment of about $12 billion, one of the 25 largest per student in the country. Duke's alumni include Melinda French Gates, the philanthropist, and Adam Silver, the N.B.A. commissioner, as well as actors, chiefs executives and members of Congress. The university, which is in Durham, N.C., long ago left behind its history of racial segregation: More than 40 percent of its undergraduates are students of color, and about 10 percent come from overseas. But it has made less progress diversifying by social class.

Why has Duke chosen this path? The university's leaders insist that they have not chosen it -- that they are deeply committed to ensuring that Duke is an engine of social mobility. ''There is nothing more important to us than making this education, which has the potential to be completely transformational in the lives of our students, available as widely as possible,'' Gary Bennett, the dean of Duke's primary undergraduate college, told me. Duke's failure to do so nonetheless makes it a case study of elite higher education's conflicted attitude toward social class. No president or dean will argue that selective colleges should be dominated by rich students. Somehow, though, economic diversity waits in line behind other priorities -- like the construction of gleaming new student centers, the rapid expansion in the number of university administrators, the admission of affluent children with various connections and the maintenance of dozens of sports teams, some of which attract few fans.

The California Institute of Technology and Notre Dame also stand out as colleges that have had very large endowments and low economic diversity (although officials at each school told me they were starting to increase their Pell shares). There are a few dozen others with smaller endowments per student but still enough money to enroll many more lower- and middle-income students than they do, including Bates, Brown, Bucknell, Georgetown, Georgia Tech, Oberlin, Reed, Tufts, Tulane and Wake Forest. Each of these colleges, like Duke, has decided not to enroll many of the talented ***working-class*** students who are qualified to attend -- and each would prefer not to call attention to this policy. Duke says it is working to rectify the situation and has shown some early signs of progress, with an increase in Pell Grant recipients among the first-year students who arrived on campus this August. Yet Duke remains a stark example of the ways in which elite higher education replicates privilege at least as much as it provides opportunity. ''We absolutely have some work to do,'' Bennett said, ''but we're committed to doing it.''

The Supreme Court's ruling this summer banning race-based affirmative action has thrust economic diversity to the center of the debate over college admissions. For years, administrators at selective universities have focused on more visible forms of diversity -- starting with gender, race and religion in the 1960s, followed by geography (both within the United States and globally) in recent decades. But the Supreme Court's decision forbids colleges to use race itself as an admissions factor, raising fears among university leaders that the number of Black, Latino and Native American students will plummet. One way to continue enrolling racially diverse classes, given the country's large racial gaps in income, wealth and neighborhood poverty, is to emphasize economic diversity in recruitment and admissions. Some colleges have signaled that they plan to pursue this strategy.

Crucially, class-based affirmative action remains legal. It is also popular with the American public, polls show. Race-based affirmative action is not. When it has appeared on the ballot in state referendums, it has lost almost every time over the past 30 years -- most recently in 2020 in deep-blue California, by almost 15 percentage points. In our polarized country, increasing the economic diversity of elite colleges, by contrast, is a rare idea on which the political left, center and right agree.

But it still is not happening on most campuses. That's the central conclusion from an analysis of enrollment data at almost 300 colleges that my colleagues and I conducted in collaboration with Ithaka S+R, a higher-education research group. We examined all of the country's most-selective colleges, public and private, including every state flagship university. Together, these schools educate roughly 2.7 million undergraduates each year.

The data stretch back more than a decade, and the trends during that period are worrisome. We focused on Pell Grants, which college students in the bottom half of the income distribution generally receive. It is not a comprehensive measure of economic diversity, but it is the broadest one available, comparable across colleges. Other data show that colleges that enroll few Pell Grant recipients, like Duke, often enroll relatively few middle-class students above the Pell cutoff.

At most colleges in our analysis, the number of Pell recipients has fallen over the past decade. The decline in the share of students who are Pell Grant recipients has been especially notable at public universities. Many states deeply cut funding for higher education after the recession of 2007-9 and never fully restored it. Universities also spent heavily in recent years to construct new buildings and hire more administrators, a recent investigation by The Wall Street Journal documented. Together, these trends have led colleges to raise tuition and recruit higher-income students who can pay it. At the University of California, San Diego, the share of first-year students receiving Pell Grants plummeted from 47 percent in 2010-11 to 24 percent in 2020-21. There were declines as well at U.C.L.A, the University of South Dakota and the University of South Florida, among others. Most private universities have likewise become less economically diverse during this period, also partly for financial reasons.

The declining economic diversity of the country's top colleges has broad consequences. These are the schools that have the most resources and the highest graduation rates. Attending one of them is typically an excellent investment. College graduates fare far better in modern America than people without a bachelor's degree. They earn more money and are less likely to lose their jobs. They are healthier and happier on average. The gap in life expectancy between the two groups has widened in recent years. Some of these differences are causal, social-science research has suggested: College teaches people both hard and soft skills that are useful in today's complex economy. All of which means that the recent enrollment trends contribute to rising inequality and diminished social mobility.

Still, there is one category of colleges where economic diversity has increased over the past decade, and it is somewhat surprising: At most of the 50 or so richest colleges -- those with the largest endowments per student -- the number of undergraduates from lower-income families has risen, sometimes substantially. At Harvard, the share of first-year students receiving Pell Grants rose to 22 percent in 2020-21, from 18 percent in 2010-11. At Princeton, the share rose to 18 percent, from 11 percent. These differences amount to several hundred students at each college. There were also significant increases at Claremont McKenna, Middlebury, Northwestern, Pomona, Swarthmore, Vanderbilt and Yale.

This summer, an academic study -- by Opportunity Insights, a Harvard-based research group -- received widespread attention for documenting the enormous admissions advantages that many of the same colleges confer on their most-affluent applicants. These applicants are more likely to come from private high schools, to be recruited athletes or to have parents who attended the college, all factors that provide a leg up in admissions. Partly as a result, elite campuses enroll hundreds of students from the top 1 percent of the income distribution (which starts at about $600,000 a year in income). Elite colleges remain far less economically diverse than many public colleges with fewer resources.

Even so, most highly endowed colleges have increased their enrollment of lower- and middle-income students over the past decade. They have done so in response to criticism that they are bastions of privilege rather than engines of upward mobility. The colleges have hardly become pure meritocracies, but they do look more like America than they did a decade ago. And although they are small relative to the rest of higher education, they matter. They send a disproportionate share of their graduates into the nation's leadership class, across government, business, science and media. One way to create a more diverse American elite is to diversify the training grounds of that elite.

Duke is a fascinating case study because it is an exception to the exception -- and therefore symbolic of the larger problems in higher education. A decade ago, Duke's level of economic diversity was fairly typical for an elite college. Recently, though, it has failed to keep pace with its closest peers. An earlier study by the Opportunity Insights researchers, based on data from the early 2010s, came to a shocking conclusion: Dozens of colleges, including Duke, enrolled more students from the top 1 percent of the income distribution than from the entire bottom 60 percent. The same appears to be true of the most recent graduating classes at Duke.

Juliana Alfonso-DeSouza did not consider herself to be poor while she was growing up in San Antonio. She lived with her mother, a real estate broker, and they seemed to be doing fine. When Juliana was young, she would accompany her mother on her business appointments. They occasionally had financial problems, but Juliana's attitude was: Who didn't? ''I'm obviously not wealthy, but my mom made both ends meet,'' she said. The two of them lived together, with their dog, Khloe.

Only after Juliana began to do so well in high school that she realized she might become valedictorian did she begin to fathom attending a selective college far from home. She and her mother were basketball fans, partly because San Antonio's only major-league sports team is the Spurs, and they often watched March Madness, the college basketball tournament, on television together. They didn't root for Duke because Juliana considered the team to be another symbol of ''white privilege,'' she recently told me with a laugh. But she was familiar with the university.

Once she and her mother began attending college fairs in San Antonio and thinking seriously about where she might go, her attitude changed. Duke was a top academic school, she knew. It wasn't too far from Texas. And it had a sports culture that Juliana liked, even if she would need to change her rooting loyalties. Duke students, she thought, seemed more well rounded than students on some other campuses. She also learned that Duke would probably be less expensive than the University of Texas, after taking financial aid into account. That is a common discovery for low- and middle-income students. Elite colleges have an intimidating total annual sticker price of about $80,000. In truth, need-based scholarships, financed partly by the colleges' endowments, often reduce the price below that of a state school. Ultimately, Juliana received a full scholarship from Duke.

As she prepared to leave for college, she started to understand that most Duke students there would not be like her. She could see their affluence on social media and more signs after she arrived. Growing up, she had not known about Canada Goose, the expensive parka brand. At Duke, it seemed like a campus uniform during the colder months. ''I never felt like I was the poor kid, and then you get to Duke, and you realize some of these kids have yachts and have mansions,'' she said. ''They are quite literally the top 1 percent. I think it was me being a little bit naïve.''

Other Duke students who identify as F.G.L.I. -- for first-generation, low-income -- tell similar stories. Money shapes life there, and on other elite campuses, in ways that affluent students barely recognize and that lower-income students must navigate: the costs of joining fraternities and sororities, eating at off-campus restaurants, joining friends for spring-break trips to Myrtle Beach or Cancún. As Stephany Perez-Sanchez said, ''If you don't have the funding from your parents, then you can't do the activities that other students are doing.'' Karen Dong, a Duke sophomore who grew up outside Dallas with parents who immigrated from China and do not speak English, said she noticed how many Duke students traveled to New Orleans for Mardi Gras in the middle of the semester. ''I am really surprised by how many of my friends do not receive financial aid,'' Dong told me. Anybody who does not need financial aid at Duke is in the top few percentage points of the U.S. income distribution.

Duke also maintains several policies that funnel university resources to affluent students. Some elite colleges, like those in the Ivy League, typically do not award so-called merit scholarships to high-income students; their financial-aid budgets pay for aid based on economic need. Duke spends millions of dollars on aid -- like the A.B. Duke Scholarship, named for the son of an early-20th-century university benefactor -- that has no connection to financial need. Some of these scholarships are used to attract wealthy students.

Several students and professors mentioned Duke's dining program as a symbol of the university's priorities. The food is uncommonly good for a college, ranked best in the nation several years ago by The Daily Meal, a food website. There is a sushi restaurant on campus, as well as an Irish pub, a raw-food restaurant and JB's Roasts & Chops, which promises students that they will ''experience meat and potatoes the way they're supposed to be.'' These meals are not cheap. ''If you want to eat a proper lunch, it's $10 or $15 at least,'' Randi Jennings, a Duke senior from South Carolina, told me. Dong explained that students have invented a word -- ''wuflation,'' based on the first two letters of West Union, the name many students use for the main dining hall -- to describe the cost of campus food. Higher-income students often buy a deluxe meal plan or have their parents add to their account late in the semester. Lower-income students monitor their meal spending to keep from exhausting their account.

Still, I was struck during my conversations with Duke's F.G.L.I. students by how matter-of-factly they described these challenges. The situation does not spring from any malicious intent, several suggested; it comes from ignorance, a lack of awareness. When other students or professors are alerted to the ways that the campus assumes affluence, they are willing to make changes. Duke LIFE, the support group for low-income students, provides subscriptions to online learning platforms, for instance.

Above all, F.G.L.I. students talk about the ways in which Duke is transforming their lives and potentially setting their whole family on a different trajectory. The data supports this view. At Duke -- as well as elite colleges that admit more low-income students -- their graduation rate tends to be similar to the overall graduation rate. ''It has definitely changed my life and the lives of other first-generation low-income students I know,'' Jennings said. Her mother worked for a family-owned car service business before she died when Randi was in middle school, and her father now drives for Uber. Jennings plans to apply to law school this year and is interested in doing appellate work. She is an avatar of the power of education.

So is Alfonso-DeSouza. She has received a full scholarship, named for David M. Rubenstein, a billionaire investor, a member of the Duke class of 1970 and himself a first-generation college student. She is majoring in evolutionary anthropology and split this summer between doing biochemistry research in Durham and working in an emergency room in San Antonio. After college, she plans to become a doctor, perhaps a surgeon. Regardless, she wants to mentor younger people like her. ''It's definitely been life-changing on my end,'' Alfonso-DeSouza said about Duke. ''Colleges don't get enough credit for how much impact they can have on people's lives.''

Bennett, the Duke dean, told me a related story. Five years ago, on his first day in an administrative job helping oversee undergraduate education, he attended a dinner for families of lower-income students. When he was growing up, Bennett's mother was a kindergarten teacher in the high-poverty schools of Camden, N.J., and his father was an administrator there, and the dinner reminded him why he went into education. For all the reasons to be cynical today, the United States was still an inspiring place when it lived up to its ideals of providing opportunity for all. At one point, a student's father approached Bennett and said that her enrollment at Duke was the most important thing that had ever happened to their family. The father had tears in his eyes. His daughter, standing nearby, rolled her eyes, a response that Bennett found perfect. She was too busy forging her new life to be sentimental about it.

Why, then, has Duke fallen so far behind on economic diversity?

As Bennett and other university officials tell the story, it was an unfortunate accident. Over the past decade, as other elite colleges paid more attention to low-income students, they wooed some who once might have attended Duke. ''This is an extremely competitive space,'' Bennett said of the recruitment of F.G.L.I. students. In response, the university put in place new strategies last year to persuade more of them to choose Duke, through personal outreach from administrators, students and Duke parents. The approach is working, Bennett said. Duke's initial count shows that the Pell share in the current first-year class jumped to 17 percent, from an average of 12.9 percent since 2010-11. If Duke can repeat that success, it will no longer be one of the country's least economically diverse colleges.

But there are reasons to wonder whether the past year was a blip. The competition for lower-income students, after all, is likely to intensify again because of the Supreme Court decision. Perhaps the biggest reason for skepticism is Duke's own justification of the trends over the past decade: that as rivals grabbed many talented poor and middle-class students, Duke could not find other such students to admit. The available data contradicts that story. An influential 2012 academic paper by two economists, Caroline Hoxby of Stanford and Christopher Avery of Harvard, found that elite colleges were not enrolling many standout students from modest backgrounds. The subtitle of the paper was ''The Hidden Supply of High-Achieving, Low-Income Students.'' Colleges that have set out to become economically diverse have come to the same conclusion. Duke could have been admitting these students for years. Schools both above it and below it in the college rankings have done so.

When Washington University in St. Louis, known as Wash. U., decided to diversify its student body in the 2010s, some board members worried that it would need to lower its academic standards, according to Holden Thorp, who was then the provost and now oversees the Science journals. But the worry was misplaced. ''There were plenty of low-income kids with high scores that we hadn't been admitting,'' Thorp told me. Ron Daniels, the president of Johns Hopkins, made the same point to me. ''They are there, and they do come,'' Daniels said. About 20 percent of the last few entering classes at Hopkins have received Pell Grants, roughly double the level in 2010.

It is difficult to know exactly what would be the ideal level of economic diversity for elite colleges. They will probably never have 50 percent of their students coming from the bottom 50 percent of the income distribution. By almost any measure, more teenagers from the top half are qualified to attend these colleges and prepared to thrive academically. But Catharine Bond Hill, an economist who studied these issues before becoming president of Vassar College and who is now a managing director at Ithaka S+R, argues that at least 25 percent of the entering class at top colleges should be Pell recipients. As Thorp told me: ''These top colleges all have the opportunity to enroll as many low-income kids with high scores as they want. There is probably a limit somewhere, but none of them are at it.''

Of course, there still is a cost to admitting more middle-class and poor students. When colleges do so, they lose some of the tuition revenue that wealthy families can pay. The difference between the levels of economic diversity at Johns Hopkins and Duke can add up to tens of millions of dollars a year, which is real money even for universities with substantial endowments. To cover the cost, universities must find donors to underwrite financial-aid programs or cut back elsewhere. Hopkins both received a $1.8 billion gift from Michael Bloomberg and delayed some construction projects for several years, including a student center. ''The moral commitment to increasing the socioeconomic diversity of the class must be tethered to a financial strategy,'' Daniels told me.

I have been writing about economic diversity for almost two decades, since I discovered in 2004 how affluent the student body had become even at some public colleges, like the University of Michigan and the University of Virginia. And I have noticed a pattern. Although every university leader I interview claims to care about the issue, many of them fail to make it a priority. College admissions resembles a zero-sum game, and other campus constituencies have more influence than ***working-class*** and poor students. University leaders find it hard to eliminate the squash or sailing team. They find it easier to build a new building than to spend the money on financial aid. They have not been able to break fully with elite higher education's roots as a preserve of the wealthy.

At the same time, many are not willing to defend the system over which they preside. When students, professors and outsiders criticize colleges for their lack of economic diversity, the administrators often make changes -- sometimes reluctantly, sometimes enthusiastically. It has happened at Johns Hopkins, Wash. U. and other elite colleges over the past decade.

Duke seems as if it might be in the early stages of this process, with the outcome still uncertain. Some of its leaders insist that no issue is more important to them. They have made tentative progress to shed their status as the country's least economically diverse top-ranked college. But they have not made the hard choices that a lasting commitment to economic diversity requires. The scholarships for affluent students and the wuflation-priced dining halls still compete for resources.

When I asked Duke's F.G.L.I. students how they thought about the university's policies, they tended to express a set of common sentiments. They are very grateful for the opportunities they are receiving. They simply wish Duke enrolled more students like them and the people with whom they grew up. ''I just think I got really, really lucky,'' Dong told me. ''Duke does a good job for the F.G.L.I. students who they do admit. However, I know they are not admitting very many of us.''

Alfonso-DeSouza framed the issue nicely. ''Duke students are really oriented to the world,'' she said. ''I think the essence of Duke is wanting to bring change not only for yourself but for others.'' What could be more consistent with an elite college education than insisting that the colleges providing that education live up to their own stated ideals?

'These top colleges all have the opportunity to enroll as many low-income kids with high scores as they want.'

'The moral commitment to increasing

the socioeconomic diversity of the class must be tethered to

a financial strategy.'

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/31/magazine/econ101.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/31/magazine/econ101.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS (PHOTOGRAPHS BY BEN DENZER) (MM42-MM43

MM44-MM45

MM48-MM49) This article appeared in print on page MM42, MM43, MM44, MM45, MM46, MM47, MM48, MM49, MM50, MM51.

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**End of Document**



[***A Former Slaughterhouse Turned Into Showroom***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:683H-8J21-JBG3-6093-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

April 26, 2023 Wednesday 13:12 EST

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**Section:** STYLE

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**Byline:** Aileen Kwun

**Highlight:** In its fifth year, Alcova, the independent design fair, offered an alternative to Milan Design Week, the largest festival of its kind in the world.

**Body**

In its fifth year, Alcova, the independent design fair, offered an alternative to Milan Design Week, the largest festival of its kind in the world.

At this year’s Milan Design Week, the world’s largest design festival, held each April, one outlier to the typical venues — and “typical” has meant palazzos, villas and theaters, as well as a desacralized church, a tennis club and an outdoor pool — was a former slaughterhouse. This is where Alcova, an annual independent fair, staged an exhibition in a set of industrial spaces in the Calvairate district, just east of the city center.

This year “has somehow gone even beyond,” said the curator Joseph Grima, who founded Alcova with Valentina Ciuffi in 2018. On the tails of their fifth year, which wrapped up last weekend, the duo are eyeing a move to expand Alcova’s presence (further details to be confirmed and announced) with a debut at Miami Art Week in December.

For design devotees, Alcova has become a must-see destination, and a palate cleanser of sorts from the sheer extravagance of Milan Design Week.

A scrappy upstart known for taking over derelict structures from Milan’s industrial past — including a bakery, a cashmere factory and a military hospital complex — Alcova recorded more than 90,000 visitors this year, or nearly a third of registered visitors to Salone del Mobile, the trade fair and commercial juggernaut around which Milan Design Week’s many offshoot events, Alcova included, revolve.

“It’s a young energy there, almost like a music festival vibe,” said the lighting designer Lindsey Adelman. “They’ve created a real magnet of a show that everybody makes a point to go to.” Ms. Adelman, a fixture of New York’s independent design scene, showed at Alcova in 2021 and returned this year to present works from LaLAB, her new collection of experimental lighting works.

Alyse Archer-Coité, a New York-based design researcher, noted how the vastness of the “sprawling, overgrown and sometimes spooky” venue made for “a truly unique environment.”

Mr. Grima, 46, and Ms. Ciuffi, 44, met several years ago as former editors at two Milanese design magazines — Mr. Grima had been at Domus, and Ms. Ciuffi at Abitare. Mr. Grima is the creative director of the Design Academy Eindhoven in the Netherlands and runs a studio practice, Space Caviar, with Sofia Pia Belenky; Ms. Ciuffi is the founder and director of Milan’s Studio Vedèt, a graphic design and branding studio that also curates FAR, a capsule of experimental work shown each year at Nina Yashar’s esteemed Nilufar Gallery, one of the city’s top spaces for contemporary design.

With Alcova, they have sought to provide a space for emerging and independent design that — because of, say, commercial viability or financial and artistic reasons — might not have the chance to show in the existing landscape of events at the larger fair.

What Alcova prioritizes are works that move beyond aesthetics to “somehow question the way things are done,” Mr. Grima said. Some of the projects on display, he added, “are not products or furniture per se, but processes or materials” that consider the full life cycle of an object, from what it takes to create it to the aftermath of its use.

The research platform Atelier Luma, based in Arles, France, for example, shared an installation of prototypes, created from various agricultural byproducts such as salt, algae and rice straw, that supported “circular design,” a regenerative approach that makes continual reuse of materials. An injection-molded chair by the California-based Prowl Studio, made of compostable hemp and paper pulp — two byproducts of industrial cannabis processing — challenged the notion that good design should last forever with the tag line: “Expect death.”

A specially curated section of the show, Alcova Project Space, explored emerging themes, including “digital ornamentalism,” an aesthetic shaped by NFTs and video games and meticulously rendered into physical forms, as seen in the work of Ryan Decker, Hannah Lim and Isabel Rower.

“What we really set out to build was more of a social network,” Ms. Ciuffi said. “We curate the list of participants, but then they curate their own space.”

Over the years, that network, which began with a group of 20 or so like-minded colleagues and friends at their first edition in 2018, has steadily grown (the physical fair was canceled and replaced with digital content in 2020 because of the pandemic).

Alcova has also served as a launchpad of sorts for new talent. One breakout star, Maximilian Marchesani, made a splash last year with his debut collection of experimental lighting designs that ruminated on the tenuous relationship between nature and man-made artifice, combining gnarled hazel branches and LED lights.

In the space of a year, Mr. Marchesani has become the subject of a solo show, with Ms. Ciuffi’s endorsement, at Nilufar Gallery. For Mr. Marchesani, it’s a major leap that still feels a bit surreal to him.

“You want to be a protagonist in some way, and you are always a guest,” said Mr. Marchesani, who moved to Milan over a decade ago as a student. “Now, suddenly, I am not a guest anymore.”

Like many start-ups that have gone on to achieve scale and critical attention, Alcova has not been immune to criticism. Last week, in an [*opinion essay in The Architect’s Newspaper*](https://www.archpaper.com/2023/04/alcova-a-temporary-design-exhibition-takes-place-within-a-wider-context-of-real-estate-speculation/), Andrea Bagnato, a writer and researcher in Milan who has worked with Mr. Grima, pointed to the show’s itinerant presence throughout the city’s historic ***working-class*** neighborhoods as an agent of gentrification and real-estate speculation.

In a [*letter*](https://www.archpaper.com/2023/04/a-reflection-on-the-right-to-the-city-after-the-fifth-edition-of-alcova-concluded-in-milan/) this week to The Architect’s Newspaper, Mr. Grima and Ms. Ciuffi said Mr. Bagnato’s argument was “problematic in that it confuses causation with correlation.” Alcova, the founders noted, never remains in one location for more than two years, to avoid contributing to an area becoming something of a design district that treads on local neighborhoods. Mr. Grima and Ms. Ciuffi also make sure potential sites are not for sale. The current site, they pointed out, had already been slated for a major redevelopment before they procured it.

“You can’t allow the perfect to be the enemy of good, and urbanism is complicated,” Mr. Grima said. “We will try to make moments of joy and generosity towards the city. That is something that we can and will do.”

PHOTOS: Right, Joseph Grima and Valentina Ciuffi, Alcova co-founders and curators, at this year’s site, once a slaughterhouse. Above, experimental lighting works by Lindsey Adelman. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY DELFINO SISTO LEGNANI VIA ALCOVA; MATTEO IMBRIANI VIA LINDSEY ADELMAN) This article appeared in print on page ST11.

**Load-Date:** April 30, 2023

**End of Document**



[***State of the City: What Goals Should the Mayor Set for 2023?; New York Today***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67D9-7N41-JBG3-60W1-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

January 26, 2023 Thursday 00:03 EST

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**Section:** NYREGION

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**Byline:** James Barron

**Highlight:** As Eric Adams gives his annual address today, experienced observers will be listening for his approach to the economy, crime and homelessness.

**Body**

As Eric Adams gives his annual address today, experienced observers will be listening for his approach to the economy, crime and homelessness.

Good morning. It’s Thursday. Mayor Eric Adams is scheduled to deliver his State of the City address today. We’ll hear what several sharp-eared experts will be listening for.

In his State of the City address last year, Mayor Eric Adams called for “a new, hopeful chapter.” He said he could spark the city’s comeback from the pandemic with relentless attention to public safety and inequality.

Adams has continued to concentrate on crime, as well as the challenges of accommodating migrants from the southern border and the cleanliness of streets, with a strikingly personal emphasis on ridding them of rats. Today he is expected to announce that the city will expand composting, a program the city put on hold just last month.

But as he outlines his vision for 2023, some measures of the city’s health remain troubling and probably beyond any mayor’s control. The city’s seasonally adjusted unemployment rate was 6.5 percent when he delivered his first State of the City speech. It was 5.9 percent in December, up 0.1 percentage point from November and well above the national rate of 3.9 percent.

With all that in mind, I asked several experienced listeners to tell us what they will be listening for in Adams’s speech. Here’s what they said:

Emma G. Fitzsimmons, City Hall bureau chief, The New York Times

Adams often talks about how he’s focused on the concerns of the Black and Latino voters outside Manhattan who elected him, and that’s the audience for the speech. He told me in an interview recently: “My secret sauce is everyday ***working-class*** families.” And he’s giving the speech at Queens Theater in Flushing Meadows Corona Park, not far from where he grew up in Jamaica, Queens, as the son of a house cleaner.

Last year, his first year in office, was defined by crisis — the continuing pandemic, concerns over crime, an influx of migrants arriving from the southern border. Now, going into his second year, a major question is: What is he hoping to accomplish that will be his legacy? And can he pull it off?

Adams doesn’t have one signature policy accomplishment, the way Bill de Blasio had with universal prekindergarten, and Adams isn’t looking for just one. He has said he wants to concentrate on several policies that could help ***working-class*** New Yorkers — tax credits for the poor, dyslexia screenings in schools and an expansion of low-cost child care.

Nearly three years into the pandemic, I’m sure he’ll also focus on economic recovery. Advocates are hoping to hear more about his plans to address the city’s affordability crisis, homelessness and violence at the Rikers Island jail complex.

Christopher Herrmann, associate professor, John Jay College of Criminal Justice

Last year was a difficult year for those of us who are really concerned about crime in New York. While we celebrated the significant decreases in shootings and homicides, all the other major crimes increased in 2022 and were much higher than their prepandemic levels.

While the property crimes of auto theft, larceny, and burglary are trending in the wrong direction, I would still like to hear that Mayor Adams and Police Commissioner Sewell remain focused on the violent crimes — murder, rape, robbery, assault, and shootings. These are the things that New Yorkers (and those who commute into New York City for work, school or entertainment) are most interested in.

People want to feel safer going to and from home, work and school. This means feeling safer on the streets, on the subways and the buses, and in their homes.

The perceptions are not in step with the reality. You have a better chance of winning the lottery than you do of getting victimized on the New York City subway, but a lot of people are fearful of the subway, for some reason.

Andrew Rein, president, Citizens Budget Commission

Of course he will reflect on where the city is now, which is certainly a challenging time economically. On the fiscal side, there is money in the city coffers for the short term, but the economic and fiscal headwinds are not only large but they’re also very clear. He has a budget that has baked-in fiscal cliffs because we have ongoing programs that are funded with federal Covid aid as well as city money that is just put in for one year at a time. The future budget gaps that you can see and the fiscal risks that are not even on the paper are large, so he’s got to start now addressing those.

Which leads to the next part. He has announced many plans and blueprints for housing, for economic development, for the ferries. Many plans. Year 2 should be about organizing and managing to get those done. With the lessons from Year 1, how will he hone his management structure so all these plans actually deliver results? That’s the task for Year 2. I hope he does it all great.

Msgr. Kevin Sullivan, executive director of Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of New York

I hope he would reiterate that New York is welcoming city for migrants. In this new surge since last summer, New York has maintained the tradition of being welcoming. We’re going to continue to do this as a city. But at the same time, he should continue to call for response by the federal government, because that’s what’s needed — and do it in a variety of ways to make the case that it’s a national responsibility. Going to the border was a way to do it. But we need to look at this as a national problem. We need congressional action.

David Giffen, executive director, Coalition for the Homeless

We know the mayor has his hands full with the influx of asylum seekers, and we agree that the federal government has to step up and help New York City.

But that does not relieve the mayor of his moral and legal obligation to provide decent and accessible shelter for all who need it. We need vastly more beds in shelters designed for unsheltered homeless people who have had bad experiences in the congregate shelter system. And the city could move current shelter residents more quickly into permanent housing, freeing up capacity in the shelter system.

The mayor also has to completely rethink his approach to unsheltered people in the streets and the transit system.

Rachel Fee, executive director, New York Housing Conference

We’ll be looking to see if the mayor is really taking seriously the staffing vacancy issue and if he has a real plan to hire for the many vacant positions that are affecting implementation of his housing plan. There are several hundred open positions at the Department of Housing Preservation and Development and the Human Resources Administration. Across those agencies, it’s a really major issue. Just for H.P.D., October was the first time we saw in nine months that the agency was gaining more staff than it was losing, but only a 1 percent increase. The city has been slow to turn around the staffing shortage. We would like to see policies to turn that around more quickly.

Tom Wright, president, Regional Plan Association

I think the most important thing is going to be following up on the “[*City of Yes” initiatives*](https://www.nyc.gov/site/planning/plans/city-of-yes/city-of-yes-overview.page) from the Department of City Planning and [*the “New” New York Panel recommendations*](https://newnypanel.com/). There was an enormous amount of overlap between the two. I was on the “New” New York Panel, which was a joint effort created by the mayor and Gov. Kathy Hochul.

She has proposed amending state law to allow the city to rezone neighborhoods and create more residential development, including more affordable housing. It’s important that Mayor Adams advocate for these changes and explain how they will help New York City recover from Covid.

Expect a chance of rain, with wind gusts and temperatures around the mid-40s. The evening is breezy and partly cloudy. Temps will drop to around 30.

In effect until Feb. 13 (Lincoln’s Birthday).

The latest New York news

* Baruch volleyball team: The Baruch Bearcats played their home opener under [*a new spotlight after Representative George Santos’s lie about having played for the team resurfaced.*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/01/25/nyregion/santos-baruch-volleyball.html)

1. Campaign loans: An updated campaign finance report raised new questions about the [*source of Santos’s six-figure loans to his campaign.*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/01/24/nyregion/george-santos-loan-campaign-finances.html)

* Bike-path terror trial: In closing arguments, the two sides dueled over why Sayfullo Saipov [*drove a truck onto a Manhattan bike path in 2017, killing eight people.*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/01/24/nyregion/saipov-bike-path-terror-trial-closings.html)

Knee deep

Dear Diary:

I was walking down Seventh Avenue in the West Village with a friend after a heavy snowfall. We stepped off a curb and sank knee deep in icy slush.

We were fuming because we hadn’t been able tell how deep the puddle was. Just then we heard laughter a few feet away, obviously at our expense.

I was annoyed, but my friend stopped to speak to the people who were laughing. He waved me over, and they explained that they had stepped into the puddle too.

We continued talking. As we stood there, several other people stepped off the curb, sank into the puddle, got annoyed and then, like us, started to laugh.

— Peter Jameson

Illustrated by Agnes Lee.[*Send submissions here*](https://www.nytimes.com/article/how-to-submit-to-metropolitan-diary.html) and[*read more Metropolitan Diary here*](https://www.nytimes.com/column/metropolitan-diary).

Glad we could get together here. See you tomorrow. — J.B.

P.S. Here’s today’s [*Mini Crossword*](https://www.nytimes.com/crosswords/game/mini) and [*Spelling Bee*](https://www.nytimes.com/puzzles/spelling-bee). [*You can find all our puzzles here*](https://www.nytimes.com/crosswords).

Melissa Guerrero and Ed Shanahan contributed to New York Today. You can reach the team at [*nytoday@nytimes.com*](mailto:nytoday@nytimes.com)

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PHOTO: (PHOTOGRAPH BY Dave Sanders for The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

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[***He Has Union Leaders' Vote, Now to Win Over Membership***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68GV-80T1-DXY4-X3YS-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

June 18, 2023 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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**Byline:** By Reid J. Epstein

**Body**

At a rally on Saturday hosted by the A.F.L.-C.I.O., President Biden enjoyed a warm reception. But changes in union membership mean that he still has work to do.

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But the modern labor movement that gathered on Saturday in Philadelphia to endorse Mr. Biden's 2024 re-election campaign is younger and more diverse, and has far more women than the union stereotype Mr. Biden has embraced during the decades he has spent building his political identity.

''You think about it as the dude with a cigar, and it's just not that,'' said Randi Weingarten, the president of the American Federation of Teachers. ''I'm sure there's still dudes with cigars, but there's lots and lots and lots of other people in a multigenerational, multiracial cacophony of people that are unified by a zealous fight for a better life.''

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Mr. Biden's campaign and the labor leaders who endorsed it -- the A.F.L.-C.I.O. and 17 other unions -- celebrated the early backing as a triumph of labor unity for the president. The president appeared before a supportive and energetic audience of about 2,000 union members in Philadelphia, the first rally of his re-election campaign since it started in April.

''I'm the most pro-union president in American history,'' Mr. Biden told the cheering crowd on Saturday, echoing a vow he made during his 2020 campaign. Predicting another victory in 2024, he added: ''What I'm really proud about is being re-elected the most pro-union president in history.''

The endorsements reflect Mr. Biden's popularity among the unions' leaders, but large segments of the union membership do not associate him with the union-friendly legislation he has signed into law.

''There is a disconnect between all the Biden-Harris accomplishments and what information is landing on the ground in communities,'' said Liz Shuler, the president of the A.F.L.-C.I.O. ''It is such an inside-the-Beltway thing to do to talk about policies and talk about legislation and regulations. It's up to us to decode that and connect the dots back to what is happening in Washington.''

Upon entering office, Mr. Biden pledged to be ''the most pro-union president you've ever seen,'' and he has largely delivered on that promise.

During the Philadelphia union rally -- officially hosted by the A.F.L.-C.I.O. but with all the trappings of a Biden campaign event -- Mr. Biden ticked through his pro-union accomplishments. Along with the climate, infrastructure and semiconductor manufacturing bills he signed that incentivize companies that employ unionized workers, Mr. Biden cited the Butch Lewis Act, which restored the pensions of more than one million people whose retirement benefits had been severely reduced because of underfunded multi-employer pension plans.

''That was a big deal,'' Mr. Biden said. ''It was one of the most significant achievements for union workers and retirees in 50 years.''

The Biden administration has made clear that it stands with unionized workers. Jill Biden, the first lady, wore the blue T-shirt of the National Education Association on Saturday. Last weekend, Mr. Biden's education secretary, Miguel Cardona, refused to cross a picket line to give a commencement address at the University of Washington. Vice President Kamala Harris canceled an MTV appearance after Hollywood writers went on strike.

Last month, workers at a school bus factory in Georgia won the first significant organizing election at a facility receiving major federal funding under legislation signed by Mr. Biden.

The president has also been far more vocal than his Democratic predecessors in encouraging union organizing. Last year, Mr. Biden welcomed to the White House the millennial Amazon and Starbucks organizers who had unionized parts of those companies.

Before he was president, Mr. Biden was a regular at Labor Day parades -- especially in Pittsburgh, home of the largely male and white steelworker unions that built much of western Pennsylvania, and where he kicked off his 2020 campaign.

That run followed a defection of large numbers of union workers to Donald J. Trump's 2016 campaign, which had reoriented the Republican Party in opposition to international free trade accords championed by Presidents Barack Obama and Bill Clinton.

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Among the youngest labor leaders is Roland Rexha, the secretary-treasurer of the Marine Engineers' Beneficial Association, which represents maritime workers including employees of the Staten Island Ferry. Mr. Rexha, who at 41 is the youngest member and the only Muslim on the A.F.L.-C.I.O.'s executive council, said it can be difficult to sell Mr. Biden to a group that was about three-quarters white men -- a group with whom Mr. Trump has drawn majority support.

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The broad union endorsements for Mr. Biden Saturday mask some discontent for the president among organized labor. The United Auto Workers has withheld an endorsement over concerns about the electric vehicle transition the White House has championed. There was significant grumbling among labor groups that on the day Mr. Biden launched his campaign, he spoke to the building trades union -- a group whose members are seen within the labor world as less reliably Democratic.

And then there is the fact that Mr. Biden's much-touted infrastructure legislation will largely benefit construction workers -- a group far more likely to be male and to vote Republican than the rest of the organized labor universe.

''There is some real progress, ironically, for construction workers, probably half of whom voted for Trump twice,'' said Larry Cohen, a former president of the Communications Workers of America who has long been an adviser to Senator Bernie Sanders of Vermont.

''The messaging is as good as it's ever been in 50 years or more, but there needs to be results.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/17/us/politics/biden-again-has-union-support-but-the-unions-look-different-this-time.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/17/us/politics/biden-again-has-union-support-but-the-unions-look-different-this-time.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: President Biden's re-election bid is being endorsed by a labor movement younger and more diverse than during most of his career. (PHOTOGRAPH BY PETE MAROVICH FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A18.

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[***Over Time***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68GV-80T1-DXY4-X411-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

June 18, 2023 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section MM; Column 0; Magazine Desk; Pg. 7; SCREENLAND

**Length:** 1300 words

**Byline:** By Robin Kaiser-Schatzlein

**Body**

Barack Obama's Netflix series ''Working'' tries to catch you up on decades of change -- more than it has time for.

Sheila steps into a wood-paneled room and addresses a ring of home-care aides in navy blue scrubs. Soft light filters through the curtains as they begin with a prayer: ''Father God, as we go through this meeting, open up our minds, open up our ears, so we can hear, so we can see. Amen.'' The aides take turns introducing themselves and offering brief sketches of their jobs. Sheila is their manager. They are employed by At Home Care, LLC, a business in southeastern Mississippi, and they are speaking to a camera -- to a documentary crew that is filming their meeting for a mini-series titled ''Working: What We Do All Day.'' Some describe the closeness they have with the people whose bedpans they change, whose medications they administer. One, Caroline, her pulled-back hair flecked with gray, says she probably knows the clients she takes care of better than their own children do. Then Sheila asks: ''Y'all have any questions for me? Any comments for me?''

This innocent query opens a floodgate of discontent that takes both Sheila and the viewer by surprise. There are questions about time-keeping and payment-tracking systems. An aide named Amanda says a client had her drive 10 miles to pick up a pizza: ''Is the GPS picking up all that?'' No, Sheila says sympathetically, aides don't get paid for extra driving. ''It don't seem right,'' she concedes, ''because you're burning your gas.'' None of this releases the pressure in the room; if anything, it just keeps building. ''How are we supposed to live and survive?'' one woman asks. ''We have kids to take care of, homes to take care of.'' Caroline notes that she has been with the company for almost three years without seeing a raise. Sheila stares downward, as though battening her emotional hatches.

The scene is documentary gold. It requires no commentary, no interviews. It is a simple, powerful illustration of an American workplace, boiling like a pot of tomato sauce, ready to spit hot rivulets of grievance at anyone who stirs it. We feel for the workers. We feel for Sheila, who seems caught in a crossfire, trying her best. We feel righteous anger at whoever might be to blame for all this dissatisfaction. But who, precisely, is that? This is one of many big questions that ''Working'' may not have anywhere near enough time to answer.

''Working'' is a limited Netflix series hosted by Barack Obama and produced in part by Higher Ground, the production company he and Michelle Obama founded. In a voice-over, the former president tells us the production was inspired by Studs Terkel's pathbreaking 1974 oral history, ''Working: People Talk About What They Do All Day and How They Feel About What They Do,'' a hefty book that relayed the thoughts and stories of a wide swath of Americans, placing their words democratically side by side. The show's four episodes, made available last month, aim for something similar, spending time with workers at all levels of the three companies it focuses on -- letting viewers viscerally compare, say, the lives of a Manhattan housekeeper and the C.E.O. of the conglomerate that owns the hotel where she works. Money was clearly spent on this program. The cameras are slick, the angles creative, the songs expensively licensed. This may well be the production's chief value: It is shockingly rare to see the daily lives of ***working-class*** people represented on TV so plainly and honestly, let alone with such a budget.

[Video: Watch on YouTube.]

In that context, watching Sheila's meeting spiral out of control feels almost as subversive and revelatory as Terkel's book. The problem arises when the show attempts to explain what, specifically, has gone wrong to make that eruption possible. Try as it might to stay close to the workers, the series can't resist its periodic voice-overs, in which Obama delivers industrial-grade doses of information over spiffy archival footage of domestic workers or the movie ''Wall Street'' or the economist Milton Friedman. The scripts touch on all sorts of systemic forces, from the workers left out of the New Deal to the macroeconomics of the decline of the middle class.

The fact that the show needs to reach all the way back to the New Deal era underlines a key problem: America's perception of its own workplaces may be astonishingly out of date, steeped in denial about just how profoundly things have changed. The series wants to hang around working people, as Terkel did, to understand their hopes and dreams and contradictions. But it also wants to put forward an argument about what's happened to American workers that involves catching the viewer up on several decades of complex changes -- all presented by a politician who, you can't help noting, happened to be in charge of the country for a key stretch of the time being explored.

Did politicians participate in all that denial? This issue goes unaddressed, but the series does touch on the idea that popular media has long neglected the workplace. Television, Obama argues at one point, used to be full of representations of working and middle-class people and their jobs -- say, in Norman Lear shows like ''Good Times'' or ''All in the Family.'' After the Reagan era, though, popular shows tended to follow upscale professionals, or to look more like ''Friends'' or ''Seinfeld,'' portraying people who lived comfortably despite being vaguely or fancifully employed. The nation's jobs have shifted from industrial to service work, but even that seismic change -- a work force now epitomized by nurses, waiters, retail clerks, delivery drivers -- is rarely reflected in the stories we consume. Neither are developments like the erosion of job security, the rise of erratic scheduling, the invasive workplace surveillance -- changes that marked Obama's very own era in the White House.

''Obtuseness in 'respectable' quarters is not a new phenomenon,'' Terkel writes in his book. He offers the example of Henry Mayhew, whose 19th-century reports on working people in London ''astonished and horrified readers of The Morning Chronicle.'' The writer Barbara Ehrenreich later cataloged the way journalists and scholars ''discovered'' poverty in the 1960s after the breathless enthusiasm of the postwar economy cooled. (''We seem to have suddenly awakened,'' the critic Dwight Macdonald wrote in a New Yorker review of one book on the topic, ''to the fact that mass poverty persists.'') It's easy to sense something similar in the audience for a documentary like ''Working'' -- a sudden, belated understanding of the indignities creeping up toward even the most insulated professionals, and a growing sense of the workplace as a site of urgent, high-stakes conflict.

In the final episode, Obama suggests his biggest worry is polarization, a fear of the problems that will arise if we cannot pay people enough for them to find dignity in their work. Terkel's own animating concerns were more jarringly radical and succinct: He began his book with the admonition that since it was about work, it was, ''by its very nature, about violence -- to the spirit as well as to the body.'' Obama is not quite there. His ''Working'' wants to show us what America's jobs look like today, and to wake us to the possibility that we have spent too long underestimating their profound, dignity-robbing, politically consequential transformation. The series would need hours of explanatory montage to make up for all that lost time; if there's anything it makes clear, it's that the problem is far larger and more urgent than a few hours of television can aim to capture.

Audio produced by Kate Winslett.

Opening illustration: Source photographs from NetflixAudio produced by Kate Winslett.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/13/magazine/working-netflix-obama.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/13/magazine/working-netflix-obama.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS (PHOTOGRAPHS BY NETLFIX) (MM7

MM8

MM9) This article appeared in print on page MM7, MM8, MM9, MM10.

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[***Biden Again Has Union Support. But the Unions Look Different This Time.***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68GK-S2C1-DXY4-X2CB-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

June 17, 2023 Saturday 23:01 EST

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**Section:** US; politics

**Length:** 1313 words

**Byline:** Reid J. Epstein

**Highlight:** At a rally on Saturday hosted by the A.F.L.-C.I.O., President Biden enjoyed a warm reception. But changes in union membership mean that he still has work to do.

**Body**

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But the modern labor movement that gathered on Saturday in Philadelphia to endorse Mr. Biden’s 2024 re-election campaign is younger and more diverse, and has far more women than the union stereotype Mr. Biden has embraced during the decades he has spent building his political identity.

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“I’m the most pro-union president in American history,” Mr. Biden told the cheering crowd on Saturday, [*echoing a vow he made during his 2020 campaign*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/12/27/business/economy/biden-labor-unions.html). Predicting another victory in 2024, he added: “What I’m really proud about is being re-elected the most pro-union president in history.”

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Before he was president, Mr. Biden was [*a regular*](https://www.nytimes.com/2015/09/08/us/politics/labor-day-paradegoers-urge-joe-biden-to-run.html) at Labor Day parades — especially in Pittsburgh, home of the largely male and white steelworker unions that built much of western Pennsylvania, and where [*he kicked off his 2020 campaign*](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/04/29/us/politics/joe-biden-2020-president.html).

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That helped Mr. Trump shave off traditionally Democratic union voters. When Hillary Clinton lost the 2016 presidential election, [*she won just 51 percent*](https://www.cnn.com/election/2016/results/exit-polls) of votes from union households, while Mr. Trump won by huge margins among white ***working class*** voters, according to exit polls at the time. Four years later, [*Mr. Biden took 56 percent*](https://www.cnn.com/election/2020/exit-polls/president/national-results) of votes from union households, and union voters made up a slightly larger share of the electorate.

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And then there is the fact that Mr. Biden’s much-touted infrastructure legislation will largely benefit construction workers — a group far more likely to be male and to vote Republican than the rest of the organized labor universe.

“There is some real progress, ironically, for construction workers, probably half of whom voted for Trump twice,” said Larry Cohen, a former president of the Communications Workers of America who has long been an adviser to Senator Bernie Sanders of Vermont.

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PHOTO: President Biden’s re-election bid is being endorsed by a labor movement younger and more diverse than during most of his career. (PHOTOGRAPH BY PETE MAROVICH FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A18.

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[***Report Paints A Dire Picture For Democrats In the Midwest***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:63SK-DXM1-JBG3-62KB-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

October 6, 2021 Wednesday

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; National Desk; Pg. 16

**Length:** 940 words

**Byline:** By Jonathan Martin

**Body**

The party's struggles in communities that saw declines in manufacturing and union jobs, and health care, could more than offset its gains in metropolitan areas.

WASHINGTON -- The share of the Democratic presidential vote in the Midwest declined most precipitously between 2012 and 2020 in counties that experienced the steepest losses in manufacturing and union jobs and saw declines in health care, according to a new report to be released this month.

The party's worsening performance in the region's midsize communities -- often overlooked places like Chippewa Falls, Wis., and Bay City, Mich. -- poses a dire threat to Democrats, the report warns.

Nationally and in the Midwest, Democratic gains in large metropolitan areas have offset their losses in rural areas. And while the party's struggles in the industrial Midwest have been well-chronicled, the 82-page report explicitly links Democratic decline in the region that elected Donald J. Trump in 2016 to the sort of deindustrialization that has weakened liberal parties around the world.

''We cannot elect Democrats up and down the ballot, let alone protect our governing majorities, if we don't address those losses,'' wrote Richard J. Martin, an Iowa-based market researcher and Democratic campaign veteran, in the report titled ''Factory Towns.''Mr. Martin wrote the report in conjunction with Mike Lux and David Wilhelm, fellow Democratic strategists who, like him, also have roots in the region and worked together on President Biden's 1988 presidential campaign.

For all the arresting data, vivid graphs and deepening red maps presented, Mr. Martin offers little guidance on how to reverse the trends. He does, however, offer a warning, one that Midwestern Democrats have been issuing since Mr. Trump's victory five years ago.

''If things continue to get worse for us in small and midsize, ***working-class*** counties, we can give up any hope of winning the battleground states of the industrial heartland,'' writes Mr. Martin.

Surveying ten states -- the Great Lakes region as well as Missouri and Iowa -- Mr. Martin laid out a set of stark figures.

Comparing Barack Obama's re-election to President Biden's election last year, he notes that Democrats gained about 1.55 million votes in the big cities and suburbs of the region surveyed. In the same period, they lost about 557,000 votes in heavily rural counties.

But in midsize and small counties, Democrats lost over 2.63 million votes between the two elections. Dubbing these communities ''factory towns,'' Mr. Martin separates them by midsize counties anchored around cities with a population of 35,000 or more and smaller counties that lean on manufacturing but do not have such sizable cities.

Taken together, the changes illustrate the degree to which Mr. Obama relied upon the votes of ***working-class*** white voters to propel his re-election -- and how much Mr. Biden leaned on suburbanites to offset his losses in ***working-class*** communities that had once been a pillar of the Democratic coalition.

What alarms Mr. Martin, and many Democratic officials, is whether the party can sustain those gains in metropolitan areas. It's uncertain, as he puts it, ''if moderate suburban Republicans will continue to vote for Democrats when Trump is not on the ballot.''

Democratic gains up and down the ballot in fast-growing Sun Belt states like Arizona and Georgia garnered significant attention last year. Yet Mr. Biden wouldn't have won the presidency and Democrats couldn't have flipped the Senate without victories in 2020 across the Great Lakes region.

However, those wins proved more difficult than many pre-election polls concluded because of the G.O.P.'s continued strength in manufacturing communities. And, the report noted, these communities made up a significant portion of the region's vote share. In Wisconsin, midsize and small manufacturing counties make up 58 percent of the statewide vote. In Michigan, half of the voting population is in these communities.

This is where the decline in manufacturing has been most damaging to Democrats. The ten states included in the survey have lost 1.3 million manufacturing jobs since the beginning of this century.

In the small to midsize ''factory town'' counties in those states, where support for the Republican presidential nominee grew between 2012 and 2020, the losses were acute: More than 70 percent suffered declines in manufacturing jobs.

The elimination of those jobs also led to declines in health care, according to data from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute.

In the counties that suffered manufacturing losses and health care declines, Republicans surged between 2012 and 2020. Nearly half of the party's gains in these states came in communities where there were both manufacturing cuts and worsening health care.

Republicans also prospered in communities hit hard by the decline in manufacturing that were predominantly white. With fewer well-paying industry jobs, the power of local unions declined as well, silencing what was always the beating heart of Democratic political organizing in these areas. In 154 such counties, Democrats suffered a net loss of over 613,000 votes between the elections in 2016 and 2020.

Perhaps most striking was the decline in union membership across the region.

Nine of the 10 states included in the survey have accounted for 93 percent of the loss of union members nationwide in the last two decades. And just in the last 10 years, these states have lost 10 percent of their union membership -- an average that is three times greater than nationally.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2021/10/05/us/politics/democrats-votes-midwest.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/10/05/us/politics/democrats-votes-midwest.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: Half of Michigan's voting population lives in the type of midsize and small manufacturing communities that the report focused on. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Spencer Platt/Getty Images FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** October 6, 2021

**End of Document**



[***More Heart Than Snark As Jersey Guys Get Meta***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:66BN-K161-DXY4-X4G3-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

September 9, 2022 Friday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section C; Column 0; Movies, Performing Arts/Weekend Desk; Pg. 4

**Length:** 461 words

**Byline:** By Glenn Kenny

**Body**

Kevin Smith revisits his convenience store characters, and his life, with this sequel.

These days more than ever, personal filmmaking deserves to be celebrated merely for manifesting itself. Which doesn't mean that personal filmmaking doesn't come in some confounding forms.

From his first feature, the very low-budget, black-and-white ''Clerks'' (1994), the writer-director Kevin Smith has only ever made movies about himself. Not just himself as a person, but himself as a sensibility: quick-witted, ***working-class***, pop-culture-obsessive wiseass Jersey boy. In ''Clerks'' he put it across perfectly. In the film's second sequel, ''Clerks III,'' he is not nearly as deft.

Paradoxically, some of this is because of Smith's relative maturity. A husband and a father and a heart attack survivor who is now 52, he's got more on his mind than being a wiseass. Instead of following up the 2006 film ''Clerks II'' with more of that picture's profane exuberant absurdity, he brings back Dante and Randal and Jay and Silent Bob and does some stocktaking.

[Video: Watch on YouTube.]

The movie is bouncy at first, though the actors Brian O'Halloran and Jeff Anderson, so rawly naturalistic in the earlier movies, here seem like they're doing bits. Still, three words characterize the first third or so of the picture: not funny enough. As in, a new character is nicknamed Blockchain. Which is funnier than that character nicknamed Podcast in the most recent ''Ghostbusters'' movie, but, you know.

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Clerks IIIRated R. It's a Kevin Smith movie. Running time: 1 hour 55 minutes. In theaters.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/08/movies/clerks-iii-review.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/08/movies/clerks-iii-review.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: From left, Brian O'Halloran, Jeff Anderson, Austin Zajur and Trevor Fehrman in ''Clerks III.'' (PHOTOGRAPH BY LIONSGATE)

**Load-Date:** September 9, 2022

**End of Document**



[***America, Land of the Free Parking***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:688W-2S81-JBG3-618F-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

May 21, 2023 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section BR; Column 0; Book Review Desk; Pg. 15; NONFICTION

**Length:** 1231 words

**Byline:** By Jennifer Szalai

**Body**

''Paved Paradise,'' by Henry Grabar, examines the country's obsession with parking, from its effects on urban sprawl to the violence it sometimes provokes.

PAVED PARADISE: How Parking Explains the World, by Henry Grabar

You have undoubtedly heard of ''road rage'' -- the kind of impetuous fury that erupts when motorists are stuck in traffic or on the move. But even when the driving ends, parking is no picnic either.

Henry Grabar opens ''Paved Paradise,'' his wry and revelatory new book about parking (a combination of words I never thought I would write), with a scrum that started when two cars vied for a scarce curbside spot in Queens and ended when a white Audi crashed through a bakery's plate-glass window. Disputes over parking can turn violent; a few dozen times a year, they turn deadly.

''Parking-driven psychosis is a regular feature of American life,'' Grabar writes, and it isn't all that hard to see why. Anyone who has experienced that highly specific form of anxiety that arises from driving around and around and failing to find a spot has felt the stirrings of ''a common parking urge shared by most nonhomicidal drivers'' -- a lizard-brain fear of being trapped in an endless search and never getting out of the car.

''A parking space is nothing less than the link between driving and life itself.'' Grabar, who writes for Slate, does this now and again: elegantly stating a simple truth that undergirds the complex knot of social questions at the center of his book. The dream of the open road assumes a place to put our cars when we arrive at our destination. This is perhaps why so many Americans expect parking to be ''convenient, available and free'' -- in other words, ''perfect.'' Grabar empathizes with these desires, which is partly what makes ''Paved Paradise'' so persuasive. Only somebody who understands the emotional power of these fantasies can gently show us how bizarre such entitlement actually is. Decades of fixation on parking have transformed our streets and our cities, none of it for the better.

Grabar's argument is straightforward: The United States is underhoused and overparked. The economist (and ''the country's foremost parking scholar'') Donald Shoup refers to so-called parking minimums as ''dark energy.'' Rules that require new housing developments to build a minimum number of parking spaces have pushed up construction prices and generated sprawl. American cities tried to imitate American suburbs and then regretted it. There are now as many as six parking spaces for every car.

Parking minimums have also offered a convenient proxy for wealthy residents to object to new affordable housing in their neighborhoods. Grabar recounts a proposed development in Solana Beach, Calif., that eventually mutated to the point where a 10-unit project was required to have a whopping 53-space underground garage -- and so the housing never got built. ''Badmouthing the poor was a little unseemly,'' Grabar writes, ''but complaining about parking was morally unimpeachable.''

About 100 miles north of Solana Beach, Los Angeles had achieved the dubious distinction of being ''a metropolis of more than 10 million people where it was possible to park, mostly for free, at nearly every single residence, office and business.'' It also had a hollowed-out downtown to show for it -- until, that is, a 1999 ordinance allowed builders to convert commercial buildings into residential ones without the obligation to provide parking. Over the next two decades, the city's downtown population more than tripled. More than 60 vacant buildings got turned into more than 6,500 apartments. Grabar encourages us to be appropriately impressed: ''That was more housing units than downtown Los Angeles had built in the previous three decades combined.''

I can already hear the chorus of skeptics who live in places like New York City. ''Overparking'' might be a reality in places with suburban sprawl, but what about dense environments where curbside parking is the norm, and people have to contend with crowded streets and a maze of parking regulations?

Grabar suggests that one of the problems of a city like New York is that the price of parking has it exactly backward: Garage parking is expensive, whereas curbside parking is cheap, or even free. So a motorist is encouraged to drive around from errand to errand, cruising for spots and burning fuel, instead of leaving the car in a garage and spending the rest of the day traveling by bus, bike or foot. Not to mention that most New York City households don't own cars, and those that do don't typically use them to commute. As Grabar puts it, ''Curb parking in New York was, in reality, long-term car storage.''

Long-term car storage: It's a phrase that might enrage some drivers, but once you stop to think about it, there is something decidedly peculiar about the special dispensation we give to curbside parking, as if car-lined streets are an irrevocable part of the natural order. We have created a landscape where people have less claim to the streets than cars do. ''This was some of the most expensive land in the world,'' Grabar writes. ''And you could have it for free, provided you used it for just one thing: parking.''

Of course, revolutionizing our parking regime will require more than just some well-placed meters and different regulations. Public transit will have to get better; it's infinitely harder to get people to stop driving if the alternative is to wait for an unpredictable train that never seems to come. There is also the issue of accessibility, though as one parking reformer argues, people with disabilities ''are less likely to drive but more likely to have trouble finding housing.'' And Grabar allows that class has become an inextricable and increasingly intractable factor when it comes to parking reform. Widening income inequality and escalating real estate prices have pushed ***working-class*** families out of city centers and toward the suburbs, where owning a car is less a privilege than a necessity. In these contexts, access to free parking can take on ''a kind of egalitarian force.''

One of the book's strangest (and most fascinating) chapters describes what happened in Chicago after 2009, when the city leased 36,000 parking meters to a group of investors led by Morgan Stanley. What was supposed to be a boon to a town desperate for cash turned out to be a bit of a bum deal, as the investors hiked the meter rates and then invoiced the city for lost revenue whenever a metered road was closed for a parade or a street fair. Chicago officials had been game to sell because the meter rates had been kept so low that they were hardly generating any money -- realizing too late that the city should have raised prices and kept the money for public use.

''The meter saga,'' Grabar writes, ''showed how little anyone -- politicians, drivers, the press -- had seriously considered the price of parking.'' Or, in the immortal words of Joni Mitchell's ''Big Yellow Taxi'' (a song that has already given this book its perfect title): ''Don't it always seem to go/That you don't know what you've got 'til it's gone?''

Audio produced by Kate Winslett.

PAVED PARADISE: How Parking Explains the World | By Henry Grabar | Illustrated | 346 pp. | Penguin Press | $30Jennifer Szalai is the nonfiction book critic for The Times.Audio produced by Kate Winslett.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/10/books/review/paved-paradise-henry-grabar.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/10/books/review/paved-paradise-henry-grabar.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO (PHOTOGRAPH BY ETIENNE LAURENT/EPA, VIA SHUTTERSTOCK) This article appeared in print on page BR15.

**Load-Date:** May 21, 2023

**End of Document**



[***‘Clerks III’ Review: From the Heart***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:66BG-9DY1-JBG3-60KT-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

September 8, 2022 Thursday 16:56 EST

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**Section:** MOVIES

**Length:** 476 words

**Byline:** Glenn Kenny

**Highlight:** Kevin Smith revisits his convenience store characters, and his life, with this sequel.

**Body**

Kevin Smith revisits his convenience store characters, and his life, with this sequel.

These days more than ever, personal filmmaking deserves to be celebrated merely for manifesting itself. Which doesn’t mean that personal filmmaking doesn’t come in some confounding forms.

From his first feature, the very low-budget, black-and-white [*“Clerks” (1994)*](https://www.nytimes.com/1994/03/25/movies/review-film-festival-at-a-convenience-store-coolness-to-go.html), the writer-director Kevin Smith has only ever made movies about himself. Not just himself as a person, but himself as a sensibility: quick-witted, ***working-class***, pop-culture-obsessive wiseass Jersey boy. In [*“Clerks”*](https://www.nytimes.com/1994/03/25/movies/review-film-festival-at-a-convenience-store-coolness-to-go.html) he put it across perfectly. In the film’s second sequel, “Clerks III,” he is not nearly as deft.

Paradoxically, some of this is because of Smith’s relative maturity. A husband and a father and a [*heart attack survivor*](https://www.mensjournal.com/health-fitness/kevin-smith-doctor-says-weed-saved-him-from-fatal-heart-attack/) who is now 52, he’s got more on his mind than being a wiseass. Instead of following up the 2006 film [*“Clerks II”*](https://www.nytimes.com/2006/07/21/movies/21cler.html) with more of that picture’s profane exuberant absurdity, he brings back Dante and Randal and Jay and Silent Bob and does some stocktaking.

[Video: [*Watch on YouTube.*](http://youtube.com/embed/uD3n3GM3Z_0)]

The movie is bouncy at first, though the actors Brian O’Halloran and Jeff Anderson, so rawly naturalistic in the earlier movies, here seem like they’re doing bits. Still, three words characterize the first third or so of the picture: not funny enough. As in, a new character is nicknamed Blockchain. Which is funnier than that character nicknamed Podcast in the most recent [*“Ghostbusters” movie*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/18/movies/ghostbusters-afterlife-review.html), but, you know.

Randal has a heart attack, and, realizing he has to make something of his life, decides to direct a movie. About, yes, working at a convenience store. Not funny enough turns to often not funny, a star-studded audition scene (Ben Affleck! Danny Trejo! Freddie Prinze Jr.!) notwithstanding.

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For instance, at one point the trench-coated Silent Bob, played as ever by Smith, breaks character and, as Smith the filmmaker, lectures Randal about the hideous color scheme of a shot he’s framing. The joke falls flat, and not just because Smith’s visual mode is rarely mistaken for that of “The Red Shoes.”

The wobbly ending combines the confounding and frequently schticky meta mode with the forced sentimentality of that Nicole Kidman [*AMC Theaters promo*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KiEeIxZJ9x0). My rooting interest in Smith notwithstanding (full disclosure: I, too, am a wiseass Jersey boy), it made me wince.

Clerks III

Rated R. It’s a Kevin Smith movie. Running time: 1 hour 55 minutes. [*In theaters.*](https://clerks3.movie/)

PHOTO: From left, Brian O’Halloran, Jeff Anderson, Austin Zajur and Trevor Fehrman in “Clerks III.” (PHOTOGRAPH BY LIONSGATE)

**Load-Date:** September 8, 2022

**End of Document**



[***Tim Ryan Struggles to Reach Ohio’s Exhausted Majority***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:655D-FMM1-DXY4-X0N3-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

April 6, 2022 Wednesday 11:08 EST

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**Section:** US; politics

**Length:** 1792 words

**Byline:** Jazmine Ulloa

**Highlight:** Mr. Ryan, the Ohio Democrat running for Senate, has been listening to white ***working-class*** voters. Whether they are listening to him and the Democratic Party is the question.

**Body**

Mr. Ryan, the Ohio Democrat running for Senate, has been listening to white ***working-class*** voters. Whether they are listening to him and the Democratic Party is the question.

NILES, OHIO — Representative Tim Ryan won re-election in 2020. But in one sharply personal way, he lost, too.

Mr. Ryan, 48, the Ohio Democrat and one-time presidential candidate, was born and raised in Niles, a manufacturing city of roughly 18,000 that sits halfway between Youngstown and Warren in southern Trumbull County.

Mr. Ryan had once won Trumbull with as much as 74 percent of the vote. That number fell to just 48 percent in 2020, when he narrowly lost the county by roughly one percentage point. A place that was once a bastion of white blue-collar Democrats turned away from a white Democratic native son whose blue-collar grandfather had been a steelworker in Niles for four decades.

Now, Mr. Ryan is trying to win back his party’s voters in Trumbull and throughout Ohio as he runs for Senate. His problem in Trumbull exemplifies the larger problem for Democrats in the Midwest: The lingering appeal of Trumpism and the erosion of support for the party among the white ***working-class*** voters who once formed a loyal part of its base in the industrial heart of the country.

Many national Democratic pollsters and pundits have written off Mr. Ryan’s pursuit as a near-impossible task. They see Ohio as too red and too white to change course. But as his Republican opponents have been veering farther to the right and aggressively pursuing former President Donald J. Trump’s endorsement, Mr. Ryan is betting voters have had enough of the extremism in American politics. He is focused on bringing back voters who feel forgotten by Democrats and turned off by Republicans.

“I feel like I am representing the Exhausted Majority,” Mr. Ryan said in an interview, using [*a phrase coined by researchers*](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/11/17/sunday-review/elections-partisanship-exhausted-majority.html) to describe the estimated two-thirds of voters who are less polarized and who feel overlooked. People, Mr. Ryan added, “just want to move on and actually focus on the things that are really important.”

Like other Democrats in long-shot races, Mr. Ryan must stay firmly within a narrow lane as he vies to replace Senator Rob Portman, a Republican who is retiring. Mr. Ryan does not tout Medicare for All and other transformative policies that tend to energize progressives, and he does not want to talk about transgender women in sports and other divisive issues. Instead, he wants to campaign strictly on jobs, manufacturing and taking on China. His first television commercial — part of a $3.3 million ad buy — almost sounds like it came from a Republican, squarely centering on the nation’s fight to beat China on manufacturing.

“It’s us versus them,” he says in a digital one-minute [*version of the ad*](https://twitter.com/TimRyan/status/1508795783210016772), during which he mentions “China” eight times in 60 seconds. The ad has drawn criticism from some Asian advocacy groups and elected officials, who described it as racist and called on him to take it down.

Shekar Narasimhan, the chairman of AAPI Victory Fund, a political action committee that mobilizes Asian American and Pacific Islander voters, urged Mr. Ryan to not use hate or fear to win votes. “That’s what the Trump Republicans do and why we fight them everywhere,” he said [*in a statement*](https://twitter.com/AAPIVictoryFund/status/1509597372132777994?s=20&amp;t=8Y79KefVHmgB4Y06PNFWqA).

Mr. Ryan condemned anti-Asian violence but said that he was speaking specifically about government policies of the Chinese Communist Party that have hurt Ohio workers and that he was not backing down.

Seven months before the November election, it is too early to say whether the Ryan playbook is working. Interviews with voters, former elected officials and community leaders in Niles, Warren and other towns in the industrial region known as the Mahoning Valley showed just how hard the midterms will be for Democrats, and for Mr. Ryan. His jobs-and-the-economy message clashes with the prices ***working-class*** voters have been paying at the grocery store and at the gas pump.

Many Republican voters in this part of the Mahoning Valley were quick to dismiss any Democrat as unviable, citing gas prices, inflation and the U.S.-Mexico border as Democratic problems that needed Republican solutions. Democrats tended to be split between those who supported Mr. Ryan and those wary he had become too much a part of the Democratic establishment. Even anti-Trump voters have been in an anti-establishment frame of mind.

Outside the Hot Dog Shoppe in Warren, Royce VanDervort, 76, who worked for the Packard electric division at General Motors, said he understood why people grew tired of the Democratic political machine amid factory closures and job losses, but was surprised by just how strong and enduring the Trump appeal has been. He is a die-hard Democrat and said he supports Mr. Ryan. “Too old to change now,” he added.

But Mr. VanDervort’s friend and neighbor, Dennis Garito, 57, was the kind of voter Mr. Ryan has been trying to win back. A retired fabrication worker and a Democrat for 35 years, Mr. Garito now describes himself as an independent. On the one hand, he said, he worries Mr. Ryan and other Democrats have lost touch with the people they represent. On the other, he has grown sick of far-right Republicans who argue, he said, like “kids fighting.”

He plans to vote for Mr. Ryan in the Democratic primary in May. But if State Senator Matt Dolan, a Republican less centered on Mr. Trump, wins the Republican primary and makes it on the ballot in November, Mr. Ryan will likely lose Mr. Garito’s vote. “If it comes down between Dolan and Ryan, I’m probably going to vote for Dolan,” Mr. Garito said. Mr. Ryan, he added, had become “too much of a career politician.”

Asked later about Mr. Garito’s comments, Mr. Ryan said Mr. Garito reflected those voters in the middle who are without a home politically. His role model has been Senator Sherrod Brown, the Ohio Democrat who has weathered Republican waves by focusing on rebuilding the middle class.

“I am telling everyone right now — ‘Just hear us out, come listen to us,’” the congressman said.

On a blustery, snowy day in early spring, Mr. Ryan sat in Giuseppe’s Italian Market, one of his favorite Italian delis in Niles, dressed down in jeans and a gray pullover with a United Steelworkers logo. In the Democratic primary, Mr. Ryan is the front-runner, but he will face Morgan Harper, a progressive lawyer, and Traci Johnson, a tech executive.

Mr. Ryan has been on a rigorous tour of the state, aiming to visit with voters in all 88 counties. So far, he has hit 82. He met with union workers in town halls, diners and factories along the Ohio River. He hosted round tables with business owners and home health care aides in Cincinnati, Cleveland and other cities. He picketed with aerospace workers north of Dayton.

“I want to see these folks,” Mr. Ryan said. “I want to be in their communities.”

Mr. Ryan’s visit-every-county tactic echoes Beto O’Rourke’s driving tour of Texas in 2017 and 2018, when Mr. O’Rourke made campaign stops in all 254 counties in Texas during his unsuccessful bid to defeat Senator Ted Cruz.

The Mahoning Valley where Mr. Ryan still lives stretches across northeastern Ohio and northwestern Pennsylvania, and was once a thriving zone of steel factories and manufacturing plants. But Mr. Ryan saw the region transform amid job losses, bad trade deals and disinvestment, he said.

“Growing up, you think it is just happening here, but when you travel Ohio, you realize that it is the vast majority of Ohio,” he said.

The exodus of white blue-collar voters from the Democratic Party accelerated here with the arrival of Mr. Trump, who stirred populist anger as he pledged to bring back manufacturing jobs and companies, as well as to aid struggling workers who had been laid off or reassigned. Many of his promises [*never materialized*](https://apps.bostonglobe.com/nation/politics/2019/10/voters-2020-election/ohio/lordstown/), but that didn’t hurt the former president’s well of support among the workers who saw him as their champion. Ohio went to Mr. Trump in the past two presidential elections, and it appears to be trending in Republicans’ favor, as President Biden’s low approval ratings are expected to hurt Democrats.

The diminishing support for Mr. Ryan in 2020 in Trumbull County was part of a larger wave of enthusiasm for Mr. Trump that knocked out other well-known Democrats in the Mahoning Valley, said Bill Padisak, who works in Niles and serves as president of the A.F.L.-C.I.O. Central Labor Council in Mahoning and Trumbull Counties. But he said it was too early to tell whether many of those people would remain Republicans.

“A lot of the union members I talk to, I think they will swing back,” Mr. Padisak said.

Democrats’ struggles go far beyond Mr. Trump. The outrage, racial resentment and white grievances harnessed by Republicans have proven too salient for some voters who see their identity and way of life under attack. Others blame the Biden administration and Democrats for the troubles with the economy and illegal immigration.

On a visit to Warren for her 18-year-old daughter’s dance competition, Kristen Moll, 54, echoed a common refrain among Republicans. “Right now, regardless of if you’re running for Senate or governor or any public office, I would feel the Democratic Party in general is leading the country down the wrong path,” Ms. Moll said.

At her home, Charlene W. Allen, 76, a community activist and legislative aide to the Youngstown Warren Black Caucus, believed Mr. Ryan had a shot. But she said he could not win the seat without doing more to repel Republicans’ attempts to sow division, like proactively taking on issues of race and crime.

“Some of that Trump support has waned, but I don’t know if it has waned enough,” she said.

David and Jennifer Raspanti, who are the owners of a painting company in Trumbull County and who are Republicans, said they did not care whether the next senator was a Republican or a Democrat as long as the candidate was not extreme and could make clearheaded decisions.

“We need to come back to the middle,” Ms. Raspanti, 44, said at a restaurant in Boardman Township, where the family was having breakfast with their two sons after church. “We need to listen to each other better.”

PHOTOS: Youngstown in the Mahoning Valley has seen blue-collar voters move toward Donald J. Trump.; David and Jennifer Raspanti said they want a senator who is not extreme, regardless of party.; Many Republican voters in the Mahoning Valley were quick to dismiss any Democrat as unviable.; TIM RYAN, Ohio Democratic congressman, on his voter outreach.; “Some of that Trump support has waned, but I don’t know if it has waned enough,” said Charlene W. Allen, a local activist.; Dennis Garito said Democrats are out of touch, but he’s also sick of Republicans who argue like “kids fighting.” (PHOTOGRAPHS BY MADDIE McGARVEY FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** April 7, 2022

**End of Document**



[***Has America Ignored the Workplace for Too Long?; Screenland***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68FR-WBW1-JBG3-61PS-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

June 13, 2023 Tuesday 07:11 EST

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**Section:** MAGAZINE

**Length:** 1305 words

**Byline:** Robin Kaiser-Schatzlein

**Highlight:** Barack Obama’s Netflix series “Working” tries to catch you up on decades of change — more than it has time for.

**Body**

Barack Obama’s Netflix series “Working” tries to catch you up on decades of change — more than it has time for.

Sheila steps into a wood-paneled room and addresses a ring of home-care aides in navy blue scrubs. Soft light filters through the curtains as they begin with a prayer: “Father God, as we go through this meeting, open up our minds, open up our ears, so we can hear, so we can see. Amen.” The aides take turns introducing themselves and offering brief sketches of their jobs. Sheila is their manager. They are employed by At Home Care, LLC, a business in southeastern Mississippi, and they are speaking to a camera — to a documentary crew that is filming their meeting for a mini-series titled [*“Working: What We Do All Day.”*](https://www.netflix.com/title/81130576) Some describe the closeness they have with the people whose bedpans they change, whose medications they administer. One, Caroline, her pulled-back hair flecked with gray, says she probably knows the clients she takes care of better than their own children do. Then Sheila asks: “Y’all have any questions for me? Any comments for me?”

This innocent query opens a floodgate of discontent that takes both Sheila and the viewer by surprise. There are questions about time-keeping and payment-tracking systems. An aide named Amanda says a client had her drive 10 miles to pick up a pizza: “Is the GPS picking up all that?” No, Sheila says sympathetically, aides don’t get paid for extra driving. “It don’t seem right,” she concedes, “because you’re burning your gas.” None of this releases the pressure in the room; if anything, it just keeps building. “How are we supposed to live and survive?” one woman asks. “We have kids to take care of, homes to take care of.” Caroline notes that she has been with the company for almost three years without seeing a raise. Sheila stares downward, as though battening her emotional hatches.

The scene is documentary gold. It requires no commentary, no interviews. It is a simple, powerful illustration of an American workplace, boiling like a pot of tomato sauce, ready to spit hot rivulets of grievance at anyone who stirs it. We feel for the workers. We feel for Sheila, who seems caught in a crossfire, trying her best. We feel righteous anger at whoever might be to blame for all this dissatisfaction. But who, precisely, is that? This is one of many big questions that “Working” may not have anywhere near enough time to answer.

“Working” is a limited Netflix series hosted by Barack Obama and produced in part by Higher Ground, the production company he and Michelle Obama founded. In a voice-over, the former president tells us the production was inspired by [*Studs Terkel’s*](https://www.nytimes.com/2008/11/01/books/01terkel.html) pathbreaking 1974 oral history, “Working: People Talk About What They Do All Day and How They Feel About What They Do,” a hefty book that relayed the thoughts and stories of a wide swath of Americans, placing their words democratically side by side. The show’s four episodes, made available last month, aim for something similar, spending time with workers at all levels of the three companies it focuses on — letting viewers viscerally compare, say, the lives of a Manhattan housekeeper and the C.E.O. of the conglomerate that owns the hotel where she works. Money was clearly spent on this program. The cameras are slick, the angles creative, the songs expensively licensed. This may well be the production’s chief value: It is shockingly rare to see the daily lives of ***working-class*** people represented on TV so plainly and honestly, let alone with such a budget.

[Video: [*Watch on YouTube.*](http://youtube.com/embed/eS6GkydzCRg)]

In that context, watching Sheila’s meeting spiral out of control feels almost as subversive and revelatory as Terkel’s book. The problem arises when the show attempts to explain what, specifically, has gone wrong to make that eruption possible. Try as it might to stay close to the workers, the series can’t resist its periodic voice-overs, in which Obama delivers industrial-grade doses of information over spiffy archival footage of domestic workers or the movie “Wall Street” or the economist Milton Friedman. The scripts touch on all sorts of systemic forces, from the workers left out of the New Deal to the macroeconomics of the decline of the middle class.

The fact that the show needs to reach all the way back to the New Deal era underlines a key problem: America’s perception of its own workplaces may be astonishingly out of date, steeped in denial about just how profoundly things have changed. The series wants to hang around working people, as Terkel did, to understand their hopes and dreams and contradictions. But it also wants to put forward an argument about what’s happened to American workers that involves catching the viewer up on several decades of complex changes — all presented by a politician who, you can’t help noting, happened to be in charge of the country for a key stretch of the time being explored.

Did politicians participate in all that denial? This issue goes unaddressed, but the series does touch on the idea that popular media has long neglected the workplace. Television, Obama argues at one point, used to be full of representations of working and middle-class people and their jobs — say, in Norman Lear shows like “Good Times” or “All in the Family.” After the Reagan era, though, popular shows tended to follow upscale professionals, or to look more like “Friends” or “Seinfeld,” portraying people who lived comfortably despite being vaguely or fancifully employed. The nation’s jobs have shifted from industrial to service work, but even that seismic change — a work force now epitomized by nurses, waiters, retail clerks, delivery drivers — is rarely reflected in the stories we consume. Neither are developments like the erosion of job security, the rise of erratic scheduling, the invasive workplace surveillance — changes that marked Obama’s very own era in the White House.

“Obtuseness in ‘respectable’ quarters is not a new phenomenon,” Terkel writes in his book. He offers the example of Henry Mayhew, whose 19th-century reports on working people in London “astonished and horrified readers of The Morning Chronicle.” The writer Barbara Ehrenreich later cataloged the way journalists and scholars “discovered” poverty in the 1960s after the breathless enthusiasm of the postwar economy cooled. (“We seem to have suddenly awakened,” [*the critic Dwight Macdonald wrote in a New Yorker review*](https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/1963/01/19/our-invisible-poor) of one book on the topic, “to the fact that mass poverty persists.”) It’s easy to sense something similar in the audience for a documentary like “Working” — a sudden, belated understanding of the indignities creeping up toward even the most insulated professionals, and a growing sense of the workplace as a site of urgent, high-stakes conflict.

In the final episode, Obama suggests his biggest worry is polarization, a fear of the problems that will arise if we cannot pay people enough for them to find dignity in their work. Terkel’s own animating concerns were more jarringly radical and succinct: He began his book with the admonition that since it was about work, it was, “by its very nature, about violence — to the spirit as well as to the body.” Obama is not quite there. His “Working” wants to show us what America’s jobs look like today, and to wake us to the possibility that we have spent too long underestimating their profound, dignity-robbing, politically consequential transformation. The series would need hours of explanatory montage to make up for all that lost time; if there’s anything it makes clear, it’s that the problem is far larger and more urgent than a few hours of television can aim to capture.

Audio produced by Kate Winslett.

Opening illustration: Source photographs from Netflix

Audio produced by Kate Winslett.

PHOTOS (PHOTOGRAPHS BY NETLFIX) (MM7; MM8; MM9) This article appeared in print on page MM7, MM8, MM9, MM10.

**Load-Date:** June 17, 2023

**End of Document**



[***Pocketbook Politics; The Morning Newsletter***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:62WF-FMX1-DXY4-X28V-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

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**Section:** BRIEFING

**Length:** 1702 words

**Byline:** David Leonhardt

**Highlight:** After Manchin’s big announcement, what’s next for Democrats?

**Body**

After Manchin’s big announcement, what’s next for Democrats?

Many Democrats are feeling bereft about Senator Joe Manchin’s [*opposition to a major voting rights bill*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/06/06/us/politics/joe-manchin-op-ed.html) and his continuing support for the filibuster. And they are correct that Manchin’s positions will [*constrain*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/06/06/us/politics/joe-manchin-op-ed.html) President Biden’s agenda.

But Manchin has also clarified the paths that are open to Democrats. The party can now let go of its dreams of sweeping legislative change achieved through repeated 51-vote Senate majorities and instead focus on the realistic options.

Today’s newsletter explains those options, broken into short term and long term.

What now?

The issues that tend to unite the Democratic Party are economic issues, and Manchin is a good case study. When he breaks with his party, it is typically on issues other than economic policy.

He effectively killed the voting rights bill this week, and he voted for Brett Kavanaugh’s Supreme Court confirmation in 2018. Manchin is also well to the right of most congressional Democrats on abortion and gun policy.

Yet he has often stuck with his party on taxes, health insurance, labor unions and other pocketbook issues. Like every other Democrat in the Senate, Manchin voted against both Donald Trump’s [*attempts to repeal Obamacare*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/06/06/us/politics/joe-manchin-op-ed.html) and the 2017 Trump tax cut that was skewed heavily toward the rich. Earlier this year, Manchin voted for Biden’s $1.9 trillion virus rescue bill. Without his vote, that bill would not be law.

On all these issues — economic and otherwise — Manchin’s votes tend to reflect the majority opinion of his constituents. West Virginia is a ***working-class*** state, and American ***working-class*** voters tend to be [*culturally conservative and economically progressive*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/06/06/us/politics/joe-manchin-op-ed.html). Polls show that most favor abortion restrictions, tight border security and well-funded police departments — as well as expanded Medicare and pre-K, a higher minimum wage, federal spending to create jobs and tax increases on the rich.

“Manchin is a pocketbook Democrat, not a social warrior,” Carl Hulse, The Times’s chief Washington correspondent, told me.

This pattern suggests that Manchin may be willing to support versions of the next two major items on Biden’s agenda: [*an infrastructure bill*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/06/06/us/politics/joe-manchin-op-ed.html) and [*an “American Families Plan”*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/06/06/us/politics/joe-manchin-op-ed.html) to expand child care, education and other areas.

Manchin’s support is certainly not guaranteed, partly because he does not like to look partisan. And congressional Republicans seem likely to oppose Biden’s upcoming bills, [*much as they opposed*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/06/06/us/politics/joe-manchin-op-ed.html) the virus rescue bill and legislation from both Barack Obama and Bill Clinton. The default position of today’s Republican Party, [*with rare exceptions*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/06/06/us/politics/joe-manchin-op-ed.html), is unanimous opposition to any bill that a Democratic president proposes.

But Manchin has been willing to provide the deciding vote on economic policy before, even along partisan lines. When he does, he sometimes demands high-profile concessions that burnish his image as a bipartisan figure who’s to the right of most Democrats — but that alter the bill in only modest ways, [*as my colleague Jonathan Martin has noted*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/06/06/us/politics/joe-manchin-op-ed.html).

If Manchin had provided the deciding vote for the voting rights bill, it arguably would have been unlike any other vote he had cast in his career. The same would not be true of a vote for the infrastructure bill or the families plan.

The Democrats’ future

What about the longer term for the Democratic Party? Some Democrats are worried that the lack of a voting rights bill will doom the party to election losses starting in 2022. But that seems like an overstatement.

The voting restrictions being passed by Republican state legislators are worrisomely antidemocratic and partisan in their intent, many election experts say. And they may give Republicans an unfair advantage in very close elections. But it seems likely they will have only a modest impact, as Nate Cohn, who analyzes elections for The Times, [*has explained*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/06/06/us/politics/joe-manchin-op-ed.html). Democrats can still win elections.

Manchin happens to be a useful guide on that topic, too. [*He has kept winning*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/06/06/us/politics/joe-manchin-op-ed.html) even as West Virginia has become deeply Republican, by appealing to the state’s culturally conservative, economically progressive majority. To varying degrees, some other Democrats from red or purple states, like Senators Sherrod Brown of Ohio and Kyrsten Sinema of Arizona, offer similar lessons. [*So did Obama*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/06/06/us/politics/joe-manchin-op-ed.html), who fared better with ***working-class*** voters than many other Democrats.

This approach is the only evident way for Democrats to stem their losses in recent years among ***working-class*** voters — and not only among the white ***working class***. A [*recent analysis*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/06/06/us/politics/joe-manchin-op-ed.html) of the 2020 election by three Democratic groups argued that the party lost Black, Latino and Asian American support because it did not have a sharp enough economic message. A [*recent poll*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/06/06/us/politics/joe-manchin-op-ed.html) by a Republican group found that most Latinos supported both tight border security and “traditional values centered on faith, family and freedom.”

As Jason Riley, a Wall Street Journal columnist, [*wrote this week*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/06/06/us/politics/joe-manchin-op-ed.html), “As more college-educated whites have joined the Democratic Party, it has lurched further left, causing discomfort among the more moderate Black, Hispanic, Asian and ***working-class*** white Democrats who outnumber them.”

One striking aspect of the voting rights debate is how close Democrats came to passing a bill. With only one or two more senators from purple or red states, the party might well be able to defang the filibuster and pass ambitious legislation on a range of issues.

The Democrats’ problem isn’t so much Joe Manchin as it is the dearth of other senators who are as good at winning tough elections as he is.

THE LATEST NEWS

The Virus

* The White House plans to send [*500 million Pfizer shots*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/06/06/us/politics/joe-manchin-op-ed.html) to about 100 countries over the next year.

1. Eight of the 10 least-vaccinated states [*are in the South*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/06/06/us/politics/joe-manchin-op-ed.html), a reflection of vaccine hesitancy and poor access to health care.
2. Who’s dying of Covid in the U.S.? These charts [*offer a portrait*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/06/06/us/politics/joe-manchin-op-ed.html).
3. The Baseball Hall of Fame [*will hold an outdoor ceremony*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/06/06/us/politics/joe-manchin-op-ed.html) with fans to induct Derek Jeter and three others in September.
4. Virus resources: U.S. employers can require vaccinations. [*Here’s the latest on the rules*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/06/06/us/politics/joe-manchin-op-ed.html).

Politics

* Biden [*revoked a Trump-era order meant to ban TikTok*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/06/06/us/politics/joe-manchin-op-ed.html).

1. The Biden Administration will restore environmental protections for [*streams, marshes and other bodies of water*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/06/06/us/politics/joe-manchin-op-ed.html).
2. Russia designated Aleksei Navalny’s [*political group as extremist*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/06/06/us/politics/joe-manchin-op-ed.html), a warning to Biden before his meeting with Vladimir Putin next week.
3. The police [*had been planning to clear Lafayette Square*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/06/06/us/politics/joe-manchin-op-ed.html) before Trump posed for photos while holding a Bible there last year, according to a report.

Other Big Stories

* The company behind the Keystone XL oil pipeline — long opposed by environmentalists — [*canceled the project*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/06/06/us/politics/joe-manchin-op-ed.html).

1. The F.B.I.’s recovery of Bitcoins from the Colonial Pipeline ransomware attack has upended the theory [*that the cryptocurrency is ideal for criminals*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/06/06/us/politics/joe-manchin-op-ed.html).
2. A major meat processor [*paid $11 million ransom in Bitcoin*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/06/06/us/politics/joe-manchin-op-ed.html) to the hackers who forced it to close its beef plants last week.
3. Researchers in Tulsa, Okla., [*found evidence of at least 27 coffins*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/06/06/us/politics/joe-manchin-op-ed.html) that may contain victims of the racist 1921 massacre there.
4. The police in Nicaragua [*are detaining opposition leaders*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/06/06/us/politics/joe-manchin-op-ed.html), leaving President Daniel Ortega running practically unopposed in November’s elections.

Opinions

For a fairer tax system, [*increase I.R.S. funding*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/06/06/us/politics/joe-manchin-op-ed.html), five former U.S. Treasury secretaries argue.

Morning Reads

Sweaty summer: Are natural deodorants [*better for you*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/06/06/us/politics/joe-manchin-op-ed.html)

The protector: After surviving abuse, he made a career of [*finding justice for others*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/06/06/us/politics/joe-manchin-op-ed.html).

A Times classic: [*Are you secretly a millennial*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/06/06/us/politics/joe-manchin-op-ed.html)

Lives Lived: Stuart Silver helped reinvigorate the Met in the 1960s and ’70s, turning exhibitions into crowd-pleasing spectacles that became models for other museums. [*He died at 84*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/06/06/us/politics/joe-manchin-op-ed.html).

ARTS AND IDEAS

The Tenement Museum’s missing piece

For nearly three decades, the Tenement Museum has explored New York’s history of immigration through tours of meticulously recreated apartments on the Lower East Side.

These spaces have long told the stories of German, Irish, Italian and Jewish immigrants, and a few years ago expanded to include Chinese and Puerto Rican families. Now, as the museum reopens after being closed during the pandemic, it is finally addressing an omission in its accounts of the neighborhood’s history by working on an exhibit about a Black family, along with a walking tour that covers nearly 400 years of local African-American history.

“The museum has always looked at the question of how people become American,” Lauren O’Brien, a lead researcher on the projects, told The Times. “But what does it mean to be born an American, but not seen as an American?”

Though the new apartment won’t open until 2022, visitors can see a preview of the exhibit starting next month. The museum is also updating all its current tours to account for how race shaped the opportunities available for predominantly white immigrants. [*Read more about the history*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/06/06/us/politics/joe-manchin-op-ed.html).

PLAY, WATCH, EAT

What to Cook

[*Bibim guksu*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/06/06/us/politics/joe-manchin-op-ed.html), “mixed noodles” in Korean, is an adaptable cold dish that’s perfect for a quick summer meal.

What to Watch

The Tribeca Festival is back. [*Here’s your guide*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/06/06/us/politics/joe-manchin-op-ed.html) to this year’s movie lineup.

Personal Tech

A new Amazon service will automatically share millions of people’s home internet with strangers. It’s not as creepy as it sounds, [*Wirecutter says*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/06/06/us/politics/joe-manchin-op-ed.html).

Late Night

The hosts talked [*about Biden’s trip to Europe*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/06/06/us/politics/joe-manchin-op-ed.html).

Now Time to Play

The pangram from yesterday’s Spelling Bee was effacing. Here is today’s puzzle — or you can [*play online*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/06/06/us/politics/joe-manchin-op-ed.html).

Here’s [*today’s Mini Crossword*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/06/06/us/politics/joe-manchin-op-ed.html), and a clue: Seth of “Superbad” (five letters).

If you’re in the mood to play more, find [*all our games here*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/06/06/us/politics/joe-manchin-op-ed.html).

Thanks for spending part of your morning with The Times. See you tomorrow. — David

P.S. Stella Bugbee, previously of New York Magazine, will be [*the new editor of The Times’s Styles section*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/06/06/us/politics/joe-manchin-op-ed.html).

You can see [*today’s print front page here*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/06/06/us/politics/joe-manchin-op-ed.html).

“[*The Daily*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/06/06/us/politics/joe-manchin-op-ed.html)” is about the mRNA vaccine. On “[*Sway*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/06/06/us/politics/joe-manchin-op-ed.html),” the E.U.’s Margrethe Vestager talks about battling Big Tech.

Claire Moses, Ian Prasad Philbrick, Tom Wright-Piersanti and Sanam Yar contributed to The Morning. You can reach the team at [*themorning@nytimes.com*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/06/06/us/politics/joe-manchin-op-ed.html).

[*Sign up here to get this newsletter in your inbox*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/06/06/us/politics/joe-manchin-op-ed.html).

PHOTO: Joe Manchin at a Senate Appropriations Subcommittee hearing yesterday. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Pool photo by Al Drago FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** June 10, 2021

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[***Lo Mein and Ropa Vieja, Sharing a Menu***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6880-93W1-DXY4-X19P-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

May 17, 2023 Wednesday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section D; Column 0; Dining In, Dining Out / Style Desk; Pg. 6

**Length:** 1126 words

**Byline:** By Christina Morales

**Body**

During a recent weekday lunch rush at his restaurant on the Upper West Side, Richard Lam hurried around the dining room fielding orders from his regulars for dishes like wonton soup, General Tso's chicken and fried rice.

Moments earlier, Mr. Lam recommended a plate of crispy chicharrones de pollo to a first-time customer who learned about the diner from a viral TikTok video posted in March.

La Dinastia, which opened in 1986, is at the center of an effort by restaurant owners to resuscitate New York City's Chino Latino food, a slowly dying cuisine that features Chinese dishes like lo mein alongside Latino ones such as palomilla steak cooked in a wok, and mofongo covered in a beef gravy.

Mr. Lam's struggle to stay relevant recently received a boost from an unlikely source: a series of widely viewed TikTok videos posted in the last few months from the account @RighteousEats that has brought scores of new customers to the diner. The videos have ranged from highlighting dishes on the menu to explaining the history of the restaurant in Spanish.

Now, Mr. Lam, 36, finds himself navigating a new frontier, with lines spilling out of the door of this neighborhood institution surrounded by trendy fast-casual spots. The moment marks his best -- and perhaps last -- chance to attract new diners to Chino Latino food, a niche in the New York food scene.

''It's my time to try and build new clientele,'' said Mr. Lam, whose father, Juan Lam, opened the restaurant shortly after he was born.

Unlike places serving fusion foods like Korean tacos or Mexican pizza, restaurants like La Dinastia split their menus to showcase separate Chinese and Latino dishes that can also be served together.

There are only a handful of Chino Latino restaurants left in New York today, but at one point, there were at least 20, said Lok Siu, a professor of Asian American and Asian diaspora studies at the University of California, Berkeley, who has researched Chinese Latinos. Many of the restaurants were opened by the descendants of Chinese immigrants who moved to countries like Cuba, Peru and Venezuela, beginning in the mid-1800s. They learned to cook local dishes and speak Spanish.

As political turmoil and economic instability uprooted people throughout Latin America, Chinese Latinos came to the United States, eventually settling in New York City. Chino Latino cuisine flourished here, Ms. Siu said, because immigrants found a community in two cultures. They opened restaurants in the late 1960s to serve ***working class*** Latinos, especially those who lived in the Upper West Side. Over time, as neighborhoods gentrified and the population of Chinese Latinos dwindled, so did the restaurants.

''These are the last remnants of what remains from this cultural phenomena,'' Ms. Liu said about the restaurants. ''There's nothing else that marks their long existence.''

That disappearing history is honored at Marco Britti's restaurant Calle Dao, named after Calle Cuchillo, the last remaining street of the Chinatown in Cuba's capital. It opened in 2014, and he took a fusion cooking approach with Chinese and Cuban ingredients to make dishes like fried rice with roasted pork and chorizo, and ropa vieja served with noodles and a Sichuan soy glaze.

In the dining room, an enlarged image of the Cuban newspaper Kwong Wah Po -- printed in Spanish and Chinese -- hangs on the wall.

''It's kind of the birth certificate of Calle Dao,'' said Mr. Britti, 50, an Italian immigrant who moved to Cuba for a short time to learn about salsa music. ''It brings the two cultures together.''

The owners of two traditional Chino Latino restaurants, La Dinastia and Flor de Mayo, which opened in 1977, have largely kept the food and service as it was when their families began.

Though both restaurants operate separately, they share a common history. Phillip Chu and William Cho immigrated to Peru in the late 1960s from Hong Kong and met Juan Lam. The trio moved to New York City soon after and took over a restaurant in 1977, forming Flor de Mayo together with an additional partner. In 1985, when the lease ended, the partners split; Mr. Lam opened La Dinastia where there was formerly a Cuban restaurant, and Flor de Mayo relocated to a new space on Broadway. The current owners remain good friends.

Both restaurants have experimented with updated dishes, like a green sauce made with cilantro and avocado that pairs well with chicharrones de pollo at La Dinastia, and yuca balls stuffed with sausage, deep fried and served with a spicy sauce at Flor de Mayo.

Last month, Brandon Marquez, of Midtown East, first dined at La Dinastia, and soon after saw a TikTok video by Righteous Eats about the restaurant.

''It kind of reminds me of home,'' Mr. Marquez, 24, who is half Filipino and Salvadoran, said about the restaurant, ''especially when I saw the TikTok and all the Asian people speaking in Spanish.''

Despite the new publicity, the biggest challenge these restaurants face is staffing. All of the cooks at La Dinastia's kitchen are Chinese and have learned to make Cuban dishes over time. Many original cooks and waiters retired during the pandemic. Michael Lan, an owner at La Dinastia who has worked there for decades, is planning his own exit.

''I'll be there for him,'' Mr. Lan, 64, said about the younger Mr. Lam. ''I'm trying to hand him the baton. He's really pushing it, and he will get there when I finally decide to hang up my shoes.''

At Flor de Mayo, inexperienced cooks start off making dishes like lo mein and fried rice, and learn to serve food like lomo saltado from the chefs that have worked there for close to 30 years. ''But they're getting old,'' said Marvin Chu, 40, an owner who operates the restaurant's three locations with his brother and great-uncle. ''Our menu has over 100 types of cooking. For someone that's new coming in and looking, they get scared.''

This variety of food has always interested Chris Sileo, 55, of the Upper West Side. About once a month, he comes to La Dinastia with friends from Hell's Kitchen and Sparta, N.J. One, Steven Grillo, 50, recognized Mr. Lan from a Facebook video.

Regulars like Mr. Sileo have had a more difficult time eating at the restaurant lately because of long lines, though Mr. Lam, an owner, said he will hold a table if frequent patrons call ahead. Mr. Sileo said he was happy to see the boost from social media and new customers.

''You have to keep it growing,'' he said. ''But they always have room for us.''

Susan C. Beachy contributed research.

Follow New York Times Cooking on Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, TikTok and Pinterest. Get regular updates from New York Times Cooking, with recipe suggestions, cooking tips and shopping advice.Susan C. Beachy contributed research.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/12/dining/chino-latino-food-nyc-tiktok.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/05/12/dining/chino-latino-food-nyc-tiktok.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Clockwise from top left: La Dinastia, on the Upper West Side

Peruvian rotisserie chicken at Flor de Mayo

palomilla steak at La Dinastia

Richard Lam, left, and Michael Lan, the owners of La Dinastia

dishes at Calle Dao

one of Calle Dao's three locations in Manhattan. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY LANNA APISUKH FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page D6.

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[***A Queer Coming-of-Age in Corona, Queens; Fiction***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:670T-KKT1-JBG3-63PK-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** BOOKS; review

**Length:** 642 words

**Byline:** May-lee Chai

**Highlight:** Bushra Rehman’s “Roses, in the Mouth of a Lion” follows a young Pakistani Muslim protagonist as she discovers her nascent intellect and sexuality.

**Body**

Bushra Rehman’s “Roses, in the Mouth of a Lion” follows a young Pakistani Muslim protagonist as she discovers her nascent intellect and sexuality.

ROSES, IN THE MOUTH OF A LION, by Bushra Rehman

Bushra Rehman’s stunningly beautiful coming-of-age novel “Roses, in the Mouth of a Lion” is set in the Corona neighborhood of Queens, New York, which was enshrined in pop culture by Paul Simon’s 1972 hit “Me and Julio Down by the Schoolyard.” Rehman’s exuberant young protagonist, Razia, knows the song well, although it puzzles her. “Why would Paul Simon be singing about Corona?” she muses. “I didn’t see many white people there unless they were policemen or firemen, and I didn’t think Paul Simon had ever been one of those.”

In the late 1980s, Razia’s Corona is home to a growing Pakistani Muslim community, along with Dominican and Korean immigrants. The earlier, largely Jewish and Italian, immigrant residents of Simon’s day have moved on to wealthier, whiter neighborhoods.

Rehman evokes time and place like a poet, with descriptions both precise and lyrical, making the streets of this ***working-class*** neighborhood come alive on the page. One house has so many roses that “they grew up and over, through the fence like they were some kind of convicts trying to scale the walls”; during the evening call to prayer, she writes, “everyone in the neighborhood tilted their heads and listened. Out of basement apartments and sixth-floor walk-ups, Muslim men started walking toward the sound, pulling their topis out of the back seats of their pockets.”

At the novel’s opening, it’s 1985 and Razia is a precocious fifth grader just starting to bridle at the restrictions placed on her as a girl — by her parents and by other members of her first-generation conservative, religious community. While boys are allowed to play freely, their misdemeanors forgiven, girls are expected to help their mothers with the housework, raising younger siblings, training for a future as wives and mothers with no options for a career or other path. Forbidden from cutting her hair or wearing clothing more revealing than the salwar kameez that her mother buys for her, Razia is jealous of other teenage girls “decked out in makeup like tropical birds, laughing and being loud.”

However, Razia’s mother recognizes her daughter’s intelligence and allows her time for homework, reading and study, which ultimately leads to Razia testing into the prestigious, public Stuyvesant High School.

The only member of her immediate circle accepted at the school, Razia travels alone to Manhattan, which opens her eyes to a new world. Still, Rehman keeps it real. The school is its own insular community, made up of various cliques of teenagers and not always sympathetic adults, like the math teacher who demands every time she gets an answer wrong, “How did you get into Stuyvesant?”

Here Razia falls in love with a classmate, coming into her own queer identity and wondering where she fits in. Rehman again proves her bona fides as a New York writer by making the Strand bookstore (“where barricades of books lined the sidewalk”) and its shelves of titles by queer authors the first place Razia begins to see herself as part of a larger community.

When a conservative “Aunty” spots Razia on a date and reacts with odium, Razia’s journey into adulthood becomes more perilous. Where a lesser book might have stooped to stereotypes about Muslims or immigrants, Rehman shows readers the complexities within Razia’s community. Individuals are allowed to be surprising, even to themselves, in this deft and empathetic novel.

May-lee Chai is the author, most recently, of “Tomorrow in Shanghai: Stories.”

ROSES, IN THE MOUTH OF A LION | By Bushra Rehman | 276 pp. | Flatiron | $27.99

PHOTO: Corona, Queens, in 1982. (PHOTOGRAPH BY WALTER LEPORATI/GETTY IMAGES) This article appeared in print on page BR15.

**Load-Date:** December 26, 2022

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[***Explaining Right-Wing Politics in America, via the Middle East***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:61JJ-2RW1-JBG3-62VV-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** By David M. Halbfinger

**Body**

An Israeli sociologist argues that Trump voters, like Netanyahu supporters in Israel, have legitimate reasons to find liberal values threatening.

JERUSALEM -- Liberals were confounded. The right-wing incumbent's blue-collar base was sticking by him, cheering as he weaponized identity politics, attacked democratic institutions and appeared to place his own interests ahead of the nation's.

A familiar set of facts, to say the least. But the liberals in question were Israeli, the incumbent was Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and the ***working-class*** voters were Israeli Jews with roots in North Africa and the Middle East.

A Tel Aviv University sociologist named Nissim Mizrachi who spent years studying those voters and grappling with their rejection of liberalism thought he understood why.

The problem was not, he said, as some liberals contend, that Jews of Mediterranean origin, or Mizrahim, were confused about what was best for them. They weren't suffering from Stockholm syndrome or ''false consciousness.''

What liberals failed to see, the professor asserted, was that ***working-class*** Mizrahim were consciously spurning liberalism for a reason: what they see as the endgame of the liberal worldview is not a world they wish to inhabit.

''It's really hard for liberals to imagine that their message, their vision itself, poses a threat to the core identity of other people,'' Professor Mizrachi, 58, said in an interview.

His description of liberalism's blind spots, published in the newspaper Haaretz a year ago, shook the Israeli left like an ideological bunker-busting bomb, and could hold lessons for another deeply polarized society in the West.

The parallels between Mizrahi voters in Israel and Trump voters in the United States are impossible to miss, Professor Mizrachi said.

Both see themselves as their countries' most patriotic citizens, and demonize the left and its allies in the news media, academia and other liberal redoubts as traitorous enemies. Both, he said, feel disdained by those elites, who dismiss their views as racist, ignorant or unwittingly self-defeating.

''You keep ridiculing us and presenting us as undemocratic and dangerous,'' he said, articulating the non-liberal view. ''But we are the people. Who are you?'''

Professor Mizrachi, as his surname suggests, is a product of the Mizrahi ***working class*** himself: His mother, who moved to Israel from Iraq as a teenager, met his father at an institute for the blind (both had lost their eyesight, from trachoma, at age 2). The couple raised their son and his two sisters on a shoestring in Kiryat Hayovel, a poverty-stricken and overwhelmingly right-wing Jerusalem neighborhood of Mizrahi immigrants.

When a teacher said that young Nissim was bright, and should perhaps attend vocational school to become a handyman, he said, his mother responded tartly that her son would study and grow up to earn enough ''to hire your son.''

Drawn to higher education, his outlook took a leftward turn in the United States while on a Fulbright Scholarship to the University of Michigan, where he earned a Ph.D. in 1998, and later at Harvard. He met other young Mizrahi scholars, still a rarity in the Israeli academy, which was dominated by Jews of Eastern European origin, and experienced something of a political awakening as a liberal and a Mizrahi.

Returning to Israel, he became an activist on Mizrahi education and human rights.

There seemed to be ample reason for Mizrahim, long treated as second-class citizens, to be drawn to liberal promises of equality and social justice. Yet, nothing he said could budge even members of his own family from their right-wing leanings.

In 2011, after hearing a visiting lecturer from Europe extol human rights as the ''international moral language,'' Professor Mizrachi had an aha moment.

If such liberal ideas were so universal, he asked, why, in Israel, ''had they failed to reach the hearts and minds of ***working-class*** people?''

He recalled demonstrations where liberal activists called for coexistence with the Palestinians and spoke of prosecuting both Israeli soldiers and Hezbollah fighters on war-crimes charges -- an expression of shared humanity that he said liberals found ''morally sublime'' but which had onlooking Mizrahi taxi drivers boiling over with rage.

''The resistance is physical,'' he said. ''They become so violent, as if you are threatening their personal property, or about to rape their daughter. And if we don't understand why they are so upset, we don't understand anything.''

For the Mizrahi ***working class***, he said, the liberal vision of peace with the Palestinians, of breaking down barriers and prejudices between peoples, imperils their own sense of identity and belonging as Jews in a Jewish state. To them, the nation's borders, walls and segregated Jewish and Arab communities are not just reassuring but essential for coexistence.

The way they see it, he said, is ''if the liberals get their version of peace, it's a threat to my way of living.''

That sense of belonging, he concluded, defeated every attempt by the left to make inroads with ***working-class*** Mizrahim.

In addition to feeling scorned by the liberal elite, he said, Mizrahim and Trump voters also share a perception that solving the world's or the Middle East's problems -- whether by welcoming immigrants and striking trade deals that send jobs overseas, or by rushing to give a bitter enemy a state next door -- too often comes at their expense. Charity must begin at home.

Some critics on the left have accused Professor Mizrachi of glossing over serious issues of racism, sexism and homophobia.

Menachem Mautner, a law professor who is both a critic and adherent of Israeli liberalism, said that Professor Mizrachi's portrayal of the Mizrahi worldview was overly ''rosy.'' But he said it would be a mistake to dismiss Professor Mizrachi's conclusions.

''We need to internalize them and to take them seriously,'' he said.

Professor Mizrachi, who is married to an ophthalmologist and has three daughters, has some influential allies in Israeli politics, among them Tehila Friedman, a centrist lawmaker.

Ms. Friedman, who as an Orthodox Jew and a feminist said she had ample experience mediating between traditional and liberal values, said the most common complaint about Professor Mizrachi was that he had legitimized discrimination, especially anti-Arab bias, among Mizrahim.

''That's a big problem,'' she said. ''That's always a problem with seeing the world in circles -- first my family, then my tribe, then my people, then other people.' But that's the way most of us live.''

Professor Mizrachi, she said, is ''trying to give respect to those sets of values, which deserve respect.''

Understanding the other side is a prerequisite to bridging the political gulf, Professor Mizrachi said. When he was a visiting professor at Berkeley, a student confided that she was having horrible fights with her mother, a Trump voter. He urged her to try to set aside her anger and interrogate her mother as if she were a research subject.

It helped, he said.

''The other side's concerns are not mine, but they should be, because I care about him or her,'' he said. ''We share something in common here. We are sharing this land and this nation. It sounds horrible, but he or she needs to become part of us. Because they are part of us.''

To that extent, Democratic relief over Mr. Trump's defeat obscures a serious risk, he said.

He recalled how Israeli liberals, driven from power in 1977, celebrated their comeback in 1999 when Ehud Barak of the Labor Party ended Mr. Netanyahu's first term. Triumphant, the left did not bother to reach out. It went right back to marginalizing Mr. Netanyahu's right-wing base.

But Mr. Barak did not last two years, his successors have all been right-wingers, and Labor today is effectively defunct.

''This is the lesson maybe for you,'' Professor Mizrachi said. ''OK, you won the election, fine. But don't forget that red America is still there.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2020/12/18/world/middleeast/israel-mizrahim-netanyahu.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/12/18/world/middleeast/israel-mizrahim-netanyahu.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: NISSIM MIZRACHI

Supporters of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu at a rally in Beit She'an, Israel. Mr. Mizrachi likens them politically to Trump backers in the United States. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY DAN BALILTY FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** December 19, 2020

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[***‘Vandalism With a Purpose’ and the Future of the G.O.P.***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:624B-80C1-JBG3-63K5-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

March 3, 2021 Wednesday 16:55 EST

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 357 words

**Byline:** ‘The Argument’

**Highlight:** Ross Douthat returns with Michael Brendan Dougherty to tell Jane she’s wrong about Trump’s populist rhetoric.

**Body**

Republicans will spend the next 20 months debating and deciding whether Trumpism will be on the ballot in 2022. Will party leaders continue to embrace Donald Trump’s populist rhetoric? Can it resonate with voters if Trump isn’t the one saying it?

[You can listen to this episode of “The Argument” on [*Apple*](https://itunes.apple.com/us/podcast/the-argument/id1438024613?mt=2), [*Spotify*](https://open.spotify.com/show/6bmhSFLKtApYClEuSH8q42), [*Google*](https://podcasts.google.com/feed/aHR0cHM6Ly9mZWVkcy5zaW1wbGVjYXN0LmNvbS8yeHpVaUh4dw?sa=X&amp;ved=2ahUKEwjX7-bRm5zuAhWKqnIEHcLtCyIQ9sEGegQIARAD) or [*wherever you get your podcasts*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/02/17/opinion/how-to-listen-to-the-argument.html).]

Ross Douthat, an Opinion columnist at The New York Times, and Michael Brendan Dougherty, a senior writer at National Review, offer their own definitions of populism and debate with Jane populism’s merits, if Trumpism is real and whether Trump allies in the Republican Party will be the future or the demise of the Grand Old Party.

[Twitter Live: Jane Coaston discussed this episode [*on Twitter*](https://twitter.com/janecoaston/status/1367535407630589955).]

Mentioned in this episode:

* Michael Brendan Dougherty in National Review: “[*The End of Populism? Don’t Bet on It.*](https://www.nationalreview.com/2021/02/the-end-of-populism-dont-bet-on-it/)” “[*Trumpism After Trump.*](https://www.nationalreview.com/2021/01/trumpism-after-trump/)”

1. Ross Douthat on how [*Trumpism ate populism*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/26/opinion/trump-hawley-populism.html), whether there is a [*Trumpism after Trump*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/07/opinion/sunday/is-there-a-trumpism-after-trump.html) and, in a prescient 2013 column, “[*Good Populism, Bad Populism*](https://www.nytimes.com/2013/09/22/opinion/sunday/douthat-good-populism-bad-populism.html?searchResultPosition=3).”
2. Jane Coaston on [*why Trumpism has no heirs*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/03/03/opinion/trump-republican-party.html) and, in National Review: “[*What If There’s No Such Thing as Trumpism?*](https://www.nationalreview.com/2017/04/donald-trump-ideology-trumpism-alt-right-syria-steve-bannon-populism/)”
3. Christopher Caldwell in The New Republic: “[*Can There Ever Be a* ***Working-Class*** *Republican Party?*](https://newrepublic.com/article/161113/republican-working-class-agenda-hawley-rubio)”
4. Ken Burns’s series with Stephen Ives “[*The West*](https://www.pbs.org/show/west/),” chronicling America’s process to become a continental nation.
5. Ross Douthat’s book [*Grand New Party*](https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/42417/grand-new-party-by-ross-douthat-and-reihan-salam/), on how Republicans can win the ***working class***.

(A full transcript of the episode will be available midday on the Times website.)

Thoughts? Email us at [*argument@nytimes.com*](mailto:argument@nytimes.com) or leave us a voice mail message at (347) 915-4324. We want to hear what you’re arguing about with your family, your friends and your frenemies. (We may use excerpts from your message in a future episode.)

By leaving us a message, you are agreeing to be governed by our [*reader submission terms*](http://www.nytimes.com/help) and agreeing that we may use and allow others to use your name, voice and message.

Special thanks to Shannon Busta.

“The Argument” is produced by Phoebe Lett, Elisa Gutierrez and Vishakha Darbha and edited by Alison Bruzek; fact-checking by Kate Sinclair; music and sound design by Isaac Jones.

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[***For Some Key Voters, Trump Has Become Toxic; Guest Essay***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68MF-7DF1-JBG3-62FD-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

July 5, 2023 Wednesday 17:08 EST

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**Section:** OPINION

**Length:** 3251 words

**Byline:** Thomas B. Edsall

**Highlight:** But we are still in the dark about 2024.

**Body**

One of the most [*significant developments*](https://www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/educational-attainment/cps-historical-time-series.html) in the run-up to the 2024 presidential election has emerged largely under the radar. From 2016 to 2022, the number of white people without college degrees — the core of Donald Trump’s support — has fallen by 2.1 million.

Over the same period, the number of white people who have graduated from college — an increasingly Democratic constituency — has grown by 13.3 million.

These trends do not bode well for the prospects of Republican candidates, especially Trump. President Biden won white people with college degrees in 2020, 51 to 48 percent, but Trump won by a landslide, 67 to 32 percent, among white people without degrees, [*according to network exit polls.*](https://www.cnn.com/election/2020/exit-polls/president/national-results)

Even so, there is new data that reflects Trump’s ongoing and disruptive quest for power.

In a paper published last year, “[*Donald Trump and the Lie*](https://www.cambridge.org/core/services/aop-cambridge-core/content/view/A438DF5A45FE78CB2BC887859EFAB587/S1537592722000901a.pdf/donald-trump-and-the-lie.pdf),” [*Kevin Arceneaux*](https://vinarceneaux.netlify.app/) and [*Rory Truex*](https://politics.princeton.edu/people/rory-truex), political scientists at Sciences Po-Paris and Princeton, analyzed 40 days of polling conducted intermittently over the crucial period from Oct. 27, 2020, to Jan. 29, 2021.

The authors found that Trump’s false claim that the 2020 election was stolen from him has had continuing ramifications:

The lie is pervasive and sticky: The number of Republicans and independents saying that they believe the election was fraudulent is substantial, and this proportion did not change appreciably over time or shift after important political developments. Belief in the lie may have buoyed some of Trump supporters’ self-esteem.

In reaction to the lie, Arceneaux and Truex wrote, “there was a significant rise in support for violent political activism among Democrats, which only waned after efforts to overturn the election clearly failed.”

Endorsement of the lie pays off for Republicans, Arceneaux and Truex argued: “Republican voters reward politicians who perpetuate the lie, giving Republican candidates an incentive to continue to do so in the next electoral cycle.”

These trends are among the most striking developments setting the stage for the 2024 elections.

Among the additional conditions working to the advantage of Democrats are the increase in Democratic Party [*loyalty and ideological consistency*](https://centerforpolitics.org/crystalball/articles/both-white-and-nonwhite-democrats-are-moving-left/), the political mobilization of liberal constituencies by [*adverse Supreme Court rulings*](https://www.npr.org/2023/06/06/1180175155/supreme-court-decisions-affirmative-action-voting-rights-student-loans), an initial edge in the fight for an [*Electoral College majority*](https://centerforpolitics.org/crystalball/articles/electoral-college-ratings-expect-another-highly-competitive-election/) and the increase in [*nonreligious voters*](https://www.graphsaboutreligion.com/p/are-the-nones-a-coherent-voting-bloc?utm_source=profile&amp;utm_medium=reader2) along with a decline in churchgoing believers.

These and other factors have prompted two Democratic strategists, Celinda Lake and Mike Lux, to declare, “All the elements are in place for a big Democratic victory in 2024.” In “[*Democrats Could Win a Trifecta in 2024*](https://www.lakeresearch.com/com/democrats-could-win-a-trifecta-in-2024),” a May 9 memo released to the public, the two even voiced optimism over the biggest hurdle facing Democrats, retaining control of the Senate in 2024, when as many as eight Democratic-held seats are competitive while the Republican seats are in solidly red states:

While these challenges are real, they can be overcome, and the problems are overstated. Remember that this same tough Senate map produced a net of five Democratic pickups in the 2000 election, which Gore narrowly lost to Bush; six Democratic pickups in 2006, allowing Democrats to retake the Senate; and two more in 2012. If we have a good election year overall, we have a very good chance at Democrats holding the Senate.

Republican advantages include high rates of crime ([*although modestly declining*](https://news.yahoo.com/violent-crime-is-dropping-nationwide-report-shows-200015787.html) in 2023 so far), homelessness and dysfunction in cities run by Democrats; a [*parents’ rights movement*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/06/16/opinion/will-estrada-and-parental-rights.html) opposed to teaching of so-called critical race theory and gender-fluid concepts; and [*declining public support*](https://news.gallup.com/poll/507230/fewer-say-sex-relations-morally-acceptable.aspx) for gay rights and especially trans rights.

There are, needless to say, a host of uncertainties.

One key factor will be the salience on Election Day of issues closely linked to race in many voters’ minds, including school integration, affordable housing, the end of affirmative action, crime, urban disorder and government spending on social programs. As a general rule, the higher these issues rank in voters’ priorities, the better Republicans do. In that respect, the success of conservatives in barring the use of race in college admissions has taken a Republican issue off the table.

[*Frances Lee*](https://politics.princeton.edu/people/frances-lee), a political scientist at Princeton, noted in an email that in the “sour environment” of today’s politics, “many voters may be tempted toward a protest vote, and it is likely that there will be some options available for such voters.” It is not clear, Lee added, “what [*No Labels*](https://www.wsj.com/articles/a-mysteriously-financed-group-that-could-upend-a-biden-trump-rematch-d34ebaea) will do, but the potential there introduces considerable additional uncertainty.”

Asked what factors he would cite as crucial to determining the outcome of the 2024 presidential election, [*Ray La Raja*](https://polsci.umass.edu/people/ray-la-raja), a political scientist at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, pointed out by email:

The economy is the source of the most uncertainty — it is doing well, although inflation is not fully tamed. Will things continue to improve, and will Biden start to get credit? This is especially important for white ***working-class*** voters in swing states like Wisconsin, Arizona, Nevada and Pennsylvania.

[*Alan Abramowitz*](http://polisci.emory.edu/home/people/biography/abramowitz-alan.html), a political scientist at Emory, documents growing Democratic unity in two 2023 papers, “[*Both White and Nonwhite Democrats Are Moving Left*](https://centerforpolitics.org/crystalball/articles/both-white-and-nonwhite-democrats-are-moving-left/)” and “[*The Transformation of the American Electorate*](https://centerforpolitics.org/crystalball/articles/the-transformation-of-the-american-electorate/).”

As a result of these trends toward intraparty consensus, there has been a steady drop in the percentage of Democratic defections to the opposition, as the party’s voters have become less vulnerable to wedge-issue tactics, especially wedge issues closely tied to race.

From 2012 to 2020, Abramowitz wrote in the “Transformation” paper, “there was a dramatic increase in liberalism among Democratic voters.” As a result of these shifts, he continued, “Democratic voters are now as consistent in their liberalism as Republican voters are in their conservatism.”

Most important, Abramowitz wrote, the

rise in ideological congruence among Democratic voters — and especially among white Democratic voters — has had important consequences for voting behavior. For many years, white Democrats have lagged behind nonwhite Democrats in loyalty to Democratic presidential candidates. In 2020, however, this gap almost disappeared, with white Democratic identifiers almost as loyal as nonwhite Democratic identifiers.

Three Supreme Court decisions handed down in the last week of June — [*rejecting*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/30/us/student-loan-forgiveness-supreme-court-biden.html) the Biden administration’s program to forgive student loan debt, [*affirming*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2023/06/30/us/gay-rights-free-speech-supreme-court) the right of a web designer to refuse to construct wedding websites for same-sex couples and [*ruling unconstitutional*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/06/30/us/student-loan-forgiveness-supreme-court-biden.html) the use of race by colleges in student admissions — are, in turn, quite likely to increase Democratic turnout more than Republican turnout on Election Day.

Politically, one of the most [*effective tools*](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/03/01/opinion/negative-partisanship-democrats-republicans.html) for mobilizing voters is to [*emphasize*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/06/15/opinion/social-media-polarization-democracy.html) lost rights and resources.

This was the case after last June’s Supreme Court decision in [*Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization*](https://www.supremecourt.gov/opinions/21pdf/19-1392_6j37.pdf), which eliminated the right to abortion and in the 2022 midterm elections mobilized millions of pro-abortion-rights voters. By that logic, the three decisions I mentioned should raise turnout among students, L.G.B.T.Q. people and African Americans, all largely Democratic constituencies.

My Times colleague Jonathan Weisman argued in a July 1 article, “[*Supreme Court Decisions on Education Could Offer Democrats an Opening*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/07/01/us/politics/supreme-court-affirmative-action-student-loans-democrats-2024.html),” that the rulings give

Democrats a way to shift from a race-based discussion of preference to one tied more to class. The court’s decision could fuel broader outreach to the ***working-class*** voters who have drifted away from the party because of what they see as its elitism.

In addition, Weisman wrote, “Republicans’ remarkable successes before the new court may have actually deprived them of combative issues to galvanize voters going into 2024.”

The education trends favoring Democrats are reinforced by Americans’ changing religious beliefs. From 2006 to 2022, the Public Religion Research Institute [*found*](https://www.prri.org/spotlight/prri-2022-american-values-atlas-religious-affiliation-updates-and-trends/), the white evangelical Protestant share of the population fell from 23 percent to 13.9 percent. Over the same period, the nonreligious share of the population rose from 16 to 26.8 percent.

[*Ryan Burge*](http://ryanburge.net/), a political scientist at Eastern Illinois University, [*found*](https://www.graphsaboutreligion.com/p/are-the-nones-a-coherent-voting-bloc?utm_source=profile&amp;utm_medium=reader2) that the nonreligious can be broken down into three groups: atheists, who are the most Democratic, voting 85 percent for Biden and 11 percent for Trump; agnostics, 78 to 18 for Biden; and those Burge calls “nothing in particular,” 63 to 35 for Biden.

The last of the pro-Democratic developments is an initial advantage in Electoral College votes, according to an analysis at this early stage in the contest.

[*Kyle D. Kondik*](https://centerforpolitics.org/staff/kyle-d-kondik/), the managing editor of [*Larry Sabato’s Crystal Ball*](https://centerforpolitics.org/crystalball/articles/the-transformation-of-the-american-electorate/) at the University of Virginia Center for Politics, published “[*Electoral College Ratings: Expect Another Highly Competitive Election*](https://centerforpolitics.org/crystalball/articles/electoral-college-ratings-expect-another-highly-competitive-election/)” last week.

“We are starting 260 electoral votes’ worth of states as at least leaning Democratic,” Kondik wrote, “and 235 as at least leaning Republican,” with “just 43 tossup electoral votes at the outset.”

In other words, if this prediction holds true until November 2024, the Democratic candidate would need 10 more Electoral College votes to win and the Republican nominee would need 35.

The competitive states, Kondik continues, “are Arizona (11 votes), Georgia (16) and Wisconsin (10) — the three closest states in 2020 — along with Nevada (6), which has voted Democratic in each of the last four presidential elections but by closer margins each time.”

In the case of Arizona, [*Bruce Cain*](https://politicalscience.stanford.edu/people/bruce-cain), a political scientist at Stanford, argued in an email that domestic migration from California to Arizona is substantial enough to help shift the state from red to purple.

“In some recent work we have done comparing California, Arizona and Texas,” Cain added, “we find that the movement of Californians is greater in absolute numbers to Texas, but proportionately more impactful to Arizona.”

People who move, Cain continued,

make Arizona a bit more polarized and close to the Arizona purple profile. They contribute to polarized purpleness. Enough move over a four-year period to have a measurable impact in a close race. Unlike immigrants, domestic migrants can become voters instantly.

How about the other side of the aisle?

[*Daniel Kreiss*](http://hussman.unc.edu/directory/faculty/daniel-kreiss), a professor of journalism and mass communication at the University of North Carolina, writing by email, cited the Republican advantage gained from diminished content regulation on social media platforms: “This platform rollback stems broadly from Elon Musk’s takeover of Twitter, which gave other platforms a green light to drop electoral and public health protections.”

The beneficiaries of this deregulation, Kreiss continued, are “Trump and Republicans more broadly who use disinformation as a strategic political tool.”

These content regulation policies are a sharp policy shift on the part of the owners and managers of social media websites, [*Bridget Barrett*](https://bridget-barrett.com/), a professor at the University of Colorado Boulder’s College of Media, Communication and Information, and Kreiss write in a June 29 paper, “[*Platforms Are Abandoning U.S. Democracy*](https://techpolicy.press/platforms-are-abandoning-u-s-democracy/).”

They argued that in the aftermath of the 2020 election,

platforms took serious steps to protect elections and the peaceful transfer of power, including creating policies against electoral disinformation and enforcing violations — including by Trump and other candidates and elected officials. And deplatforming the former president after an illegitimate attempt to seize power was a necessary step to quell the violence.

More recently, Barrett and Kreiss noted, “social media platforms have walked away from their commitments to protect democracy. So much so that the current state of platform content moderation is more like 2016 than 2020.”

Frances Lee pointed out that [*Cornel West’s*](https://www.britannica.com/biography/Cornel-West) entry into the presidential election as a candidate of the Green Party will siphon some liberal voters away from Biden: “West has announced a presidential bid and has now moved from the People’s Party to the Green Party, which will have ballot access in most states,” she wrote.

Insofar as West gains support, it will in all likelihood be at Democrats’ expense. West is a prominent figure in progressive circles, and [*his agenda*](https://www.cornelwest24.com/) is explicitly an appeal to the left.

In a [*June 28 appearance on*](https://www.c-span.org/video/?528951-5/cornel-west-2024-presidential-bid) C-SPAN, West declared:

We need jobs with a living wage. We need decent housing, quality education, the basic social needs. You can imagine disproportionately Black and brown are wrestling with poverty. The abolition of poverty and homelessness. I want jobs with a living wage across the board. I want a U.S. foreign policy that is not tied to big money and corporate interests.

While West will draw support from very liberal Democrats, there is another factor that may well weaken Democratic support among some moderate voters: the seeming insolubility of homeless encampments, shoplifting, carjacking and crime generally in major cities. This has the potential to tilt the playing field in favor of Republican law-and-order candidates, as it did in the 2023 Wisconsin Senate race and in suburban New York House contests.

In 2022, crime [*ranked high*](https://www.cnn.com/2022/10/31/politics/crime-issue-midterms-election/index.html) among voter concerns, but Republicans who campaigned on themes attacking Democrats as weak on crime [*met with mixed results*](https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/analysis-opinion/how-criminal-justice-reformers-fared-midterms).

A recent trend raising Republican prospects is the [*Gallup Poll finding*](https://news.gallup.com/poll/507230/fewer-say-sex-relations-morally-acceptable.aspx) that the percentage of people “who say gay or lesbian relations are morally acceptable” fell by seven percentage points, from a record high of 71 percent in 2022 to 64 percent this year.

There was a six-point drop among Democrats on this question, from 85 to 79 percent approval, and a precipitous 15-point falloff among Republicans, 56 to 41 percent. Independents, in contrast, went from 71 percent approval to 72 percent. The overall decline reversed 20 years of steadily rising approval, which grew from 39 percent in 2002 to 71 percent in 2022. Gallup also [*found*](https://news.gallup.com/poll/507023/say-birth-gender-dictate-sports-participation.aspx) that the public is holding increasingly conservative views on key issues related to gender transition.

Asked “Do you think transgender athletes should be able to play on sports teams that match their current gender identity or should only be allowed to play on sports teams that match their birth gender?” the public favored birth gender by 28 points, 62 to 34 percent, in May 2021. In May 2023, the margin grew to 41 points, 69 to 28 percent.

Similarly, Gallup asked, “Regardless of whether or not you think it should be legal, please tell me whether you personally believe that in general it is morally acceptable or morally wrong to change one’s gender.” In May 2021, 51 percent said it was morally wrong, and 46 percent said it was acceptable. In May 2023, 55 percent said it was morally wrong, and 43 percent said it was acceptable.

Biden is a strong supporter of transgender rights. On March 31, the White House released “[*Statement From President Joe Biden on Transgender Day of Visibility*](https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2023/03/31/statement-from-president-joe-biden-on-transgender-day-of-visibility/),” in which he vowed:

My administration will never quit fighting to end discrimination, to stand against unjust state laws and to guarantee everyone the fundamental right and freedom to be who they are. We’ll never stop working to create a world where everyone can live without fear, where parents, teachers and whole communities come together to support kids, no matter how they identify, and every child is surrounded by compassion and love.

Republican candidates are moving in the opposite direction. At the Faith and Freedom conference last month in Washington, Mike Pence [*promised*](https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2023/jun/26/republicans-target-trans-rights-extremist-rhetoric) to “end the gender ideology that is running rampant in our schools, and we will ban chemical and surgical gender transition treatment for kids under the age of 18.”

Ron DeSantis [*told*](https://www.c-span.org/video/?528908-10/gov-ron-desantis-speaks-faith-freedom-coalition-conference) the gathering:

The left is lighting the fire of a cultural revolution all across this land. The fire smolders in our schools. It smolders in corporate board rooms. It smolders in the homes of government. We’re told that we must accept that men can get pregnant. We are told to celebrate a swimmer who swam for three years on the men’s team, then switches to the women’s team and somehow is named the women’s champion.

The 2020 election raised a new concern for Democrats: Trump’s success in [*increasing his support*](https://www.cnn.com/2020/11/03/politics/exit-polls-2020/index.html) from 2016 among Latino voters.

Kyle Kondik’s analysis showed that Nevada ([*17 percent*](https://www.cnn.com/election/2020/exit-polls/president/nevada) of the vote was Hispanic in 2020) and Arizona ([*19 percent*](https://www.cnn.com/election/2020/exit-polls/president/arizona) was Hispanic) are two of the four tossup states in 2024. This suggests that the Latino vote will be crucial.

While acknowledging the gains Trump and fellow Republicans have made among Latino voters, a June 2023 analysis of the 2022 elections, “[*Latino Voters &amp; The Case of the Missing Red Wave*](https://weareequis.us/api/docs/qV8T7OpIWxw54fYWr9F0M/d1ecc7309b286d6b7db60d7f140f3b4f/2022_Post-Mortem_June_14.pdf),” by [*Equis*](https://www.weareequis.us/en-US), a network of three allied, nonpartisan research groups, found that with the exception of Florida, “at the end of the day, there turned out to be basic stability in support levels among Latinos in highly contested races.” In short, the report’s authors continued, “the G.O.P. held gains they had made since 2016/2018 but weren’t able to build on them.”

In Florida, the report documented a six-year collapse in Democratic voting among Hispanics: In 2016, Hillary Clinton won 66 percent of the Latino vote; in 2020, Biden won 51 percent, and in 2022, Democratic congressional candidates won 44 percent.

The Equis study also pointed to some significant Democratic liabilities among Latino voters: Substantial percentages of a key bloc of pro-Democratic Hispanics — those who say they believe Democrats “are better for Hispanics” — harbor significant doubts about the party. For example, 44 percent agreed that “Democrats don’t keep their promises,” and 44 percent agreed that “Democrats take Latinos for granted.”

In addition, the percentage of Latino voters describing immigration as the top issue — a stance favoring Democrats — has nose-dived, according to the Equis analysis, from 39 percent in 2016 to 16 percent in 2020 and 12 percent in 2022.

Where, then, does all this contradictory information leave us as to the probable outcome of the 2024 presidential election? The reasonable answer is: in the dark.

The [*RealClearPolitics average*](https://www.realclearpolitics.com/epolls/2024/president/us/general-election-trump-vs-biden-7383.html) of the eight most recent Trump versus Biden polls has Trump up by a statistically insignificant 0.6 percent. From August 2021 to the present, RealClear has tracked a total of 101 polls pitting these two against each other. Trump led in 56, Biden 38, and the remainder were ties.

While this polling suggests Trump has an even chance, surveys do not fully capture the weight of Trump’s indictments and falsehoods on his candidacy and, as evidenced in competitive races in 2022, on Republicans who are closely tied to the former president.

Among the key voters who, in all likelihood, will pick the next president — relatively well-educated suburbanites — Trump has become toxic. He is, at least in that sense, Biden’s best hope for winning a second term.

Even before the votes are counted on Nov. 5, 2024, the most important question may well turn out to be: If Trump is the Republican candidate for a third straight time and loses the election for a second, will he once again attempt to claim victory was stolen from him? And if he does, what will his followers — and, for that matter, everyone else — do?

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PHOTO: (PHOTOGRAPH BY Cameron Pollack for The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** July 5, 2023

**End of Document**



[***John Fetterman: The left-leaning Pennsylvania politician in gym clothes.***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65GC-HCR1-DXY4-X01T-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

May 18, 2022 Wednesday 06:37 EST

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**Section:** US; politics

**Length:** 940 words

**Byline:** Katie Glueck

**Highlight:** “Just a dude” who won Pennsylvania’s Democratic nomination for the Senate — days after suffering a stroke.

**Body**

“Just a dude” who won Pennsylvania’s Democratic nomination for the Senate — days after suffering a stroke.

PITTSBURGH — John Fetterman, the liberal lieutenant governor of Pennsylvania who won his state’s Democratic nomination for Senate on Tuesday, seemed to be cruising into what is shaping up as one of the most closely watched general elections in the country this fall. Then a stroke upended his plans.

Mr. Fetterman, the 6-foot-8, hoodie-wearing former mayor of Braddock, Pa., was not a favorite of the party establishment, but he electrified some progressive voters and a broader slice of the Democratic electorate that embraced his [*blunt-spoken, accessible style*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/14/us/politics/fetterman-pennsylvania-democratic-primary.html) and welcomed his pledges to fight aggressively for party priorities in Washington.

“I’m just doing my thing,” he said in an interview last week. “I’m just a dude that shows up and just talks about what I believe in, you know?”

After canceling campaign events on Friday, Saturday and Sunday, Mr. Fetterman, 52, [*announced that he had had a stroke*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/15/us/politics/john-fetterman-stroke.html), was recovering and had not suffered any cognitive damage.

He was still in the hospital on Tuesday, when his campaign announced that he would undergo “a standard procedure to implant a pacemaker with a defibrillator,” adding, “It should be a short procedure that will help protect his heart and address the underlying cause of his stroke.”

It was unclear when he would be able to resume campaigning.

The health scare carried ramifications far beyond Pennsylvania. Democrats hold a majority in the Senate only by virtue of Vice President Kamala Harris’s tiebreaking vote. The party’s vulnerability had already been highlighted when Senator Ben Ray Luján of New Mexico [*suffered a stroke*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/05/us/politics/ben-ray-lujan-stroke-interview.html) in January.

It also seemed jarring given Mr. Fetterman’s vigorous public image; he often was dressed as if he’d just left the gym.

“He may not look like a Senate candidate for New York or California, but he’s just fine for Pennsylvania,” said Ed Rendell, a Democratic former governor of the state. “He’s a very believable candidate for the ***working class***.”

Mr. Fetterman, who holds a degree from the Harvard Kennedy School, served for 13 years as the mayor of Braddock, where he attracted attention for his efforts to revitalize a struggling steel town — and scrutiny over a 2013 episode in which he brandished a shotgun to stop an unarmed Black jogger, [*telling the police*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/02/09/us/politics/john-fetterman-gun-black-jogger.html) he had heard gunshots.

He [*ran unsuccessfully*](https://www.nytimes.com/elections/2016/results/primaries/pennsylvania) for the Senate in 2016 but gained an enthusiastic following, and went on to [*defeat an incumbent*](https://www.inquirer.com/philly/news/politics/elections/john-fetterman-pa-democrat-lieutenant-governor-primary-election-results-2018-mike-stack-20180515.html#loaded) to win his party’s nomination for lieutenant governor in 2018. In that role, he maintained an active presence around the state, building name recognition that played an important role in his primary victory.

“He spent a lot of time in communities throughout the state,” said Senator Bob Casey of Pennsylvania, who did not take sides in the primary. “That’s something he’s been able to build on.”

Mr. Fetterman also made a name for himself in national progressive circles, [*receiving the endorsement*](https://twitter.com/JohnFetterman/status/989551334805385216?s=20&amp;t=KqUEAupR0-IOyrl4k9SBVg) of Senator Bernie Sanders of Vermont in 2018 after [*he backed*](https://www.politifact.com/factchecks/2016/feb/04/john-fetterman/fetterman-says-he-only-senate-candidate-backing-sa/) Mr. Sanders’s 2016 presidential primary bid. And he gained [*fresh prominence*](https://www.vulture.com/2020/11/pa-lt-gov-john-fetterman-2020-election-ham-sandwich.html) with a broader range of voters as a cable-television fixture when Pennsylvania’s 2020 votes were being counted.

Several months later, he entered the Senate primary, [*the first*](https://www.inquirer.com/politics/election/john-fetterman-2022-pennsylvania-senate-campaign-launch-20210208.html) major Democratic candidate to jump into the race, and cemented an overwhelming fund-raising advantage over his nearest rivals.

Mr. Fetterman campaigned on issues like raising the minimum wage, promoting criminal justice reform and supporting voting rights, abortion rights and protections for L.G.B.T.Q. people.

But he attracted just as much attention for his style, and some saw him as skilled at connecting with blue-collar voters. He favored basketball shorts and sweatshirts over button-downs and khakis and spent significant time campaigning in rural, ***working-class*** counties that had overwhelmingly voted for former President Donald J. Trump, hoping to improve Democratic margins in those areas.

Mr. Fetterman has repeatedly described himself as a progressive in the past, but in the Senate race he did not seek the left-wing mantle. He [*rejected a suggestion*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/14/us/politics/fetterman-pennsylvania-democratic-primary.html) last week that he would join the “Squad,” a group of left-wing members of Congress, should he win.

Republicans and some Democrats, however, believe that he may be vulnerable to criticism that he is too far to the left for one of the most closely divided states in the nation, and especially for its more centrist suburbs, which have been vital to recent Democratic gains in the state.

“It’s good that Fetterman is going to these areas where Democrats have done poorly in these Republican counties, but I think his bigger challenge is going to be these suburban communities,” said former Representative Charlie Dent, a Pennsylvania Republican [*who said*](https://www.cnn.com/2020/08/19/opinions/biden-president-endorsement-dent/index.html) he had voted for President Biden.

Mr. Dent warned that Mr. Fetterman is seen by some as a “Bernie Sanders Democrat.”

The lieutenant governor lives in Braddock with his three children and his wife, Gisele Barreto Fetterman, the second lady of Pennsylvania, [*who has embraced*](https://twitter.com/giselefetterman?ref_src=twsrc%5Egoogle%7Ctwcamp%5Eserp%7Ctwgr%5Eauthor) the acronym “SLOP” and who, like Mr. Fetterman, has an active social media presence.

She insisted that he get checked out after feeling unwell on Friday, the Fettermans said.

His campaign said Monday that Mr. Fetterman had been “again evaluated by the neurologist who once again reiterated that John will make a full recovery.”

PHOTO: John Fetterman, the Democratic lieutenant governor of Pennsylvania who is running for the Senate, speaking to voters in Lemont Furnace last week. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Maddie McGarvey for The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** May 18, 2022

**End of Document**



[***Yale and Harvard Law Schools Withdraw From the U.S. News Rankings***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:66W8-1FJ1-JBG3-630P-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

November 16, 2022 Wednesday 11:21 EST

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**Section:** US

**Length:** 1390 words

**Byline:** Anemona Hartocollis

**Highlight:** Citing flaws in the way the ratings are determined, the schools said they will stop participating, breaking away from the rankings industry.

**Body**

Citing flaws in the way the ratings are determined, the schools said they will stop participating, breaking away from the rankings industry.

In perhaps the biggest challenge yet to the school rankings industry, both Yale and Harvard announced Wednesday that they were withdrawing from the influential U.S. News &amp; World Report rankings of the nation’s best law schools.

Colleges and universities have been critical of the U.S. News ranking system for decades, saying that it was unreliable and skewed educational priorities, but they had rarely taken action to thwart it, and every year almost always submitted their data for judgment on their various undergraduate and graduate programs.

Now both Yale and Harvard law schools have announced that they will no longer cooperate. In two separate letters posted on their websites, the law school deans excoriated U.S. News for using a methodology that they said devalued the efforts of schools like their own to recruit poor and ***working-class*** students, provide financial aid based on need and encourage students to go into low-paid public service law after graduation.

“It has become impossible to reconcile our principles and commitments with the methodology and incentives the U.S. News rankings reflect,” John F. Manning, the dean of Harvard Law, said in his statement.

The two deans said they had decided to withdraw only after they and “a number” of other schools had taken their concerns directly to U.S. News and been rebuffed.

The news was unveiled in dramatic fashion, beginning Wednesday morning with Yale Law’s dean, Heather K. Gerken, posting a statement. Later, Harvard joined in.

U.S. News reacted somewhat blandly to Yale, saying it stood by its “mission” to “ensure that law schools are held accountable for the education they will provide.”

Asked whether U.S. News would continue to rank Yale, Eric Gertler, chief executive of U.S. News, said that the organization was reviewing options.

After Harvard’s announcement, the tone became more conciliatory. “We agree that test scores don’t tell the full story of an applicant, and law schools make their own decisions on the applicant pool based on the mission of the school,” U.S. News said in an email.

But the statement said the American Bar Association still requires standardized tests for almost all law schools. “The rankings are a start, not an answer,” U.S. News said. “Our mission is, and has always been, to provide data on schools for prospective students and their families.”

The withdrawal of heavyweight institutions like Harvard and Yale is unlikely to topple the rankings industry. For one, only the law schools withdrew from the rankings. And even though U.S. News asks schools to provide their own data, much of the information is publicly available.

“It is unlikely that Yale Law’s action will change the (profit-seeking) behavior of U.S. News leaders unless a significant number of other name-brand institutions follow suit,” Robert Schaeffer, public education director of FairTest, an anti-testing group, said in an email on Wednesday.

But, he added, as Harvard joined in, “if a few more brand-name law schools join in quickly, this initiative will have clout.”

The rankings are [*entrenched*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/15/us/us-news-college-ranking.html?searchResultPosition=1) in the culture of higher education — with every new annual ranking promoted by many of the schools that decry them. Prospective students have few other seemingly objective, data-based ways to judge schools.

Also, the rankings are perhaps more meaningful to lower-ranked institutions, which often advertise them prominently and depend on them to attract students, than to schools in the top 10, or even top 30, whose reputation and brand recognition are well established.

Yale, at No. 1, is followed in the law school rankings this year by Stanford, the University of Chicago, and then Columbia and Harvard, which were both ranked fourth.

Many critics of the rankings have said that the data can be easily manipulated, and pointed to the doubts this year over Columbia University’s data.

Over the summer, Columbia [*announced*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/06/30/us/columbia-us-news-rankings.html) that it would no longer participate in the rankings of national universities, and said it was reviewing its data — which had resulted in a No. 2 spot — after a math professor had [*questioned*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/03/17/us/columbia-university-rank.html?action=click&amp;module=RelatedLinks&amp;pgtype=Article) its accuracy. The university ultimately admitted that some of its data, including undergraduate class size and the percentage of faculty with the highest degree in their field, had been inaccurate.

U.S. News kept Columbia in the rankings nonetheless but dropped it to [*No. 18*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/12/us/columbia-university-us-news-ranking.html).

Even though Yale Law School has consistently been the top-rated school on the U.S. News list for the last three decades, Ms. Gerken said the rankings had been on her mind as she embarked on her second term as dean.

Asked why she would worry about them when Yale was No. 1, she said: “It’s not about Yale Law School. It’s about legal education and the profession. It’s a moment to step back and think about what we are doing.”

In her letter, Ms. Gerken called the U.S. News rankings a “for-profit” and “commercial” enterprise that is “profoundly flawed.” She said the methodology does not give enough weight to programs like Yale’s “that support public interest careers, champion need-based aid, and welcome ***working-class*** students into the profession,” and as a result, skews the rankings of law schools that emphasize that work.

She said that 20 percent of a law school’s overall ranking comes from grades and test scores. “This heavily weighted metric imposes tremendous pressure on schools to overlook promising students, especially those who cannot afford expensive test preparation courses,” she said in her letter. “It also pushes schools to use financial aid to recruit high-scoring students.”

That money, she said, could be diverted to scholarships for low-income students.

Moreover, she said, the rankings were misleading in the way they portrayed the employment rate of Yale law students after graduation, an important metric for students who are acutely conscious that they have to start making money to pay off often exorbitant student loans.

Yale awards “many more public interest fellowships per student than any of our peers.” she wrote. “Even though our fellowships are highly selective and pay comparable salaries to outside fellowships, U.S. News appears to discount these invaluable opportunities to such an extent that these graduates are effectively classified as unemployed.”

The metrics also devalued students who wanted to pursue advanced degrees like a master’s or a Ph.D., Ms. Gerken said.

Mr. Manning, of Harvard, said the rankings methodology “can create perverse incentives that influence schools’ decisions in ways that undercut student choice and harm the interests of potential students.”

For one thing, he said, the “debt metric” adopted by U.S. News two years ago might appear to reflect lower debt at graduation because of generous financial aid. But the metric could also mean that a law school admitted “more students who have the resources to avoid borrowing,” he wrote. “And to the extent the debt metric creates an incentive for schools to admit better resourced students who don’t need to borrow, it risks harming those it is trying to help.”

There is currently an effort to do away with mandatory testing for admission to law school, but no final decision has been taken. At the same time, dozens of law schools now allow applicants to submit GRE scores in place of LSAT scores. Both are part of an effort to boost admissions for low-income students and students of color.

As for the rankings, many of the other top 10 law schools appeared on Wednesday to be holding their fire.

The University of Pennsylvania law school applauded Yale and Harvard “for their leadership” and said that it was “evaluating this issue,” but it did not immediately offer to join in.

Columbia and the University of Chicago declined to comment. New York University officials said they were aware of the action by Harvard and Yale, but “we haven’t made any determination on the matter yet.”

Neelam Bohra contributed reporting. Alain Delaquérière contributed research.

Neelam Bohra contributed reporting. Alain Delaquérière contributed research.

PHOTO: Yale School of Law was No. 1 this year, and Harvard’s law school was tied for fourth. (PHOTOGRAPH BY CHRISTOPHER CAPOZZIELLO FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A25.

**Load-Date:** November 17, 2022

**End of Document**



[***To Understand Red-State America, He Urges a Look at Red-State Israel; Saturday Profile***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:61JC-PRN1-JBG3-628X-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

December 18, 2020 Friday 09:24 EST

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**Section:** WORLD; middleeast

**Length:** 1357 words

**Byline:** David M. Halbfinger

**Highlight:** An Israeli sociologist argues that Trump voters, like Netanyahu supporters in Israel, have legitimate reasons to find liberal values threatening.

**Body**

An Israeli sociologist argues that Trump voters, like Netanyahu supporters in Israel, have legitimate reasons to find liberal values threatening.

JERUSALEM — Liberals were confounded. The right-wing incumbent’s blue-collar base was sticking by him, cheering as he weaponized identity politics, attacked democratic institutions and appeared to place his own interests ahead of the nation’s.

A familiar set of facts, to say the least. But the liberals in question were Israeli, the incumbent was [*Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/12/23/world/middleeast/israel-election-explained.html) and the ***working-class*** voters were Israeli Jews with roots in North Africa and the Middle East.

A Tel Aviv University sociologist named Nissim Mizrachi who spent years studying those voters and grappling with their rejection of liberalism thought he understood why.

The problem was not, he said, as some liberals contend, that Jews of Mediterranean origin, or Mizrahim, were confused about what was best for them. They weren’t suffering from Stockholm syndrome or “false consciousness.”

What liberals failed to see, the professor asserted, was that ***working-class*** Mizrahim were consciously spurning liberalism for a reason: what they see as the endgame of the liberal worldview is not a world they wish to inhabit.

“It’s really hard for liberals to imagine that their message, their vision itself, poses a threat to the core identity of other people,” Professor Mizrachi, 58, said in an interview.

His description of liberalism’s blind spots, published in the newspaper Haaretz a year ago, shook the Israeli left like an ideological bunker-busting bomb, and could hold lessons for another deeply polarized society in the West.

The parallels between Mizrahi voters in Israel and [*Trump*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/12/23/world/middleeast/israel-election-explained.html) voters in the United States are impossible to miss, Professor Mizrachi said.

Both see themselves as their countries’ most patriotic citizens, and demonize the left and its allies in the news media, academia and other liberal redoubts as traitorous enemies. Both, he said, feel disdained by those elites, who dismiss their views as racist, ignorant or unwittingly self-defeating.

“You keep ridiculing us and presenting us as undemocratic and dangerous,” he said, articulating the non-liberal view. “But we are the people. Who are you?’”

Professor Mizrachi, as his surname suggests, is a product of the Mizrahi ***working class*** himself: His mother, who moved to Israel from Iraq as a teenager, met his father at an institute for the blind (both had lost their eyesight, [*from trachoma*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/12/23/world/middleeast/israel-election-explained.html), at age 2). The couple raised their son and his two sisters on a shoestring in Kiryat Hayovel, a poverty-stricken and overwhelmingly right-wing Jerusalem neighborhood of Mizrahi immigrants.

When a teacher said that young Nissim was bright, and should perhaps attend vocational school to become a handyman, he said, his mother responded tartly that her son would study and grow up to earn enough “to hire your son.”

Drawn to higher education, his outlook took a leftward turn in the United States while on a Fulbright Scholarship to the University of Michigan, where he earned a Ph.D. in 1998, and later at Harvard. He met other young Mizrahi scholars, still a rarity in the Israeli academy, which was dominated by Jews of Eastern European origin, and experienced something of a political awakening as a liberal and a Mizrahi.

Returning to Israel, he became an activist on Mizrahi education and human rights.

There seemed to be ample reason for Mizrahim, long treated as second-class citizens, to be drawn to liberal promises of equality and social justice. Yet, nothing he said could budge even members of his own family from their right-wing leanings.

In 2011, after hearing a visiting lecturer from Europe extol human rights as the “international moral language,” Professor Mizrachi had an aha moment.

If such liberal ideas were so universal, he asked, why, in Israel, “had they failed to reach the hearts and minds of ***working-class*** people?”

He recalled demonstrations where liberal activists called for coexistence with the Palestinians and spoke of prosecuting both Israeli soldiers and Hezbollah fighters on war-crimes charges — an expression of shared humanity that he said liberals found “morally sublime” but which had onlooking Mizrahi taxi drivers boiling over with rage.

“The resistance is physical,” he said. “They become so violent, as if you are threatening their personal property, or about to rape their daughter. And if we don’t understand why they are so upset, we don’t understand anything.”

For the Mizrahi ***working class***, he said, the liberal vision of peace with the Palestinians, of breaking down barriers and prejudices between peoples, imperils their own sense of identity and belonging as Jews in a Jewish state. To them, the nation’s borders, walls and segregated Jewish and Arab communities are not just reassuring but essential for coexistence.

The way they see it, he said, is “if the liberals get their version of peace, it’s a threat to my way of living.”

That sense of belonging, he concluded, defeated every attempt by the left to make inroads with ***working-class*** Mizrahim.

In addition to feeling scorned by the liberal elite, he said, Mizrahim and Trump voters also share a perception that solving the world’s or the Middle East’s problems — whether by welcoming immigrants and striking trade deals that send jobs overseas, or by rushing to give a bitter enemy a state next door — too often comes at their expense. Charity must begin at home.

Some critics on the left have accused Professor Mizrachi of glossing over serious issues of racism, sexism and homophobia.

Menachem Mautner, a law professor who is both a critic and adherent of Israeli liberalism, said that Professor Mizrachi’s portrayal of the Mizrahi worldview was overly “rosy.” But he said it would be a mistake to dismiss Professor Mizrachi’s conclusions.

“We need to internalize them and to take them seriously,” he said.

Professor Mizrachi, who is married to an ophthalmologist and has three daughters, has some influential allies in Israeli politics, among them Tehila Friedman, a centrist lawmaker.

Ms. Friedman, who as an Orthodox Jew and a feminist said she had ample experience mediating between traditional and liberal values, said the most common complaint about Professor Mizrachi was that he had legitimized discrimination, especially anti-Arab bias, among Mizrahim.

“That’s a big problem,” she said. “That’s always a problem with seeing the world in circles — first my family, then my tribe, then my people, then other people.’ But that’s the way most of us live.”

Professor Mizrachi, she said, is “trying to give respect to those sets of values, which deserve respect.”

Understanding the other side is a prerequisite to bridging the political gulf, Professor Mizrachi said. When he was a visiting professor at Berkeley, a student confided that she was having horrible fights with her mother, a Trump voter. He urged her to try to set aside her anger and interrogate her mother as if she were a research subject.

It helped, he said.

“The other side’s concerns are not mine, but they should be, because I care about him or her,” he said. “We share something in common here. We are sharing this land and this nation. It sounds horrible, but he or she needs to become part of us. Because they are part of us.”

To that extent, Democratic relief over Mr. Trump’s defeat obscures a serious risk, he said.

He recalled how Israeli liberals, driven from power in 1977, celebrated their comeback in 1999 when Ehud Barak of the Labor Party ended Mr. Netanyahu’s first term. Triumphant, the left did not bother to reach out. It went right back to marginalizing Mr. Netanyahu’s right-wing base.

But Mr. Barak did not last two years, his successors have all been right-wingers, and Labor today is effectively defunct.

“This is the lesson maybe for you,” Professor Mizrachi said. “OK, you won the election, fine. But don’t forget that red America is still there.”

PHOTOS: NISSIM MIZRACHI; Supporters of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu at a rally in Beit She’an, Israel. Mr. Mizrachi likens them politically to Trump backers in the United States. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY DAN BALILTY FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** December 23, 2020

**End of Document**



[***Read Your Way Through Hanoi***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68VD-DKN1-DXY4-X52D-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

August 2, 2023 Wednesday 20:51 EST

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**Section:** BOOKS

**Length:** 1658 words

**Byline:** Nguy\xE1\x85n Phan Qu\xE1\xBA Mai

**Highlight:** Hanoi, long a city of storytellers, has been devastated and reborn time and time again. Nguy\xE1\x85n Phan Qu\xE1\xBA Mai guides readers through the literature that has played a part in that renewal.

**Body**

Hanoi, long a city of storytellers, has been devastated and reborn time and time again. Nguy\xE1\x85n Phan Qu\xE1\xBA Mai guides readers through the literature that has played a part in that renewal.

[*Read Your Way Around the World*](https://www.nytimes.com/series/literary-guides) is a series exploring the globe through books.

Hanoi has always been a city of tales and legends. Its ancient name, [*Thang Long*](https://hoangthanhthanglong.com/2021/09/06/ten-goi-manh-dat-thang-long-qua-cac-thoi-ky-lich-su/?lang=en), which means “the Rising Dragon,” comes from a tale about Emperor Ly Thai To witnessing a golden dragon ascending when he moved the capital here in 1010. The city is now the heartland of Vietnamese literature — home to many of our finest writers, literary festivals and book fairs.

Cradled by the silky Red River, Hanoi is also a city of loss and survival: It was destroyed time and time again during the French Indochina War, then the Vietnam War, when [*thousands of tons of bombs*](https://edition.cnn.com/2022/12/17/asia/operation-linebacker-ii-50th-anniversary-intl-hnk-ml-dst/index.html) were dropped onto the city. But once in Hanoi, you will feel the energy of a city that constantly renews itself.

What should I read before I pack my bags?

Vietnam is too often seen through the prism of war, but it is a place with more than 4,000 years of history and culture. A fun book to dive into is “The Food of Vietnam,” by Luke Nguyen. The chapter about Hanoi serves you delicious introductions to the city’s most treasured dishes, such as cha ca (traditional fish cakes), bun cha (noodles with grilled meat and fried spring rolls), [*banh cuon*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/31/magazine/banh-cuon-recipe.html) (steamed rice crepes) and pho (Vietnamese noodle soup).

Hanoi is a city of poets, and one of my favorites is Ho Xuan Huong, whose daring and thought-provoking poems have been translated and published in “[*Spring Essence: The Poetry of Ho Xuan Huong.*](https://www.nytimes.com/2001/03/15/books/woodcuts-bytes-for-vietnamese-poet-preserving-dying-ideographic-script-via.html)” For a contemporary poetry collection, check out “[*The Women Carry River Water*](https://www.umasspress.com/9781558490871/the-women-carry-river-water/),” by Nguyen Quang Thieu. If you prefer to get to know Hanoi via fiction, “[*Dumb Luck*](https://saigoneer.com/vietnam-literature/15820-saigoneer-bookshelf-revisiting-vu-trong-phung-s-dumb-luck),” by Vu Trong Phung — a sarcastic novel set in Hanoi during the colonial period — is considered a classic of Vietnamese literature.

“Understanding Vietnam,” by Neil L. Jamieson, offers a deep examination of our country through poetry and fiction. “Hanoi: Biography of a City,” by William Stewart Logan, and “Hanoi of a Thousand Years,” by Carol Howland, both explore the life and history of this ancient city.

What books can show me other facets of the city?

The people of Hanoi have experienced countless wars, political turmoil and daily challenges to survival. Vietnamese writers, in documenting these experiences, have had to overcome a strong culture of censorship, practiced not just by the government but also by publishers and editors who need to protect themselves from harm by censoring not only whole books but paragraphs, sentences, words.

Most books about Hanoi haven’t been translated. Among the few that have, I highly recommend “[*The Sorrow of War*](https://www.nytimes.com/1995/05/15/arts/war-recalled-through-vietnamese-eyes.html),” by Bao Ninh, which tells the story of Kien, a Hanoi boy who went to war and returned a traumatized man. First published in 1991, the novel was banned in Vietnam until 2005 because it contradicted the official viewpoint that, since North Vietnam had won the war, there should be glory, not sorrow.

For the book to be published again in Vietnam, the author had to change the Vietnamese title from “The Sorrow of War” to “The Fate of Love.” Now the original name of the novel has been reinstated, and [*Bao Ninh*](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/09/05/opinion/vietnam-war-writers.html) is being hailed as one of the greatest Vietnamese writers. His most recent short story collection, “[*Hanoi at Midnight*](https://www.washingtonpost.com/books/2023/06/18/bao-ninh-hanoi-midnight-interview/),” documents the complex lives of the people here.

“[*The General Retires and Other Stories*](https://www.amazon.com/General-Retires-Other-Stories/dp/0195885805),” by Nguyen Huy Thiep, daringly criticizes socialist ideas and brings to life the struggles and courage of Hanoian people. “[*Behind the Red Mist*](https://archive.nytimes.com/www.nytimes.com/books/98/11/01/bib/981101.rv154952.html),” by Ho Anh Thai, is another thought-provoking and innovative book.

I highly recommend “[*Last Night I Dreamed of Peace*](https://www.nytimes.com/2006/06/06/world/asia/06vietnam.html),” the diary of Dang Thuy Tram, who was killed on the battlefield at the age of 27 while working as a doctor during the Vietnam War. Her diary was brought back to the United States by an American military intelligence officer, Frederic Whitehurst. Thirty-five years later, in 2005, the diary was returned to her family in Hanoi, then [*published*](https://sm.stanford.edu/archive/stanmed/2007summer/diaries.html) to international acclaim.

Another female writer whose work I admire is Le Minh Khue, whose short story collection “[*The Stars, The Earth, The River*](https://www.nytimes.com/1997/08/10/books/books-in-brief-fiction-438120.html)” is mainly set in Hanoi’s ***working-class*** neighborhoods and depicts a grittier city.

What audiobook would make for good company while I walk around?

The Vietnamese poet Phung Quan once wrote, “During the moments of difficulties, I hold on to the verse of poetry and pull myself up.” Poetry is a pillar of Vietnamese life and, as you walk around Hanoi, you can listen to “[*Lanterns Hanging on the Wind,*](https://saigoneer.com/vietnam-literature/15764-a-radio-program-puts-vietnamese-poetry-in-the-limelight-with-bilingual-readings)” a two-part, bilingual radio program celebrating Vietnamese poetry. The Vietnamese versions of the poems are read by the authors, and the English translations are read by Jennifer Fossenbell, an American poet.

While spending time Hanoi, you may find yourself on Hai Ba Trung Street, named after [*two warrior sisters*](https://theculturetrip.com/asia/vietnam/articles/hai-ba-trung-the-story-of-vietnams-elephant-riding-warrior-princesses/) who, according to legend, rode on the backs of elephants, leading an army of mostly women to defeat the Chinese colonizers around A.D. 40. The audiobook of Phong Nguyen’s “[*Bronze Drum*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/17/books/review/new-this-week.html),” narrated beautifully by Quyen Ngo, will transport you into the lives of the Trung sisters.

What literary landmarks and bookshops should I visit?

Hanoi’s [*19/12 Street*](https://luckyhotelhanoi.com/en/1912-book-street-a-new-destination-loved-by-young-people-in-hanoi), dedicated to books and booksellers, is right next to the historic [*Hoa Lo Prison*](https://www.lonelyplanet.com/vietnam/hanoi/attractions/hoa-lo-prison-museum/a/poi-sig/1141862/357880), nicknamed the “Hanoi Hilton” by U.S. prisoners of war. Local book companies and publishers have stores along the thoroughfare, displaying and selling their titles. As you walk under the green canopies of ancient trees, reflect on this fact: This street used to be a busy market — the [*Underworld Market*](https://hanoitimes.vn/tales-of-hanoi-streets-the-underworld-market-in-hanoi-322266.html) — named for the mass graves of victims killed during the Anti-French Resistance War.

The Temple of Literature, where the annual Vietnamese Poetry Day celebration is held two weeks after the first day of the Vietnamese New Year, is a [*must-visit site*](https://www.nytimes.com/2009/04/05/travel/05hours.html). While you are there, stand in one of the ancient courtyards, close your eyes and imagine listening to Vietnamese poets reading to thousands of Hanoians who consider Poetry Day a highlight of their new year.

To the west of the city, the [*Vietnam Museum of Literature*](https://baotangvanhoc.vn/) will enable you to get to know many of our foremost writers and poets. A book cafe has just been added to the building and is a good place to relax.

Trang Tien Bookstore and Thang Long Bookstore on Trang Tien Street, near the [*Lake of the Restored Sword*](https://www.thrillophilia.com/attractions/lake-of-the-restored-sword#:~:text=Located%20in%20Hanoi's%20historical%20center,Chinese%2C%20he%20became%20the%20king.), will give you a glimpse into books being published locally.

Nearby is Dinh Le Street, lined with indie bookstores, each with a small range of English books. Around the corner, on Nguyen Xi Street, many secondhand books are sold. On this street, you can also find banned books, which include those written by Hanoi writers who have had to publish their work overseas, only to see copies of those books smuggled back into Vietnam and sold here. A few years ago, I came to a bookshop here asking for the novels of [*Duong Thu Huong*](https://www.nytimes.com/2005/07/11/books/vietnamese-writer-wont-be-silenced.html) and was told by the seller that he didn’t carry them. But later, when I was paying, he asked in a whisper if I really wanted to buy the titles I had mentioned. I nodded and he took me up several flights of stairs, to the top floor, into a dimly lit back room where he handed me the books.

For a fun time, hop on the back of a motorbike taxi and let the driver take you to West Lake and [*Tran Quoc Pagoda*](https://www.vietnamonline.com/attraction/tran-quoc-pagoda.html). On the way, ask the driver to stop by [*Bookworm Hanoi*](https://www.bookwormhanoi.com/) — one of the largest foreign-language bookstores in the country — which has a good collection of well-preserved vintage books on Vietnam.

If I have no time for day trips, what books could take me farther afield instead?

“[*Beneath Saigon’s Cho Nau*](https://paulchristiansen.net/beneath-saigons-cho-nau-duoi-tan-cho-nau-sai-gon/),” by Paul Christiansen, is an excellent essay collection that takes you to southern Vietnam and highlights many aspects of our culture and lifestyle, including rice wine making and whale worshiping. “[*The Defiant Muse: Vietnamese Feminist Poems from Antiquity to the Present*](https://www.feministpress.org/books-a-m/the-defiant-muse)” will transport you to many regions of Vietnam, as well as into the hearts and minds of our people, using the rich Vietnamese poetic traditions.

Note: The Vietnamese words in the original version of this essay used diacritical marks. To comply with New York Times style, the marks were removed before publication.

Unfortunately, this practice alters the meaning of the words. In the case of H\xE1\x8Fa Lò Prison, for example, “h\xE1\x8Fa” means “fire,” and “lò” means “furnace”: the Burning Furnace Prison. Without the marks, “hoa” means “flowers,” and “lo” means “worry,” rendering the term “Hoa Lo” meaningless. I look forward to the day when The Times and other Western publications celebrate the richness and complexity of Vietnamese, and of all other languages, by showcasing them in their original formats.

Nguy\xE1\x85n Phan Qu\xE1\xBA Mai’s Hanoi Reading List

* “The Food of Vietnam,” Luke Nguyen

1. “Spring Essence: The Poetry of Ho Xuan Huong,” Ho Xuan Huong
2. “The Women Carry River Water,” Nguyen Quang Thieu
3. “Dumb Luck,” Vu Trong Phung
4. “Understanding Vietnam,” Neil L. Jamieson
5. “Hanoi: Biography of a City,” William Stewart Logan
6. “Hanoi of a Thousand Years,” Carol Howland
7. “The Sorrow of War” and “Hanoi at Midnight,” Bao Ninh
8. “The General Retires and Other Stories,” Nguyen Huy Thiep
9. “Behind the Red Mist,” Ho Anh Thai
10. “Last Night I Dreamed of Peace,” Dang Thuy Tram
11. “The Stars, The Earth, The River,” Le Minh Khue
12. “Bronze Drum,” Phong Nguyen
13. “Beneath Saigon’s Cho Nau,” Paul Christiansen
14. “The Defiant Muse: Vietnamese Feminist Poems from Antiquity to the Present,” edited by Nguyen Thi Minh Ha, Nguyen Thi Thanh Binh and Lady Borton

Born and raised in Vietnam, Nguy\xE1\x85n Phan Qu\xE1\xBA Mai is a novelist, poet and translator. Her most recent books are “[*The Mountains Sing*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/17/books/review/the-mountains-sing-nguyen-phan-que-mai.html),” which won, among other awards, the 2021 PEN Oakland-Josephine Miles Literary Award, and “[*Dust Child*](https://www.bostonglobe.com/2023/03/23/arts/dust-child-nguyn-phan-qu-mai-uses-silken-touch-tale-those-left-behind-after-occupation-vietnam/),” published in 2023. Her writing has been translated into twenty languages.

PHOTO: (PHOTOGRAPH BY Raphaelle Macaron FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** August 7, 2023

**End of Document**



[***A New Hope for Manhattan’s Chino Latino Restaurants: TikTok***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:686X-THX1-DXY4-X1JK-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

May 12, 2023 Friday 21:31 EST

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**Section:** DINING

**Length:** 1176 words

**Byline:** Christina Morales

**Highlight:** These fading institutions, where lo mein and mofongo are served side by side, have found a new customer base.

**Body**

During a recent weekday lunch rush at his restaurant on the Upper West Side, Richard Lam hurried around the dining room fielding orders from his regulars for dishes like wonton soup, General Tso’s chicken and fried rice.

Moments earlier, Mr. Lam recommended a plate of crispy chicharrones de pollo to a first-time customer who learned about the diner from a viral [*TikTok video posted in March*](https://www.tiktok.com/@righteouseats/video/7210828665746410798?q=righteous%20eats&amp;t=1683329545459).

La Dinastia, which opened in 1986, is at the center of an effort by restaurant owners to resuscitate New York City’s Chino Latino food, a slowly dying cuisine that features Chinese dishes like lo mein alongside Latino ones such as palomilla steak cooked in a wok, and mofongo covered in a beef gravy.

Mr. Lam’s struggle to stay relevant recently received a boost from an unlikely source: a series of [*widely viewed*](https://www.tiktok.com/@righteouseats/video/7211315816317373742) [*TikTok*](https://www.tiktok.com/@righteouseats/video/7220529930529017134) [*videos*](https://www.tiktok.com/@righteouseats/video/7228658472458407210) posted in the last few months from the account [*@RighteousEats*](https://yo.righteouseats.co/) that has brought scores of new customers to the diner. The videos have ranged from highlighting dishes on the menu to explaining the history of the restaurant in Spanish.

Now, Mr. Lam, 36, finds himself navigating a new frontier, with lines spilling out of the door of this neighborhood institution surrounded by trendy fast-casual spots. The moment marks his best — and perhaps last — chance to attract new diners to Chino Latino food, a niche in the New York food scene.

“It’s my time to try and build new clientele,” said Mr. Lam, whose father, Juan Lam, opened the restaurant shortly after he was born.

Unlike places serving fusion foods like Korean tacos or Mexican pizza, restaurants like La Dinastia split their menus to showcase separate Chinese and Latino dishes that can also be served together.

There are only a handful of Chino Latino restaurants left in New York today, but at one point, there were at least 20, said Lok Siu, a professor of [*Asian American and Asian diaspora studies*](https://ethnicstudies.berkeley.edu/people/lok-siu-1/) at the University of California, Berkeley, who has [*researched Chinese Latinos*](https://www.jstor.org/stable/23055229?read-now=1&amp;seq=3). Many of the restaurants were opened by the descendants of Chinese immigrants who moved to countries like Cuba, Peru and Venezuela, beginning in the mid-1800s. They learned to cook local dishes and speak Spanish.

As political turmoil and economic instability uprooted people throughout Latin America, [*Chinese Latinos*](https://www.nytimes.com/2004/09/05/nyregion/thecity/identity-stew.html) came to the United States, eventually settling in New York City. Chino Latino cuisine flourished here, Ms. Siu said, because immigrants found a community in two cultures. They opened restaurants in the late 1960s to serve ***working class*** Latinos, especially those who lived in the Upper West Side. Over time, as neighborhoods gentrified and the population of Chinese Latinos dwindled, so did the restaurants.

“These are the last remnants of what remains from this cultural phenomena,” Ms. Liu said about the restaurants. “There’s nothing else that marks their long existence.”

That disappearing history is honored at Marco Britti’s restaurant [*Calle Dao*](https://www.calledao.com/), named after [*Calle Cuchillo*](https://www.alamy.es/calle-cuchillo-barrio-chino-la-habana-provincia-de-la-habana-cuba-image381780420.html), the last remaining street of the Chinatown in Cuba’s capital. It opened in 2014, and he took a fusion cooking approach with Chinese and Cuban ingredients to make dishes like fried rice with roasted pork and chorizo, and ropa vieja served with noodles and a Sichuan soy glaze.

In the dining room, an enlarged image of the Cuban newspaper [*Kwong Wah Po*](http://cu.china-embassy.gov.cn/esp/sbgx/202211/t20221115_10975027.htm) — printed in Spanish and Chinese — hangs on the wall.

“It’s kind of the birth certificate of Calle Dao,” said Mr. Britti, 50, an Italian immigrant who moved to Cuba for a short time to learn about salsa music. “It brings the two cultures together.”

The owners of two traditional Chino Latino restaurants, La Dinastia and [*Flor de Mayo*](https://www.flordemayo.com/), which opened in 1977, have largely kept the food and service as it was when their families began.

Though both restaurants operate separately, they share a common history. Phillip Chu and William Cho immigrated to Peru in the late 1960s from Hong Kong and met Juan Lam. The trio moved to New York City soon after and took over a restaurant in 1977, forming Flor de Mayo together with an additional partner. In 1985, when the lease ended, the partners split; Mr. Lam opened La Dinastia where there was formerly a Cuban restaurant, and Flor de Mayo relocated to a new space on Broadway. The current owners remain good friends.

Both restaurants have experimented with updated dishes, like a green sauce made with cilantro and avocado that pairs well with chicharrones de pollo at La Dinastia, and yuca balls stuffed with sausage, deep fried and served with a spicy sauce at Flor de Mayo.

Last month, Brandon Marquez, of Midtown East, first dined at La Dinastia, and soon after saw a TikTok video by Righteous Eats about the restaurant.

“It kind of reminds me of home,” Mr. Marquez, 24, who is half Filipino and Salvadoran, said about the restaurant, “especially when I saw the TikTok and all the Asian people speaking in Spanish.”

Despite the new publicity, the biggest challenge these restaurants face is staffing. All of the cooks at La Dinastia’s kitchen are Chinese and have learned to make Cuban dishes over time. Many original cooks and waiters retired during the pandemic. Michael Lan, an owner at La Dinastia who has worked there for decades, is planning his own exit.

“I’ll be there for him,” Mr. Lan, 64, said about the younger Mr. Lam. “I’m trying to hand him the baton. He’s really pushing it, and he will get there when I finally decide to hang up my shoes.”

At Flor de Mayo, inexperienced cooks start off making dishes like lo mein and fried rice, and learn to serve food like lomo saltado from the chefs that have worked there for close to 30 years. “But they’re getting old,” said Marvin Chu, 40, an owner who operates the restaurant’s three locations with his brother and great-uncle. “Our menu has over 100 types of cooking. For someone that’s new coming in and looking, they get scared.”

This variety of food has always interested Chris Sileo, 55, of the Upper West Side. About once a month, he comes to La Dinastia with friends from Hell’s Kitchen and Sparta, N.J. One, Steven Grillo, 50, recognized Mr. Lan from a Facebook video.

Regulars like Mr. Sileo have had a more difficult time eating at the restaurant lately because of long lines, though Mr. Lam, an owner, said he will hold a table if frequent patrons call ahead. Mr. Sileo said he was happy to see the boost from social media and new customers.

“You have to keep it growing,” he said. “But they always have room for us.”

Susan C. Beachy contributed research.

Follow [*New York Times Cooking on Instagram*](https://www.instagram.com/nytcooking/), [*Facebook*](https://www.facebook.com/nytcooking/), [*YouTube*](https://www.youtube.com/nytcooking), [*TikTok*](https://www.tiktok.com/@nytcooking?lang=en) and [*Pinterest*](https://www.pinterest.com/nytcooking/). [*Get regular updates from New York Times Cooking, with recipe suggestions, cooking tips and shopping advice*](https://www.nytimes.com/newsletters/cooking).

Susan C. Beachy contributed research.

PHOTOS: Clockwise from top left: La Dinastia, on the Upper West Side; Peruvian rotisserie chicken at Flor de Mayo; palomilla steak at La Dinastia; Richard Lam, left, and Michael Lan, the owners of La Dinastia; dishes at Calle Dao; one of Calle Dao’s three locations in Manhattan. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY LANNA APISUKH FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page D6.

**Load-Date:** May 16, 2023

**End of Document**



[***La Mami***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:655V-2N41-DXY4-X4XF-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

April 8, 2022 Friday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section C; Column 0; Movies, Performing Arts/Weekend Desk; Pg. 5; CRITIC'S PICK

**Length:** 300 words

**Byline:** By Beandrea July

**Body**

This documentary about the den mother of dancers at a Mexico City cabaret is vérité at its best.

At the Cabaret Barba Azul, women get paid to dance and drink with the male patrons, a custom that dates back to the 1930s. In the beautifully-rendered documentary ''La Mami,'' the director and cinematographer Laura Herrero Garvín (''The Swirl'') immerses us in the behind-the-scenes world of these dancers through the lens of their den mother: Doña Olga. Like them, Doña Olga also used to spend her nights dancing for pesos, but after 45 years working various jobs at the cabaret to support her five children, she has settled into her post in the club's dressing room-bathroom combo. There she regulates the distribution of toilet paper with an iron fist, and doles out a charming mix of motherly nurturing and fierce rebukes. Like this bit of poetry: ''Men are only good for two things: for nothing, and for money.''

[Video: Watch on YouTube.]

Garvín's adept camerawork allows the story to unfold so seamlessly in its vérité style, that the film emanates the magic of a scripted drama without revealing any noticeable interference. And it creates a palpable depth of intimacy too: from Doña Olga waving incense and whispering prayers throughout the club before the doors open, to the nervous new girl Priscilla putting on makeup in the mirror.

The triumph of ''La Mami'' is that in depicting how Doña Olga and the Barba Azul dancers navigate a job where male pleasure dominates, the film does not look down on them, but instead revels in their humanity. And in so doing, this remarkable portrayal of female friendship offers a poignant, elemental take on the lives of ***working-class*** women in urban Mexico today.

La MamiNot rated. In Spanish, with subtitles. Running time: 1 hour 21 minutes. In theaters.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2022/04/07/movies/la-mami-review-tough-love.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/04/07/movies/la-mami-review-tough-love.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: Doña Olga, the den mother of the dancers, in the documentary ''La Mami.'' (PHOTOGRAPH BY CINEMA TROPICAL AND HABANERO)

**Load-Date:** April 8, 2022

**End of Document**



[***Small Town Wisconsin***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65N8-7F11-DXY4-X334-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

June 10, 2022 Friday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section C; Column 0; Movies, Performing Arts/Weekend Desk; Pg. 6

**Length:** 349 words

**Byline:** By Glenn Kenny

**Body**

A major-league farewell journey turns into an adventure for this dad who is losing shared custody.

Taking advantage of a shared custody arrangement that is soon to be justifiably voided, a divorced father, Wayne (David Sullivan), entertains his young son, Tyler (Cooper J. Friedman), in an unorthodox way. Wayne takes Tyler to the house in which Wayne grew up (they enter the property through a hole in a chain-link fence; nearby hangs a sign reading ''Bank Owned'') and imitates the harangues his own abusive, alcoholic father delivered at the ancestral dinner table.

''Small Town Wisconsin,'' directed by a Milwaukee native, Niels Mueller, from a script by Jason Naczek, is the story of a man who, to paraphrase Bob Dylan, knows something's happening but doesn't know what it is. Tyler's mom and her new partner are moving West from the ***working-class*** suburb in Wisconsin where they live. Wayne is angered and befuddled by this but can't make a case for himself. This also angers and befuddles him. Of course, he too is an alcoholic.

[Video: Watch on YouTube.]

He contrives a blowout weekend for him and his boy: a trip to Milwaukee and a major-league baseball game. Wayne's ex insists on a chaperone -- which is where Wayne's best bud, Chuck (Bill Heck), comes in.

Chuck is wary. ''I've been a part of your failed missions before,'' he tells Wayne. The trip goes wrong in a number of ways (one involving Wayne's lack of credit cards). This forces the guys to take refuge with Wayne's estranged sister (Kristen Johnston). Who, as you might figure, has some life lessons to impart.

Mueller's direction is patient and sensitive, the cast is accomplished and committed, and the picture's comedic aspects sometimes earn a chuckle. But ''Small Town Wisconsin'' is not sufficiently distinctive to rise above the standard-issue cinematic contemplation of the arguably poignant state of the white male American screw-up.

Small Town WisconsinNot rated. Running time: 1 hour 49 minutes. In theaters and available to rent or buy on Google Play, Vudu and other streaming platforms and pay TV operators.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2022/06/09/movies/small-town-wisconsin-review.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/06/09/movies/small-town-wisconsin-review.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTO: Cooper J. Friedman, left, and David Sullivan in ''Small Town Wisconsin,'' a film about a father and son, directed by Niels Mueller from Jason Naczek's script. (PHOTOGRAPH BY QUIVER DISTRIBUTION)

**Load-Date:** June 10, 2022

**End of Document**



[***Willy Chavarria Takes It to Church; Fashion Review***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:66D5-RRH1-JBG3-6231-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

September 16, 2022 Friday 17:09 EST

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**Section:** STYLE

**Length:** 585 words

**Byline:** Guy Trebay

**Highlight:** Classicism, class consciousness and design chops converged at the Latinx designer’s latest presentation.

**Body**

Classicism, class consciousness and design chops converged at the Latinx designer’s latest presentation.

Fashion is no place for people without a stomach for contradiction. Consider the gorgeous, if occasionally lugubrious, Willy Chavarria show on Wednesday in Manhattan at Marble Collegiate Church, home pulpit of President Richard M. Nixon’s favorite clergyman, Norman Vincent Peale, the self-help pundit who wrote “The Power of Positive Thinking.” Exalting and hokey, exhortatory as a sermon and yet subtly persuasive, the show was also so late in starting that guests started fidgeting in the pews.

Then, in a honeyed tenor, the singer Dorian Wood opened Mr. Chavarria’s spring 2023 collection, “Please Rise,” with a Spanish-language hymn about crossing the metaphorical and actual borders that divide us, and the designer took us to church. Inspired by clerical garments like cassocks, surplices and priestly capelets, the collection also featured the colossal proportions, boxy silhouettes and subtly coded references to unassimilated Latin subcultures that are Chavarria signatures — his way of bridging what he calls “the divisions in our world.”

There were vast pleated trousers beneath snug-fitting double-breasted jackets, their chevron lapels zoot-suiting out beyond the shoulder line. There were T-shirts draped to knee length and inside references to the geographies of Mr. Chavarria’s California childhood in the form of place names like Sacramento, San Jose and Fresno spelled backward across sleeved athletic jerseys. Huge satin roses were pinned to waistbands and collars in what, given Mr. Chavarria’s affinity for outsiders, may well have been a symbolic reference to prison tattoos.

Not since Miguel Adrover left New York has the city known a designer whose work is as emotional and inventive, as classical and uncompromising in its politics as Mr. Chavarria’s. Mr. Adrover famously grew disillusioned with fashion and abandoned this city and country for Spain and his birthplace on the island of Majorca. Having already endured plenty of the hard knocks a tough business can deliver, Mr. Chavarria, 55, appears to be here for the long haul.

The thread of continuity between the two is crucial because Mr. Chavarria has an essential voice and vision. In addition to centering aesthetic and beauty ideals drawn less from European than from Mexican and Central American cultures, he embraces hybrid identities in all their paradoxes. Born to Irish American and Mexican parents, Mr. Chavarria was raised ***working-class*** in the fields of California’s agriculturally rich Central Valley. Now, as a senior vice president at Calvin Klein (and a stealth creative force behind [*Yeezy Gap*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/07/25/style/yeezy-gap-balenciaga.html), which [*appeared to be imploding on Thursday*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/15/business/kanye-west-yeezy-gap.html)), he is among the best-paid, and certainly the most influential, Latinx designers in the field.

Interviewed by Vogue years after his retirement, Mr. Adrover asserted that his principal goal in fashion had always been giving a voice to the underdog. “For me, it was really important to bring up people that had never been represented before on a catwalk,” [*he told the magazine*](https://www.vogue.com/article/its-been-20-years-since-miguel-adrover-disrupted-nyfw-8-ways-that-he-was-ahead-of-his-time). For far too long, no successor to Mr. Adrover appeared; sometimes it even seemed as if the person who combined his abundant gifts and deeply held convictions did not exist.

Then suddenly the industry discovered Mr. Chavarria hidden in plain sight.

PHOTO: Willy Chavarria debuted his spring 2023 collection at Marble Collegiate Church in Manhattan. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Selwyn Tungol FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** September 16, 2022

**End of Document**



[***Steven Knight Isn’t Ready for ‘Peaky Blinders’ to End; Ask a Showrunner***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65N9-J4J1-DXY4-X4CK-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

June 10, 2022 Friday 22:36 EST

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**Section:** ARTS; television

**Length:** 1351 words

**Byline:** Desiree Ibekwe

**Highlight:** The cult British show’s final season is now on Netflix, but its creator has plans for a spinoff movie and says he wants to follow the Shelby family into the 1940s and ’50s.

**Body**

The cult British show’s final season is now on Netflix, but its creator has plans for a spinoff movie and says he wants to follow the Shelby family into the 1940s and ’50s.

LONDON — Steven Knight knew something special was happening around “Peaky Blinders,” his TV crime drama, a few years ago, when the rapper Snoop Dogg asked to talk with him.

The pair met in a London hotel room, Knight said in a recent interview, and for three hours discussed the show, which is based on the real-life Shelby family that operated in Birmingham, in central England, in the shadow of World War I. “Peaky” reminded the rapper of how he got involved in gang culture in Los Angeles, Knight said.

“How the connection occurs between 1920s Birmingham and South Central, I don’t know,” Knight, 62, said. “I think you just get lucky with some projects and it resonates with people.”

Since premiering in Britain in 2013, the tumultuous fortunes of the Shelby family, headed by Tommy Shelby (Cillian Murphy), and set against the backdrop of the political and social tumult of the interwar years, has resonated with many.

Devotees hold [*weddings themed around the show’s early-20th-century aesthetic*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/03/08/arts/television/peaky-blinders.html) and cut their hair like the characters. The official “Peaky” brand extensions have been diverse, weird and wonderful, including an [*official cookbook*](https://peakyblinders.tv/product/the-official-peaky-blinders-cookbook/), despite fans noting that Tommy [*is never seen eating*](https://www.ladbible.com/entertainment/cillian-murphy-explains-why-tommy-shelby-is-never-seen-eating-in-entir-20220330); a [*Monopoly board game*](https://peakyblinders.tv/product/monopoly-top-trumps/); a [*virtual reality game*](https://www.peakyblindersthekingsransom.com/); and a [*dance show*](https://peakyblindersdance.com/about-the-show/) which premieres in Britain this year.

Now, after six seasons, the cultural hit is drawing to a close, its final outing dropping on Netflix on Friday. (The season aired in Britain earlier this year.) While Season 6 is the official conclusion of the show, Knight has trailed a [*spinoff movie*](https://ew.com/tv/peaky-blinders-movie-spin-offs/) and other projects, framing the final season as “the end of the beginning.”

In a recent video interview, he discussed the development of “Peaky,” and what he has planned for the future. These are edited excerpts from the conversation.

When did you first have the idea to dramatize the story of the Peaky Blinders?

These stories were told to me when I was a kid by my parents because they grew up in Small Heath in Birmingham, and so they sort of experienced that world. When they told me stories, I always thought it would make a great drama.

I first thought about doing it as a TV series probably 20 years ago, and I’m really thankful that it didn’t happen then because I don’t think there was the technology to have done it justice. Then I was off writing movies and, when television started to become what it is now, someone said, do you have any television ideas? It was an idea that I had sort of in the bottom drawer.

Why did those stories resonate with you as a child, did you see them as heroes?

Yes. My dad’s uncles were illegal bookmakers known as the Peaky Blinders, so he was in awe of them as a kid — whenever he saw them he was terrified and impressed, they were heroes to him. He would see them in immaculate clothes with razor blades in their hats and drinking whiskey out of jam jars.

And I know those streets, I know the pubs, I know the Garrison pub — the real one — and when I wanted to do “Peaky” I decided to keep the mythology rather than be like, what was it really like?

I wanted to keep it as if they were being viewed through the eyes of a kid. The horses are all beautiful. The clothes are all magnificent. I was a big fan of westerns; it’s like a western, and that’s how I wanted to keep it.

Do you think the show has changed how Birmingham is viewed? In Britain at least, the city and the accent have often been maligned.

Part of the challenge in the beginning was to try and make Birmingham — which was a blank canvas at best before — cool. To give it a story. Liverpool has the Beatles and Manchester has the nightclub scene, Birmingham never really had anything.

There was a suggestion in the early days of moving the story to London or another city, and I said no. I think the fact that Birmingham was a blank canvas helped because there were no preconceptions.

According to people I know from Birmingham, when they go abroad and they speak, instantly people mention “Peaky Blinders.” And it’s not a bad thing, it’s always good. I think it has given Birmingham an identity that perhaps it didn’t have, purely in the media.

The show could easily have been ahistoric, but you weave contemporary social movements and political goings-on throughout the seasons. Why was that important to you?

If you’re setting something in the 1920s, if you look at what was really going on historically, it gives you an enormous amount of material to use.

I didn’t look at history books because I think they, first of all, don’t really tell the history of the ***working class*** anyway, and also they tend to look at trends and patterns that eventually made everything that happened seem inevitable when it wasn’t.

If you look at newspapers and wherever you can get word-of-mouth testimony about the way life was, it’s so fascinating. And if you can bring that into the work, it just gives it — even though this is very heightened and mythological — a real base.

The show takes place in a similar time frame to “Downton Abbey.” As in that series, British period dramas usually show ***working-class*** characters as servants.

Servants or figures of fun or whatever. What I wanted to do was have these ***working-class*** characters where we’re not looking at them and saying, “Isn’t it a shame? Wasn’t it awful? Wasn’t their life so dreadful?” Their lives are amazing and romantic and tragic.

An abiding critique of the show is its [*portrayal of violent masculinity*](https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/peaky-blinders-glorifies-violence-and-toxic-masculinity-fxzvnhhxl). What do you think about claims that “Peaky” glorifies violence?

I think there’s lots of things going on. First of all, you’re depicting life in the ’20s and ’30s and it was very different — to suggest that people behaved the way they behave now, would be the same as saying they didn’t smoke. But also, the way that I look at it, any act of violence in “Peaky” has a very big consequence. If they get scarred, they stay scarred.

There’s a scene in one of the early series where Arthur [a Shelby family member] is in a boxing ring and kills someone because he loses his temper. In the next season, that boy’s mother turns up at the Garrison with a gun and wants to get revenge for what happened. In other words, it’s not like this is parting violence. All violence has a consequence.

The show is coming to an end, but you have spoken of spinoffs, including a movie. Why do you want to keep returning to the show’s world?

It’s partly to do with the fact that it seems to be going up and not down in terms of audience. And I’m interested in concluding during the Second World War. So the film will be set during that war, and then the film itself will dictate what happens next.

But I’m quite interested in keeping that world going into the ’40s and ’50s and just seeing where it goes because as long as there’s an appetite, then why not do it? I probably won’t be writing them all, but the world will be established.

Tommy Shelby is a deeply complicated character. How did you want his story to end?

I always imagine that before Episode 1 of Season 1, he put a gun to his head and decided, “Well, I’m not going to kill myself, I’m just going to do whatever I want.” There’s a great Francis Bacon quote about how, since life is so meaningless, we might as well be extraordinary. Tommy doesn’t think there’s a point, he doesn’t think there’s a goal, he doesn’t think there’s a destination, he just does these things.

Then over the six seasons, he, bit by bit, comes back to life. It’s like something that’s frozen is thawing out, but obviously that process is very painful. My take is that Season 6 is asking the question: Can Tommy Shelby be redeemed? And I think that question is answered in the last 10 minutes.

PHOTOS: Above, Steven Knight, the creator of “Peaky Blinders,” in London. He said the show, set in Birmingham, England, was “like a western, and that’s how I wanted to keep it.” Left, Cillian Murphy as Tommy Shelby, head of the Shelby crime family in that Netflix series. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY JEREMIE SOUTEYRAT FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES; NETFLIX)

**Load-Date:** June 13, 2022

**End of Document**



[***‘La Mami’ Review: Tough Love; Critic’s Pick***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:655M-S2M1-JBG3-61CR-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

April 7, 2022 Thursday 17:15 EST

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**Section:** MOVIES

**Length:** 318 words

**Byline:** Beandrea July

**Highlight:** This documentary about the den mother of dancers at a Mexico City cabaret is vérité at its best.

**Body**

This documentary about the den mother of dancers at a Mexico City cabaret is vérité at its best.

At the Cabaret Barba Azul, women get paid to dance and drink with the male patrons, a [*custom*](http://www.boston.com/news/world/latinamerica/articles/2009/11/27/once_legendary_mexico_citys_famed_dance_for_peso_halls_fading/?utm_source=pocket_mylist) that dates back to the 1930s. In the beautifully-rendered documentary “La Mami,” the director and cinematographer Laura Herrero Garvín (“The Swirl”) immerses us in the behind-the-scenes world of these dancers through the lens of their den mother: Doña Olga. Like them, Doña Olga also used to spend her nights dancing for pesos, but after 45 years working various jobs at the cabaret to support her five children, she has settled into her post in the club’s dressing room-bathroom combo. There she regulates the distribution of toilet paper with an iron fist, and doles out a charming mix of motherly nurturing and fierce rebukes. Like this bit of poetry: “Men are only good for two things: for nothing, and for money.”

[Video: [*Watch on YouTube.*](http://youtube.com/embed/aQnQXIhRQmA)]

Garvín’s adept camerawork allows the story to unfold so seamlessly in its vérité style, that the film emanates the magic of a scripted drama without revealing any noticeable interference. And it creates a palpable depth of intimacy too: from Doña Olga waving incense and whispering prayers throughout the club before the doors open, to the nervous new girl Priscilla putting on makeup in the mirror.

The triumph of “La Mami” is that in depicting how Doña Olga and the Barba Azul dancers navigate a job where male pleasure dominates, the film does not look down on them, but instead revels in their humanity. And in so doing, this remarkable portrayal of female friendship offers a poignant, elemental take on the lives of ***working-class*** women in urban Mexico today.

La Mami

Not rated. In Spanish, with subtitles. Running time: 1 hour 21 minutes. In theaters.

PHOTO: Doña Olga, the den mother of the dancers, in the documentary “La Mami.” (PHOTOGRAPH BY CINEMA TROPICAL AND HABANERO)

**Load-Date:** April 7, 2022

**End of Document**



[***Brian Cox Takes Stock of His Eventful Life on Stage and Screen***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64KG-D6M1-DXY4-X28X-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

January 21, 2022 Friday 15:24 EST

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**Section:** BOOKS

**Length:** 1066 words

**Byline:** Alexandra Jacobs

**Highlight:** In “Putting the Rabbit in the Hat,” the actor currently thriving as Logan Roy in “Succession” recounts his Scottish upbringing, his years in the theater and his experiences in Hollywood.

**Body**

I’m such a fan of the HBO series “Succession,” about a morally depraved, megarich media family, that I hum its theme song in the shower and have taken to wearing commanding pantsuits. So when I picked up “Putting the Rabbit in the Hat,” the new memoir by Brian Cox, who plays the family’s tyrannical patriarch, Logan Roy, I was desperate for tidbits to tide me over during the long wait for Season 4.

Well, there aren’t many. Cox writes gruffly of a newcomer director on the show giving Kieran Culkin, who plays his youngest son and is an ace at mixing up the script, notes to “slow down.” “Now, this is an actor who’s calibrated the patterns of his character’s delivery over the course of two previous seasons,” the author thunders, or so I imagine (as Roy, he’s a big thunderer). “He’s not going to suddenly slow down just because you’ve given him a note.”

Cox confides furthermore that he doesn’t really relate to the intense, Method-like “process” that Jeremy Strong uses to get into the character of Kendall, Logan’s middle son. Fans already knew about Strong’s tactics from [*a profile*](https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2021/12/13/on-succession-jeremy-strong-doesnt-get-the-joke?source=search_google_dsa_paid&amp;gclid=Cj0KCQiAraSPBhDuARIsAM3Js4obrxxmLxHOprmNAozN9ei0DD8ON14mn1lxCXGku4upFvej-GFMekAaAjKhEALw_wcB) of him in The New Yorker that was chewed over for weeks after it was published in December. Some perceived [*condescension in the article toward Strong’s* ***working-class*** *background*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/01/09/opinion/culture/jeremy-strong-new-yorker-careerist-striver.html), including an anonymous Yale classmate having marveled at his “careerist drive.”

The heated discussion was fascinating and perplexing. When did acting become so bougie and aspirational? Wasn’t a ***working-class*** background once a key element of the Hollywood success narrative — getting yanked out, discovered and made over by the savior figure of agent or studio executive? Think Cary Grant (born Archibald Leach, son of a tailor’s presser), Lana Turner (miner’s daughter), Ava Gardner (child of sharecroppers) and all those other glamour figures of yesteryear.

A humble background didn’t hinder Cox, who has gone from leading man of the British stage to one of America’s most prolific and consistent character actors — what is sometimes called a “jobbing actor,” though he now has the clout to negotiate a chauffeur, nice hotels and a double-banger trailer. Nobody rescued Cox, the consummate utility player. “I knew that simply wasn’t my ballpark,” he shrugs, on the subject of Hollywood stardom. “Besides, I’m too short.” He’s written two previous memoirs, one that tracks him to Moscow to direct “The Crucible” and another about the challenges of “King Lear.” Taking stock at 75, he’s not so much a lion in winter (indeed, he was fired as the voice of Aslan in the Narnia movies) as a seasoned workhorse finally able to enjoy a victory gallop.

Cox writes eloquently about his origins in Dundee, Scotland, as the youngest of five children who occasionally had to beg for batter bits from the local chip shop. His parents met at a dance hall; his mother had been a spinner at jute mills and suffered multiple miscarriages and mental illness; his father, a shopkeeper and socialist, died when Brian was 8. Getting plunked in front of the telly rather than taken to the funeral was formative. So were later escapes to the movies, particularly ones like “Saturday Night and Sunday Morning” (1960), starring Albert Finney: “a film that wasn’t all about the lives of posh folk in drawing rooms, or struggling nobly in far-off places, or having faintly amusing high jinks on hospital wards,” Cox writes. “It was all about ***working-class*** people — people like us.” A kind teacher told him about a gofer gig at the local repertory theater and boom, he was home.

Cox went on to attend the London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art and perform in esteemed halls like the Royal Court, learning the classics but also grooving nicely with the rise of the angry young man and kitchen-sink realism led by the playwright John Osborne, with whom he became friends. Before very long he was working with his gods, including Finney.

At a time when theater, the fabulous invalid, is straitjacketed by the pandemic, it’s heartening and a little wistful-making to have it recalled in all its messy midcentury glory. Cox fluffed a flustered Lynn Redgrave’s wig; got felt up by Princess Margaret backstage; narrowly escaped dying in a plane crash on his way to audition for Laurence Olivier. Years later, as Lear in a wheelchair, he “frisbeed” his metal crown into the first row at the National Theater, injuring an audience member. He once compromised his testicles during a naked yoga scene. In the leaner years, he booked bikini waxes and cohabited with an army of cockroaches in a sublet apartment. There was drunkenness aplenty; one actor playing the priest in “Hamlet” got so soused he tumbled into Ophelia’s grave.

Cox, who prefers cannabis to drink, can ramble on a bit. If times ever get lean again, it’s easy to imagine him doing bedtime stories for a sleep app. He salts all the idolatry with disdain. On Kevin Spacey: “A great talent, but a stupid, stupid man.” On Steven Seagal: “As ludicrous in real life as he appears onscreen.” On Quentin Tarantino: “I find his work meretricious. It’s all surface.” (Though he’d take a part if offered.) He’s softer on Woody Allen, owning up to himself dating an 18-year-old when he was in his 40s. “It seems that everybody in this book is either dead or canceled,” he notes with some rue. He’s preoccupied with making a “good death,” cataloging friends’ ends with an almost clinical relish (cancer, emphysema, suicide, a heart attack so massive it threw the victim “clean across the pebbles”).

Like many actors, Cox treads more nimbly on the boards than in his personal life. He admits he wasn’t fully present for family tragedies, like his first wife’s stillborn twins and their daughter’s anorexia. “And that’s my flaw,” he declares. “It’s this propensity for absence, this need to disappear.” He loves the part of Logan partly because, when not thundering, he’s “reined in and bottled up.” But on the page, at least, he is present, lively and pouring forth, though the hints of his distinctive burr may send you heading for the audiobook instead.

Alexandra Jacobs is a book critic for The Times and the author of “Still Here: The Madcap, Nervy, Singular Life of Elaine Stritch.” Follow her on Twitter: @AlexandraJacobs. Putting the Rabbit in the Hat A Memoir By Brian Cox Illustrated. 374 pages. Grand Central Publishing. $29.

PHOTOS: PHOTO (C1); Brian Cox (PHOTOGRAPH BY VINCENT TULLO FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) (C4)

**Load-Date:** January 25, 2022

**End of Document**



[***‘Small Town Wisconsin’ Review: A Father-Son Trip Goes Awry***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65N2-XJT1-JBG3-62S5-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

June 9, 2022 Thursday 23:29 EST

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**Section:** MOVIES

**Length:** 379 words

**Byline:** Glenn Kenny

**Highlight:** A major-league farewell journey turns into an adventure for this dad who is losing shared custody.

**Body**

A major-league farewell journey turns into an adventure for this dad who is losing shared custody.

Taking advantage of a shared custody arrangement that is soon to be justifiably voided, a divorced father, Wayne (David Sullivan), entertains his young son, Tyler (Cooper J. Friedman), in an unorthodox way. Wayne takes Tyler to the house in which Wayne grew up (they enter the property through a hole in a chain-link fence; nearby hangs a sign reading “Bank Owned”) and imitates the harangues his own abusive, alcoholic father delivered at the ancestral dinner table.

“Small Town Wisconsin,” directed by a Milwaukee native, Niels Mueller, from a script by Jason Naczek, is the story of a man who, to paraphrase Bob Dylan, knows something’s happening but doesn’t know what it is. Tyler’s mom and her new partner are moving West from the ***working-class*** suburb in Wisconsin where they live. Wayne is angered and befuddled by this but can’t make a case for himself. This also angers and befuddles him. Of course, he too is an alcoholic.

[Video: [*Watch on YouTube.*](http://youtube.com/embed/iWSxiPKtoSw)]

He contrives a blowout weekend for him and his boy: a trip to Milwaukee and a major-league baseball game. Wayne’s ex insists on a chaperone — which is where Wayne’s best bud, Chuck (Bill Heck), comes in.

Chuck is wary. “I’ve been a part of your failed missions before,” he tells Wayne. The trip goes wrong in a number of ways (one involving Wayne’s lack of credit cards). This forces the guys to take refuge with Wayne’s estranged sister (Kristen Johnston). Who, as you might figure, has some life lessons to impart.

Mueller’s direction is patient and sensitive, the cast is accomplished and committed, and the picture’s comedic aspects sometimes earn a chuckle. But “Small Town Wisconsin” is not sufficiently distinctive to rise above the standard-issue cinematic contemplation of the arguably poignant state of the white male American screw-up.

Small Town Wisconsin

Not rated. Running time: 1 hour 49 minutes. In theaters and available to rent or buy on [*Google Play*](https://play.google.com/store/games?hl=en_US&amp;gl=US), [*Vudu*](https://www.vudu.com/) and other streaming platforms and pay TV operators.

PHOTO: Cooper J. Friedman, left, and David Sullivan in “Small Town Wisconsin,” a film about a father and son, directed by Niels Mueller from Jason Naczek’s script. (PHOTOGRAPH BY QUIVER DISTRIBUTION)

**Load-Date:** June 9, 2022

**End of Document**



[***Canada's Goal: Day Care for Less Than $10***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68JH-49W1-JBG3-63Y8-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

June 26, 2023 Monday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section A; Column 0; Foreign Desk; Pg. 4

**Length:** 1397 words

**Byline:** By Vjosa Isai

**Body**

A national program is reducing day care fees to as low as 10 Canadian dollars, about $7.60, per day, a relief for families even as a surge in demand has created obstacles.

As Susana Ibarra's maternity leave was ending and she was preparing to return to her office outside Toronto, she still faced a big challenge: finding care for her son and then figuring out how to pay for it.

Finally, after putting him on a dozen or so waiting lists, she landed a spot. Even better, it came at a discounted fee of 600 Canadian dollars, or $450, a month.

The low cost was the result of an ambitious day care plan expanding across Canada, intended to drastically cut fees that supporters say will address one of the most vexing problems facing many working parents.

''It was just perfect timing,'' said Ms. Ibarra, who in January went back to work as a paralegal at a tax services firm in Mississauga, a Toronto suburb. She had heard plenty of stories of co-workers who stopped working once they had children because child care costs were exorbitant.

The national day care plan was introduced two years ago by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's government with a goal of steadily pushing down child care costs so that, by 2026, tens of thousands of child care slots would be available at daily fees of 10 Canadian dollars, roughly 200 dollars a month, or less.

By comparison, in large urban areas like Toronto or Vancouver, day care can cost 1,200 Canadian dollars or more per month, or about 60 dollars a day.

The federal child care program is ''a transformative project on a scale with the work of previous generations of Canadians, who built a public school system and public health care,'' the federal government said in a statement when the program was unveiled.

Working with the country's provinces, which are responsible for delivering education and child care services, the federal government plans to spend up to 30 billion Canadian dollars to create a total of 250,000 new low-cost child care spaces, mostly in nonprofit or public day care centers and family-based providers.

Child care providers use government financing to reduce their fees over time until they reach the 10 Canadian dollars a day threshold.

Day care centers in five of Canada's 13 less populated provinces and territories have already lowered fees to that level, while the remaining provinces, including Ontario, have cut their fees by half on the road to reaching 10 dollars per day.

So far, about 52,000 reduced-cost child care slots have been created across the country under the program.

''This is part of our plan to make life more affordable for the middle class and for people working hard to join it,'' Mr. Trudeau said in March while announcing the program's expansion in Manitoba.

Though the program has been widely praised, it has run into growing pains with demand for discounted child care slots exceeding supply and providers grappling with a shortage of workers.

Making child care more affordable enables many working parents, especially women, not to have to choose between their careers or raising their children, child care advocates and researchers said. Studies have also shown that low-cost child care is an economic boon because it increases the work force participation of women.

''Not only is this really good for our economy, not only is this really good for gender equality and for women in the work force, but it's also really good for setting up our kids for success,'' said Karina Gould, Canada's minister of families, children and social development.

Among the world's wealthiest countries, European nations tend to dominate rankings of child care policies.

A Unicef report two years ago that measured maternity leave and day care costs, among other factors, showed that nine of the top 10 nations were in Europe, led by Luxembourg. (Canada ranked 22nd, while the United States, which spends far less on child care than most other wealthy nations, was 40th.)

Rosanne D'Orazio and her husband moved more than a decade ago from Montreal to Iqaluit, the capital of the sparsely populated northern Canadian territory of Nunavut, where she said day care consumed a large chunk of her pay working for an Inuit association.

But last December, the child care fee for her 3-year-old daughter dropped to 10 dollars a day after day care centers in the province started lowering prices as part of the federal program.

Ms. D'Orazio, who also has a son, 7, and whose husband is a freelance photographer and videographer, decided to switch careers.

Having monthly day care reduced to 200 Canadian dollars from 1,500 dollars ''allowed me the flexibility, the financial freedom,'' she said, ''to leave my nine-to-five and become a consultant'' to Indigenous organizations.

Canada's program was modeled, in part, after a similar initiative in Quebec that started 25 years ago. Parents there pay around 9 Canadian dollars a day for government-subsidized day care.

Supporters say the program has allowed more women to work. Nearly 90 percent of women in Quebec are in the work force, the highest labor participation rate among women of any Canadian province.

The program has also strengthened the province's economy: Quebec's gross domestic product is 1.5 percent higher than it would have been without the program, according to research by Pierre Fortin, an emeritus professor of economics at the Université du Québec à Montréal.

''We certainly know that there's strong benefits for families and there's benefits for the economy, so that's what's been able to convince the Canadian government that it should follow the Quebec example,'' said Gordon Cleveland, an emeritus professor in economics at the University of Toronto, who has advised the federal government on its child care program.

One of the biggest challenges facing child care providers that are part of the federal program is accommodating parents seeking to enroll.

''I knew that the parents that I serve would need this program,'' said Susie Beghin, the owner of Alpha's Discovery Kids, which operates three day care centers in what she described as ***working-class*** communities outside Toronto.

The centers serve 270 children and have a monthslong waiting list of parents seeking a discounted slot.

The surge in demand has amplified existing problems across Canada's child care sector, including labor shortages and concerns about low pay. Some critics worry that the Trudeau government is investing a significant amount of money in a program that will serve a relatively small number of children.

Others say more parents would benefit if the government instead expanded existing child care tax breaks.

''Despite the best intentions of the federal program, I'm concerned it's going to entrench an expensive, poor quality program that serves a minority of children'' and underestimates the cost and complexity of delivering child care, said Peter Jon Mitchell, director of the family program at Cardus, a research group.

Some day care providers say the program has made it harder to raise wages because once they receive government funds, they cannot raise their fees, and federal financing does not cover all their expenses.

''That has limited the capacity of existing programs and it has also made expansion pretty much impossible,'' said Morna Ballantyne, the executive director of Child Care Now, an advocacy group. ''You just can't run programs without staff and you can't run quality programs without qualified staff.''

But for many families, the low-cost day care program has been a welcome relief.

Ms. Ibarra, whose partner works as a delivery driver, had been ready to spend as much as 1,300 Canadian dollars, or $970, a month for her 18-month-old son, Ethan, the regular fees at the day care where he is enrolled.

Paying around 600 dollars a month, she said, ''made going back to work a very easy choice'' and has allowed her to build up her savings.

Roopal Khandelwal moved from Delhi to Toronto in February when her husband got a new position at his company. They have a 2-year-old son, Avik, and are expecting a second child in August.

Finding a discounted day care slot for Avik means that Ms. Khandelwal, 32, a digital marketing specialist, can return to work.

''I do have a big break of two years in my résumé,'' Ms. Khandelwal said. ''I am looking forward to giving a fresh start to my career.''

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: Susana Ibarra with her son Ethan at their home in Mississauga, a Toronto suburb. She pays 600 Canadian dollars, or $450, a month in day care fees.

Top, Ms. Ibarra and Ethan's morning routine

above, Ethan being dropped off at day care. Without a government subsidy, families near Toronto can expect to pay up to 1,200 Canadian dollars a month in day care costs. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY IAN WILLMS FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES) This article appeared in print on page A4.

**Load-Date:** June 29, 2023

**End of Document**



[***‘The Walk’ Review: Two Families So Far Apart***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65N3-RJ31-JBG3-6300-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

June 9, 2022 Thursday 11:51 EST

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**Section:** MOVIES

**Length:** 376 words

**Byline:** Devika Girish

**Highlight:** This sentimental drama about an upstanding cop caught up in the 1974 school desegregation conflict in Boston recycles tired white-savior clichés.

**Body**

This sentimental drama about an upstanding cop caught up in the 1974 school desegregation conflict in Boston recycles tired white-savior clichés.

Set in South Boston in 1974, in the riotous aftermath of court-ordered school desegregation, Daniel Adams’s “The Walk” shows its hand early on. We first meet Billy (Justin Chatwin), a ***working-class*** Irish cop, as he lets a Black shoplifter off the hook and even pays for the man’s stolen baby formula. The perp responds incredulously with a comment that emerges as the film’s thematic refrain: “Damn, I guess there are some good white pigs left.”

It’s a dubious choice, centering a film about anti-Black racism on a “noble” Caucasian policeman — no matter that Billy responds to the thief’s comment by gratuitously slamming him against the wall and threatening to arrest him.

[Video: [*Watch on YouTube.*](http://youtube.com/embed/T_P_uyYUWZU)]

As the film opens, the Federal District Court has just mandated busing as a means of integrating Boston’s public schools. Much to the chagrin of his prejudiced neighbors, Billy is assigned to escort Black high school students as they are bused to the all-white school attended by his (increasingly, noxiously bigoted) daughter.

Among the Black kids is the bright, brave Wendy (Lovie Simone), the daughter of an emergency medical worker (Terrence Howard). The film occasionally switches perspectives from Billy and his family to Wendy and her father, though their arcs all tie up in a melodramatic display of Billy’s heroism that reaffirms tired white-savior clichés.

The topic is, of course, timely. (When is racism not?) Yet “The Walk” feels dated. Every exchange among Adams’s schema of archetypes — the radical, quick-tempered Black man and the peace-loving Black woman; the impoverished, racist white people and the do-gooding liberals — lands like a platitudinous lecture about “fighting hate,” with the stilted performances (featuring too-forced Bah-stin accents) adding to the after-school-special vibe.

The Walk

Rated R for racist epithets and violence. Running time: 1 hour 45 minutes. In theaters.

Rated R for racist epithets and violence. Running time: 1 hour 45 minutes. In theaters.

PHOTO: Justin Chatwin in “The Walk,” directed by Daniel Adams. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Vertical Entertainment FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** June 9, 2022

**End of Document**



[***America, Land of the Free Parking; Nonfiction***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:686G-W5M1-JBG3-62H0-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

May 10, 2023 Wednesday 17:22 EST

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**Section:** BOOKS; review

**Length:** 1234 words

**Byline:** Jennifer Szalai

**Highlight:** “Paved Paradise,” by Henry Grabar, examines the country’s obsession with parking, from its effects on urban sprawl to the violence it sometimes provokes.

**Body**

“Paved Paradise,” by Henry Grabar, examines the country’s obsession with parking, from its effects on urban sprawl to the violence it sometimes provokes.

PAVED PARADISE: How Parking Explains the World, by Henry Grabar

You have undoubtedly heard of “road rage” — the kind of impetuous fury that erupts when motorists are stuck in traffic or on the move. But even when the driving ends, parking is no picnic either.

Henry Grabar opens “Paved Paradise,” his wry and revelatory new book about parking (a combination of words I never thought I would write), with a scrum that started when two cars vied for a scarce curbside spot in Queens and [*ended when a white Audi crashed through a bakery’s plate-glass window*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wlmD0yRLUKA). Disputes over parking can turn violent; a few dozen times a year, they turn deadly.

“Parking-driven psychosis is a regular feature of American life,” Grabar writes, and it isn’t all that hard to see why. Anyone who has experienced that highly specific form of anxiety that arises from driving around and around and failing to find a spot has felt the stirrings of “a common parking urge shared by most nonhomicidal drivers” — a lizard-brain fear of being trapped in an endless search and never getting out of the car.

“A parking space is nothing less than the link between driving and life itself.” Grabar, who writes for Slate, does this now and again: elegantly stating a simple truth that undergirds the complex knot of social questions at the center of his book. The dream of the open road assumes a place to put our cars when we arrive at our destination. This is perhaps why so many Americans expect parking to be “convenient, available and free” — in other words, “perfect.” Grabar empathizes with these desires, which is partly what makes “Paved Paradise” so persuasive. Only somebody who understands the emotional power of these fantasies can gently show us how bizarre such entitlement actually is. Decades of fixation on parking have transformed our streets and our cities, none of it for the better.

Grabar’s argument is straightforward: The United States is underhoused and overparked. The economist (and “the country’s foremost parking scholar”) Donald Shoup refers to so-called parking minimums as “dark energy.” Rules that require new housing developments to build a minimum number of parking spaces have pushed up construction prices and generated sprawl. American cities tried to imitate American suburbs and then regretted it. There are now as many as six parking spaces for every car.

Parking minimums have also offered a convenient proxy for wealthy residents to object to new affordable housing in their neighborhoods. Grabar recounts a proposed development in Solana Beach, Calif., that eventually mutated to the point where a 10-unit project was required to have a whopping 53-space underground garage — and so the housing never got built. “Badmouthing the poor was a little unseemly,” Grabar writes, “but complaining about parking was morally unimpeachable.”

About 100 miles north of Solana Beach, Los Angeles had achieved the dubious distinction of being “a metropolis of more than 10 million people where it was possible to park, mostly for free, at nearly every single residence, office and business.” It also had a hollowed-out downtown to show for it — until, that is, a 1999 ordinance allowed builders to convert commercial buildings into residential ones without the obligation to provide parking. Over the next two decades, the city’s downtown population more than tripled. More than 60 vacant buildings got turned into more than 6,500 apartments. Grabar encourages us to be appropriately impressed: “That was more housing units than downtown Los Angeles had built in the previous three decades combined.”

I can already hear the chorus of skeptics who live in places like New York City. “Overparking” might be a reality in places with suburban sprawl, but what about dense environments where curbside parking is the norm, and people have to contend with crowded streets and a maze of parking regulations?

Grabar suggests that one of the problems of a city like New York is that the price of parking has it exactly backward: Garage parking is expensive, whereas curbside parking is cheap, or even free. So a motorist is encouraged to drive around from errand to errand, cruising for spots and burning fuel, instead of leaving the car in a garage and spending the rest of the day traveling by bus, bike or foot. Not to mention that most New York City households don’t own cars, and those that do don’t typically use them to commute. As Grabar puts it, “Curb parking in New York was, in reality, long-term car storage.”

Long-term car storage: It’s a phrase that might enrage some drivers, but once you stop to think about it, there is something decidedly peculiar about the special dispensation we give to curbside parking, as if car-lined streets are an irrevocable part of the natural order. We have created a landscape where people have less claim to the streets than cars do. “This was some of the most expensive land in the world,” Grabar writes. “And you could have it for free, provided you used it for just one thing: parking.”

Of course, revolutionizing our parking regime will require more than just some well-placed meters and different regulations. Public transit will have to get better; it’s infinitely harder to get people to stop driving if the alternative is to wait for an unpredictable train that never seems to come. There is also the issue of accessibility, though as one parking reformer argues, people with disabilities “are less likely to drive but more likely to have trouble finding housing.” And Grabar allows that class has become an inextricable and increasingly intractable factor when it comes to parking reform. Widening income inequality and escalating real estate prices have pushed ***working-class*** families out of city centers and toward the suburbs, where owning a car is less a privilege than a necessity. In these contexts, access to free parking can take on “a kind of egalitarian force.”

One of the book’s strangest (and most fascinating) chapters describes what happened in Chicago after 2009, [*when the city leased 36,000 parking meters*](https://www.nytimes.com/2009/11/20/us/20cncmeters.html) to a group of investors led by Morgan Stanley. What was supposed to be a boon to a town desperate for cash turned out to be a bit of a bum deal, as the investors hiked the meter rates and then invoiced the city for lost revenue whenever a metered road was closed for a parade or a street fair. Chicago officials had been game to sell because the meter rates had been kept so low that they were hardly generating any money — realizing too late that the city should have raised prices and kept the money for public use.

“The meter saga,” Grabar writes, “showed how little anyone — politicians, drivers, the press — had seriously considered the price of parking.” Or, in the immortal words of Joni Mitchell’s “Big Yellow Taxi” (a song that has already given this book its perfect title): “Don’t it always seem to go/That you don’t know what you’ve got ’til it’s gone?”

Audio produced by Kate Winslett.

PAVED PARADISE: How Parking Explains the World | By Henry Grabar | Illustrated | 346 pp. | Penguin Press | $30

Jennifer Szalai is the nonfiction book critic for The Times. Audio produced by Kate Winslett.

PHOTO (PHOTOGRAPH BY ETIENNE LAURENT/EPA, VIA SHUTTERSTOCK) This article appeared in print on page BR15.

**Load-Date:** May 16, 2023

**End of Document**



[***Still Processing***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67PF-G8C1-DXY4-X0NR-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

March 5, 2023 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section BR; Column 0; Book Review Desk; Pg. 11; FICTION

**Length:** 892 words

**Byline:** By Ladee Hubbard

**Body**

In her new novel, ''An Autobiography of Skin,'' Lakiesha Carr tells the stories of three contemporary Black women, each struggling with different manifestations of trauma.

AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF SKIN, by Lakiesha Carr

What does it mean to be a Black woman in the United States? How does it feel to inhabit a Black woman's body in a society that, for most of its history, defined humanness as white and male? In what ways is her experience still haunted by contradictory representations that emerged out of slavery: the aggressive, hypersexual Jezebel; the nurturing, nonthreatening Mammy? To what extent do these portrayals continue to inform perceptions of Black women as available for abuse, as willing participants in (if not the causes of) their own alienation, and as somehow, ultimately, impervious to pain?

Lakiesha Carr's powerful and timely new novel, ''An Autobiography of Skin,'' explores these issues by telling the stories of three contemporary Black women, each struggling with different manifestations of trauma that finds its primary expression through their experience of their own physicality. Carr is interested in the expressive potency of the body, and the novel is meticulously structured to highlight its enduring cultural significance. At the same time, the book is less interested in explaining or rationalizing that significance than in dramatizing how it literally feels.

Nettie, the protagonist of the first section of the book, lives with her husband and makes money giving colonics from her home. Her work with a former stripper mediates her own awareness of how the body's scars can constitute a map of past experience. ''Watching the silky weblike threads of her parasites pass, she told me again the story of how she got the small burn at the base of her neck,'' Nettie explains. ''How the thin cut running alongside her left ear was the result of broken glass flying during a fight at Baby Dolls. And before we were done, she gently lifted the skin around her belly, pointing at her C-section scar and told me how when the weather changed it still itched where they took out her middle child.''

Much of this section takes place in a secret gambling room behind a convenience store where Nettie, mourning the anniversary of her mother's passing, goes to relax. Because so many of the people Nettie encounters there are so clearly and variously suffering from societal neglect, there is something inherently restorative about the attentiveness with which Carr observes them, even as she documents their scars.

The scars are overlooked because of both a pervasive tendency to ignore Black ***working-class*** women's pain and also because of the women's own fears of the repercussions of exposure. This becomes a theme of the second section, where we are introduced to Maya, who explicitly associates the need to hide with assimilation, which, in her view, is ''not so much a choice once you grow honest with the self about what it takes to survive and thrive in this reality. When you learn how important to that survival it can be to preserve, indeed hide your very own authenticity lest the world judge then devour you whole -- with equal parts love and hate.''

In contrast to Nettie, Maya lives in a middle-class enclave, her relative affluence sustained by her husband's work as a pornographer, a fact they keep secret both from their white neighbors and Maya's parents. Increasingly obsessed with news reports about police violence against Black youth, she begins a misguided effort to protect her two sons, which leads to an act of abuse for which she is sent to a psychiatric ward.

While her actions can be interpreted as physicalizing the way many parents hurt their children out of a warped desire to ''protect'' them, they also speak to a larger truth, encapsulated by Maya's husband's reaction to her behavior: He reminds her that the violence is not new. '''White people been killing us since the beginning of time!' he screamed at her. 'Black people too!'''

It is not until the third section of the book, narrated by Maya's best friend, Ketinah, that we are presented with the possibility that all of these characters are literally being haunted. Ketinah, like her grandmother, has the ability to see the malicious ghosts that surround them and that, however disembodied, are nevertheless real. The recognition of their presence signifies how the past is, for these characters, deeply felt and a part of their experiential reality.

It is a testament to Carr's power as a writer that she is able to so clearly represent these aspects of her characters' experiences with such intimacy and honesty. In that sense, the book is an admission of the fact that, for all the changes that have occurred in our society over the past 100 years, many Black people, both men and women, are still processing the trauma and violence caused by their body's simultaneous hypervisibility and erasure. This truth becomes a potent aspect not just of the subjective experience of Carr's characters, but of the reality they inhabit, whether it is acknowledged or not.

Ladee Hubbard's most recent book is the short story collection ''The Last Suspicious Holdout.''

AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF SKIN | By Lakiesha Carr | 244 pp. | Pantheon | $27Ladee Hubbard's most recent book is the short story collection, ''The Last Suspicious Holdout.''

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/02/23/books/review/an-autobiography-of-skin-lakiesha-carr.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/02/23/books/review/an-autobiography-of-skin-lakiesha-carr.html)

**Graphic**

This article appeared in print on page BR11.

**Load-Date:** March 5, 2023

**End of Document**



[***In the flooded New Jersey town that Biden visited, residents feel forgotten.***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:63JH-1M01-DXY4-X122-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

September 7, 2021 Tuesday 10:49 EST

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**Section:** US

**Length:** 836 words

**Byline:** Juliet Macur

**Highlight:** It’s hard to find a single street in the ***working-class*** town of Manville that was not severely affected by flooding connected to Hurricane Ida.

**Body**

It’s hard to find a single street in the ***working-class*** town of Manville that was not severely affected by flooding connected to Hurricane Ida.

MANVILLE, N.J. — In the aftermath of Hurricane [*Ida*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/09/08/nyregion/biden-visit-ida-floods.html), it is hard to find a single neighborhood — or even a street — in the small central New Jersey town of Manville that was not severely affected by flooding.

The ***working-class*** town of about 10,000 residents has seen many hardships.

Manville was named after the company Johns Manville, which manufactured asbestos there. Town residents found white flakes of asbestos floating in their pools, thinking nothing of it until the material was later found to cause cancer.

Another part of town was later designated a federal Superfund site, needing major environmental cleanup because a wood treatment facility had used creosote, a toxic substance dumped into two sludge lagoons. Manville families ice-skated on the frozen lagoons in winter, not knowing that the toxins had contaminated the ground and drinking water.

And flooding in Manville, which President Biden visited on Tuesday, has been an issue for decades. When Regina Petrone’s house flooded this time — she has lived in Manville for 30 years — she lost everything in her basement. The federal government has let Manville suffer, she said as the stench of sewage wafted through the pile of debris from her house.

In recent years, an Army Corps of Engineers study found that Manville did not meet the cost-benefit standard for any flood protection project; a series of dikes that were built in a nearby town, Bound Brook, saved it from Ida’s devastation.

“We’re the forgotten town,” Ms. Petrone said. “We’re too small to care about, evidently. So I hope Biden does something. This has gone on way too long.”

Ms. Petrone said she was not moving out of the Manville area called the Lost Valley because she raised two sons there and could not “get top dollar for the house anytime soon.” It is the most flood-prone area in town.

“Who’d want to buy here now?” she said. A house down the street exploded a day after the flooding. Several houses nearby have been condemned.

Yet residents like Ms. Petrone choose to stay. The location is good — about an hour from New York City and also an hour from the Jersey Shore — and the community of immigrants and many generations of families there have long been tight-knit.

Immigrants from Eastern Europe have flocked to Manville, and its Polish population is one of the state’s largest: One downtown church, Sacred Heart Catholic Church, holds two Polish Masses on Sunday, and there are two delis that sell Eastern European food like pierogies and stuffed cabbage. Immigrants from Central and South America have made Manville more diverse.

Mauro Rojas and Karla Licano, who are from Costa Rica, moved to Manville two years ago. They looked at 30 houses but bought the one on Boesel Avenue, in the Lost Valley. The house was near a vast park and close to a river, and had a backyard with a big porch and an aboveground pool. It was perfect for a family with a young daughter and dog.

The couple had heard that the house had a 1 percent chance of flooding, and even knew that several surrounding lots were empty because the government had bought and demolished flood-prone homes. They took a chance. But the night the floodwaters rose, they saw their dream house — and all of the items in it — disappear.

When water began to leak into their first floor from the basement and front door, Mr. Rojas, who runs a painting business, grabbed a ladder and led his family, including their Beagle mix, to the roof.

Their daughter, Elena, snuggled into her blanket. The dog shook. In tears and with disbelief, the family watched their 1,200-gallon pool rise from the ground, lifted by the water below it.

In the morning, after climbing into a rescuer’s boat, Elena began to weep when she saw the 27 rainbow-colored bags she and her mother had filled with lighted eyeglasses, hair bows, chocolates and other treats the night before. They were floating down the street. It was her sixth birthday.

“She said, ‘Mom, my birthday bags! No!’ and my heart broke,” Ms. Licano, a secretary, said on Tuesday as she stood crying on a muddied floor.

“It’s so hard because I can’t do anything to fix things for Elena,” she said.

Ms. Licano hopes Mr. Biden can provide help, and quickly.

Elena is missing crucial days of kindergarten. Ms. Licano and her husband cannot work during the cleanup. She works in a tax business on South Main Street that lost everything.

Daniel Lopez, 42, lives a block from that street with his girlfriend, Liz Davis. Mr. Lopez, a locksmith, said he had lived through four floods since his parents moved into the house in 1991. But it had never been this catastrophic, he said.

“The people here can’t take much more of this,” he said.

PHOTO: Emergency crews in Manville, N.J., on Friday worked to put out a fire in a banquet hall that was devastated by the remnants of Hurricane Ida. (PHOTOGRAPH BY Bryan Anselm for The New York Times FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

**Load-Date:** September 8, 2021

**End of Document**



[***Breaking the Mold, Over and Over***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69M6-4J21-DXY4-X03F-00000-00&context=1519360)

The New York Times

November 12, 2023 Sunday

Late Edition - Final

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**Section:** Section AR; Column 0; Arts and Leisure Desk; Pg. 16

**Length:** 3081 words

**Byline:** By Wesley Morris

**Body**

Maybe it's her grandkids, maybe it's being 81, but Barbra Streisand is open to new stuff. Take sharing. Well, take sharing herself. ''My Name Is Barbra,'' her first memoir, is upon us. It's 970 pages and billows with doubt, anger, ardor, hurt, pride, persuasion, glory and Yiddish. I don't know that any artist has done more sharing.

And yet, last month, after lunch at her home in Malibu, Calif., Streisand shared something else, a treasure she guards almost as much she's guarded the details of her life. And that's dessert. There's a lot in this book -- tales of film and television shoots, clashes and bonds with collaborators, a whole chapter on Don Johnson (it's short) and another called ''Politics,'' her unwavering preference for big blends of the masculine and the feminine. But food is so ubiquitous that it's practically a love of Streisand's life, especially ice cream.

So when it's time for dessert at Streisand's, despite any choice you're offered, there's truly only one option. And that's McConnell's Brazilian Coffee ice cream. She writes about it with an orgasmic zeal comparable only, perhaps, to her stated zests for Modigliani and Sondheim. How much does Streisand love Brazilian Coffee? In the book, she's in the middle of a sad story about a dinner with her buddy Marlon Brando at Quincy Jones's place, when she interrupts herself to rhapsodize over its flavor and reminisce on the lengths she has gone to get some. So I wanted to have what she's having.

''Okaaayyyy,'' Streisand said. She gave her longtime assistant, Renata Buser, a deep, knowing look.

''We'll trade. You give a good review.''

Panic, panic, panic. Stammer, stammer, stammer.

She was grinning. Buser was smiling.

''I love to laugh right now,'' said Streisand, who said she's been in a funk over the state of the planet.

Buser agreed: ''You really needed a laugh.''

But Streisand wasn't entirely kidding -- well, about the good review she was. But not about the ice cream.

See, sometimes, they explained, like two girls talking about an ornate but dire piece of cafeteria gossip, there's a situation with how available it is. (Basically, McConnell's sometimes takes Brazilian Coffee off the market, leaving Turkish Coffee and sometimes just ... ''Coffee.'') When she gets her hands on some, she all but password-protects it. ''My husband happens to like Turkish Coffee. Thank God,'' Streisand says of the actor James Brolin, her spouse of 25 years. ''So he doesn't take my stash.''

To be clear: They're not the same?

''Noooo,'' Streisand and Buser said together. Streisand was shrugging that ''are you serious right now?'' shrug: ''Turkey is not Brazil.''

It goes on like this for another minute until something crucial suddenly occurs to Streisand.

''Are you a fan of coffee ice cream?''

Crickets ...

She didn't have time for this. ''We have vanilla.'' More kidding. ''I'll give you a scoop -- well, how about half a scoop? He'll have half a scoop. I'll take the other half.''

Eventually, Buser arrives with a bowl, and I get it.

If Loro Piana made dessert, this is how it would taste, like money. Buser had lodged Streisand's demiscoop inside a wafer cone just the way she likes. Mine was gone in about 90 seconds. Streisand, though -- she made the eating of this ounce of ice cream a discreet aria of bliss. Little nibbles of cone, then one spin around her mouth. Nibble, nibble, spin. I've seen one other person make love to a dessert this way, and she gave birth to me. Otherwise, no one will ever quite have what they're having.

THIS MEMOIR OF STREISAND'S encompasses her girlhood in ***working-class*** Brooklyn in the 1940s, her big break on Broadway in ''Funny Girl'' in 1964, a movie career that made her the biggest actress of the 1970s, her popular albums and top-rated TV specials, the awards, the snubs, her hangups, terrors and passions, her close girlfriends, the men she's loved and, yes, the foods she might adore more. ''My Name Is Barbra'' is explanatory and ruminative and enlightening. It's shake-your-head funny and hand-to-mouth surprising. The lady who wrote it is in touch with herself, loves being herself. Yet she disliked memoir-writing's ostensible point. ''I've been through therapy many, many years ago, trying to figure these things out,'' she told me. ''And I got bored with that. Trying to get things out. I really didn't want to relive my life.''

Writing the book forced Streisand not only to relive it, but to do the synthesizing between the present and the past. For instance, she frequently reckons with how losing her father at a young age and living for decades with her mother's glass-half-empty approach to maternity set her up for a journey of approval.

Those 970 pages also turn the book into a piece of exercise equipment. Streisand doesn't like the heft. ''I wanted two volumes,'' she said. ''Who wants to hold a heavy book like that in their hands?''

Rick Kot, an executive editor at Viking who oversaw production on the book, told me, ''Publishing books in two volumes is difficult just as a commercial venture. And nobody seems to have any issue with how long'' Streisand's is.

The bigness of it makes literal the career it contains. Streisand is poring over, pouring out, her life. She's feeling her way through it, remembering, sometimes Googling as she types. It's not a book you inhale, per se. (Unless, of course, you've got a pressing lunch date with the author.) Nor does it inspire the ''five takeaways'' treatment that juicy new memoirs by Britney Spears and Jada Pinkett Smith have. Not that there weren't requests for spicier material. Streisand said that Christine Pittel, her editor, told her ''that I had to leave some blood on the page.'' So feelings are more deeply plumbed; names are named.

And she did do some hemming and hawing. ''I was very late in delivering the book,'' she said. ''I think I was supposed to deliver it in two years.'' It took her 10. And as she went, she thought about her legacy. ''If you want to read about me in 20 years or 50 years, whatever it is -- if there's still a world -- these are my words. These are my thoughts.'' She also considered those other Streisand titles, the ones by other people. ''Hopefully, you don't have to look at too many books written about me. You know, whenever I was told about what they said, certain things, I thought, like, who are they talking about?''

There are takeaways. But they're too chronic to qualify as ''current.'' Mostly, they involve Streisand's hunger for work and her endless quest to maintain control over it. Singing and acting made her famous. This insistence on perfection made her notorious. Sexism and chauvinism are on display throughout the book. But what becomes apparent is that the woman who has a ''directed by'' credit on just three films (''Yentl,'' ''The Prince of Tides'' and ''The Mirror Has Two Faces'') had been a director from the very start of her career. Here is the book's grand revelation -- for a reader but for the author, too. ''I didn't know about it,'' she said, of this proclivity for management, planning, vision, authority and obeying her instincts. ''But writing the book, I discovered it. Basically, I was doing that, you know, when I was 19 years old -- or even showing my mother how to smoke.''

Streisand is unsparing about the treachery she faced at work, collaborating with men. Sydney Chaplin (one of Charlie's kids) played the original Nick Arnstein during her ''Funny Girl'' Broadway run; they shared a flirtation that Chaplin wanted to consummate and that Streisand wanted to keep professional. (For one thing, she was married to Elliott Gould.) So, she writes, Chaplin did a number on her. In front of live audiences, he'd lean in to whisper put-downs and profanity. When it came time to shoot ''Hello, Dolly!,'' Streisand couldn't understand why her co-star Walter Matthau and their director, Gene Kelly (yes, the Gene Kelly) were so hostile toward her. She confronts Matthau, and he confesses: ''You hurt my friend,'' meaning Chaplin, his poker buddy. Throughout her career, she's up against what one surly camera operator, on the set of ''The Prince of Tides,'' boasts is a boys' club.

That's the sort of blood that gives this book its power -- not the prospect of a bluntly louche Brando and a doting Pierre Trudeau being honest-to-God soul mates, not whatever her byzantine thing with Jon Peters was about. It's that Barbra Streisand endured a parade of harsh workplaces yet never stopped trying to make the best work. That experience with Chaplin left her with lifelong stage fright. But what if it also helped sharpen her volition to get things -- in the studio, on a film set, before a show -- exactly, possibly obsessively, right?

''When I was younger, I think they had a preconception, you know, because maybe I was aloof or something, because I was a singer but I wanted to be an actress. And then as an actress, I wanted to be a director,'' she said to me. ''In other words, take another step. Be the actress as well as the singer. To me, it was so much easier to look at the whole. But even when I was an actress, I would care about the whole.'' Like that scene in Sydney Pollack's ''The Way We Were,'' from 1973, where Streisand touches Robert Redford's hair while he's sleeping, a personal choice she made by instinct.

Over and over again -- with TV specials, live concerts, musical arrangements -- she was executing ideas. The execution earned her a permanent reputation. And she knows it. In the book, she tells a story about making some staging suggestions for her 1980 Grammys performance with Neil Diamond and muses, ''This kind of incident may be why I'm called 'difficult.'''

''Difficult'' is in the work. Streisand's characters constitute this cocktail of ''mercurial'' and ''determined'' with a couple squirts of ''feral.'' They're multitaskers, consumed with both busyness and learning how to do something. She was perfect for romantic comedies during second-wave feminism: Her drive drove men nuts. My favorite performance from this '70s run of hers is in ''The Main Event,'' a frothy, filthy, solidly funny screwball hit from 1979. She's in high expressive form and at peak curls, playing Hillary Kramer, a fragrance mogul forced to sell her company after her accountant runs off with all her money. But she discovers a surprise asset: a terrible boxer, Eddie ''Kid Natural'' Scanlon (Ryan O'Neal), whose career she tries to turn around. The movie, which Howard Zieff directed, sums up the Streisand experience: her tenacity; her outrageous comfort as both a comedic actor and as a version of herself; her exasperation with men who exploit her and count her out.

Eddie doesn't want to work with Hillary and bets that the sight of his battered face will disgust her right out of boxing management. The violence of boxing does send Hillary vomiting during the drive home from one of his fights. What it doesn't do is deter her. ''I hope this taught you a lesson,'' says Whitman Mayo, who plays Eddie's pal and trainer, Percy. ''It has,'' Streisand says. ''Get him in shape.''

The two men share a sinking feeling, seemingly typical when it comes to Streisand. ''She's not giving up, Percy,'' Eddie says to his trainer, who must concur: ''That's a problem.'' People who've negotiated with her probably recognize the look of worry and fatigued resignation on O'Neal's face. He's going to lose.

It's reasonable to suspect that Tom Rothman, the head of Sony Pictures, knows the feeling. When the company was planning to release an anniversary edition of ''The Way We Were'' this year, Streisand argued for him to include two scenes that, she was pained to discover, had been omitted from the original. For Rothman, the trouble with granting Streisand her wish was that, as ''a filmmaker's executive,'' as he put it in an interview, he didn't want to change anything without Pollack's input. But Pollack's been dead for 15 years. They agreed to release two versions: Pollack's and, essentially, Streisand's extended cut.

This, she writes, is a triumph of her relentlessness. ''The word she uses in the book, that's 100 percent accurate,'' Rothman told me. ''She's relentless.'' Her being right about the scenes didn't matter to his bottom line, which required him to do justice to Pollack's memory while assuaging Streisand's worries over creative injustice. ''She would say: 'This is better, this is better! This is why it's good!' And I would say: 'But Sydney Pollack didn't want it!'''

The reason Rothman wanted to land at a happy solution was because of the person he was negotiating with. ''Barbra broke a lot of not just artistic boundaries but boundaries for female artists in the movie business, in Hollywood, in terms of taking control of her career,'' he said. ''I have boundless respect for her.''

Streisand's boundlessness, her capaciousness -- the lack of precedent for her whole-enchilada ambitions, the daffiness, the sexiness, the talent, orchestration, passion, originality; her persistence and indefatigability; the outfits; the hair -- were a watershed. She was always adapting, if not to what was cool or ''current,'' per se, then certainly to whom she felt she was at a given moment. ''You know me,'' she writes, late in the book. ''I'm the version queen.''

The line is straight from Streisand to Madonna, Janet Jackson, Jennifer Lopez, Queen Latifah, Beyoncé, Lady Gaga, Taylor Swift -- version queens of different kingdoms. That's just a list of the obvious people who followed her into showbiz and makes no mention of the less famous folks whom Streisand inspired into a thousand other achievements. She's ''to thine own self be true'' in neon. This might be the real Streisand Effect. And now she can take a step back and appreciate it.

''That gives me real joy, that I affected some people into doing what they wanted to do,'' Streisand said. ''That I gave them some sort of courage. Or if they felt different, you know, I was somebody who felt different. That's a reward for me. That makes me feel great.''

THIS HOME OF STREISAND'S has been called a compound. But even with the ocean overlook, it's too rustic, cozy and deceptively modest for the geologic or ego-logical footprint that ''compound'' connotes. There's an active farm and enough rose varieties to hijack a flower show. It's neither Xanadu nor Neverland Ranch. There's some reality to Streisand's place, some soul.

This is to say that paintings are everywhere, outside the bathroom, up the main staircase, in the bathroom. There are oils by John Singer Sargent and Thomas Hart Benton, portraits by Ammi Phillips and Mary Cassatt. A wall holds one of Gilbert Stuart's George Washingtons. She loves Klimt and adores Tamara de Lempicka and Modigliani, adores them with an awe the world reserves for her. Some of the paintings are by Streisand, including a portrait of Sammie, her late Coton de Tulear, whose fur is affixed to the canvas. One, her son, Jason Gould, did.

Streisand's fans know what's on her property and the labor she personally devoted to realizing it -- that there's a mill with a functioning waterwheel, that she's dedicated a room to her collection of dolls and that another's maintained for the display and storage of her stage and screen costumes. They'd know because, in 2010, Streisand put it all in a book called ''My Passion for Design.'' Nevertheless, people have concluded that Streisand lives at her own personal Grove. They'll ask: Are you going to see the mall? But there is no mall to see. Nothing's for sale, nothing is open to the public.

Less known is how it might feel to stand here, in a living room at Streisand's house, to gaze over her shoulder at the ocean and stop yourself from saying out loud, ''On a clear day you really can see forever.'' It's strange to move from the bulk of her book to the lightness of the woman who wrote it, to the one-of-a-kind incandescence that's kept her a star. No memoir can quite contain that. An odd effect of that stardom is how that person can start to seem an uncanny sort of familiar. One of the mightiest, most Olympic performers we Americans have ever experienced, is, on a Tuesday at lunchtime -- and I mean this from the bottom of my heart -- just some lady. The one behind you at a Gelson's, maybe, who might notice the cottage cheese in your cart and get moony over how creamy it is. (''I love going to the supermarket,'' she told me.)

After lunch, Streisand was ready to relax and needed to stretch her back, which lately has been acting up. Relaxing meant letting loose her three Cotons de Tulear, dogs as white as snowflakes, whiter in fact, like bleached teeth. It meant retreating to the family room. So off I went down a wallpapered hallway paneled with more framed art and into another section of the house that felt different from the airs of presentation and preservation that typify the rest of the home. The kitchen was here, for one thing. For another, hunched over a round table was James Brolin. Streisand calls him Jim, and Jim was in a T-shirt and sweatpants, cross-referencing information on an iPad with what he was writing on a sheet of paper. He was jotting down film titles to watch later for movie night. They had just had a Scorsese marathon.

There's life all over the property. But here in the family room is where everybody lives, including that portrait of Sammie, which, at the moment, was propped up on the floor because ''I don't have any places to hang anything anymore,'' she said. This way she can see it from the sofa while she watches TV. This part of the house seems like the only place where anything gets strewn. ''It's not that orderly,'' she told me. ''Meaning, I have the things I need around me.'' Like her pets, like Jim. ''It's a playroom. We watch TV, we have the dogs on our laps. It's more disordered.''

It felt, in many ways, like a secret, the comfy chaos of this zone feeling preferable to the control on display everywhere else. Streisand seemed at home here because she was. She took a seat and proceeded to ply the dogs, Fanny and Sammie's lab-bred clones, Scarlet and Violet, with a treat. They looked up at her with expectant patience. I've seen scores of dogs anticipate a treat. It's as if Streisand's had heard about the bonkers approach of those other dogs and zigged, sitting patiently as Streisand doled a morsel or two to each. Even she seemed impressed. Here is another of stardom's odd effects. Without us, it's Tuesday.

[*https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/07/movies/barbra-streisand-memoir-book.html*](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/11/07/movies/barbra-streisand-memoir-book.html)

**Graphic**

PHOTOS: PHOTO (PHOTOGRAPH BY HARRY BENSON/EXPRESS, VIA GETTY IMAGES) (AR16)

Top, Barbra Streisand at the ''Funny Girl'' film opening in 1968 outside the Criterion Theater in Manhattan. Above, Streisand directing Mandy Patinkin and Amy Irving, right, on the set of the 1983 film ''Yentl.'' Below, the superstar relaxing at home in 2018. (PHOTOGRAPHS BY DON HOGAN CHARLES/THE NEW YORK TIMES

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**Byline:** Thomas B. Edsall

**Highlight:** The consequences of a Republican takeover of the House or of both branches of Congress are unlikely to be routine.

**Body**

As the 2022 midterms draw into view, the question arises: To what degree are Democratic difficulties inevitable?

[*Ruy Teixeira*](https://substack.com/profile/12224429-ruy-teixeira), a co-editor of The Liberal Patriot, argues in an email that “the cultural left has managed to associate the Democratic Party with a series of views on crime, immigration, policing, free speech and, of course, race and gender that are quite far from those of the median voter. That’s a success for the cultural left, but the hard reality is that it’s an electoral liability for the Democratic Party.”

Teixeira went on: “The current Democratic brand suffers from multiple deficiencies that make it somewhere between uncompelling and toxic to wide swaths of American voters who might potentially be their allies.”

In Teixeira’s view, many Democrats have fallen victim to what he calls the “[*Fox News fallacy*](https://theliberalpatriot.substack.com/p/the-fox-news-fallacy?s=w).”

“This is the idea,” Teixeira said. “If Fox News criticizes the Democrats for X, then there must be absolutely nothing to X, and the job of Democrats is to assert that loudly and often.” He wrote, “Take the issue of crime. Initially dismissed as simply an artifact of the Covid shutdown that was being vastly exaggerated by Fox News and the like for their nefarious purposes, it is now apparent that [*the spike in violent crime is quite real*](https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2021/07/crime-progressives/619569/) and that voters are very, very concerned about it.”

In an analysis of the complexity of the current Democratic predicament, [*Sarah Anzia*](https://gspp.berkeley.edu/faculty-and-impact/faculty/sarah-anzia), a professor of public policy and political science at Berkeley, addressed the preponderance of urban voters in the Democratic coalition: “The Democrats have a challenge rooted in political geography and the institution of single-member, first-past-the-post elections.” Citing [*Jonathan Rodden’s*](https://politicalscience.stanford.edu/people/jonathan-rodden) 2019 book “[*Why Cities Lose*](https://www.basicbooks.com/titles/jonathan-a-rodden/why-cities-lose/9781541644250/),” Anzia argued that the density of Democratic voters in cities has both geographically isolated the party and empowered its most progressive activist wing:

They need to find ways to compete in more moderate or even conservative districts if they hope to have majorities of seats in the U.S. Congress or state legislatures. But large numbers of their voters are concentrated in cities, quite progressive and want the party to move further left in its policy positions — and not just on social-cultural issues.

Anzia contended that Democrats “have collectively staked out positions that have alienated certain supporters,” which is “related to the built-in challenge I just described.”

The murder of George Floyd and the Black Lives Matter protests in the summer and fall of 2020, Anzia continued,

brought policing reform to the agenda in a way that it hadn’t been before, even after Ferguson, but suddenly the conversation jumped to “defund the police.” However one defines the specifics of what that should mean, I do think it sounded extreme and scary to a lot of people outside of places like Berkeley, Seattle, Minneapolis.

According to Anzia’s analysis, Democratic elected officials and teachers’ unions weakened the party by closing schools for in-person instruction for too long:

It made sense to have remote instruction early in the pandemic, but in many places, kids were in Zoom school until April of 2021 or even until the end of the academic year. Anyone could see that this was going to have some really negative consequences for kids.

[*Multiple*](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.3102/0013189X211048840) [*studies*](https://www.the74million.org/article/one-fate-two-fates-red-states-blue-states-new-data-reveals-a-432-hour-in-person-learning-gap-produced-by-the-politics-of-pandemic-schooling/), Anzia wrote,

show that this was more common — schools remained in remote learning longer — in more Democratic places with stronger teachers’ unions. This is an issue that affects people’s lives very directly. It handed Republicans an issue to run on.

Some experts in American elections make the case that Joe Biden was elected by voters seeking a return to regular order after the tumultuous Trump years but that instead of steering a moderate course, Biden sought to become a [*transformative*](https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/10/28/president-biden-announces-the-build-back-better-framework/) president in the mold of Franklin Roosevelt — the problem being that because his party held razor-thin majorities in Congress, he lacked the mandate to do it.

[*Frances Lee*](https://politics.princeton.edu/people/frances-lee), a political scientist at Princeton, wrote in an email that

the structural problem here is that Democrats’ success in winning unified party control in the Georgia Senate runoffs in 2021 hugely inflated the expectations of Democratic base voters about what could be achieved. At that time, it was even bandied about that Joe Biden was going to be the next F.D.R. Democrats passed a $3.5 trillion budget resolution that envisioned a transformational domestic policy agenda. But Democrats have not been able to deliver on most of these policy goals.

“Democrats,” Lee continued,

have not been able to achieve that unanimity on issues of critical importance to the party’s base: voting rights, Build Back Better, minimum wage, police reform. Democratic base voters are very frustrated and disappointed right now. Considering that the policy outcomes of trifecta control of national government have been so disappointing, it is hard to see how Democrats can fire up their base to turn out again. It is difficult to see anything changing on this front between now and the 2022 midterms.

[*Eric Schickler*](https://polisci.berkeley.edu/people/person/eric-schickler), a political scientist at Berkeley, described the most likely outcome of the 2022 elections as part of “a cycle of disappointment and recrimination” that not only has plagued Biden’s first two years in office but also dogged his two most recent Democratic predecessors — Bill Clinton in 1994 and Barack Obama in 2010.

The pattern:

Republicans provided unified opposition to Democrats’ agenda, Democrats struggled to corral all of their members behind their program, and the party’s own voters grew frustrated by the disappointing results compared to their expectations.

At the moment, there is widespread pessimism among those on the left end of the political spectrum. [*Isabel V. Sawhill*](https://www.brookings.edu/experts/isabel-v-sawhill/), a senior fellow at Brookings, replying by email to my inquiry, wrote that for predictable reasons, “Democrats face an uphill battle in both 2022 and 2024.”

But, she went on, “the problems are much deeper. First, the white ***working class*** that used to vote Democratic no longer does.” Sawhill noted that when she

studied this group back in 2018, what surprised me most was their very negative attitudes toward government, their dislike of social welfare programs, their commitment to an ethic of personal responsibility and the importance of family and religion in their lives. This large group includes some people who are just plain prejudiced but a larger group that simply resents all the attention paid to race, gender, sexual preference or identity and the disrespect they think this entails for those with more traditional views and lifestyles.

Messages coming from the more progressive members of the Democratic Party, Sawhill warned, “will be exploited by Republicans to move moderate Democrats or to move no-Trump Republicans in their direction.”

[*Sean Westwood*](https://govt.dartmouth.edu/people/sean-jeremy-westwood), a political scientist at Dartmouth, is highly critical of the contemporary Democratic Party, writing by email:

Misguided focus on unpopular social policies are driving voters away from the Democratic Party and are mobilizing Republicans. Democrats used to be the party of the ***working class***, but today they are instead seen as a party defined by ostensibly legalizing property crime, crippling the police and injecting social justice into math classes.

As a result, Westwood continued,

It is no surprise that this doesn’t connect with a working family struggling to pay for surging grocery bills. By abandoning their core brand, even Democrats who oppose defunding the police are burdened by the party’s commitment to unpopular social policy.

The traditional strategy in midterm elections, Westwood wrote, is to mobilize the party base. Instead, he contended, Democrats

have decided to let the fringe brand the party’s messaging around issues that fail to obtain majority support among the base. Perhaps the most successful misinformation campaign in modern politics is being waged by the Twitter left against the base of the Democratic Party. The Twitter mob is intent on pushing social policies that have approximately zero chance of becoming law as a test of liberalism. Even if you support reducing taxes on the middle class, immigration reform and increasing the minimum wage, opposing defunding the police or the legalization of property crime makes you an unreasonable outcast.

Along similar lines, [*John Halpin*](https://substack.com/profile/12421919-john-halpin), who works with Teixeira as a co-editor of [*The Liberal Patriot*](https://theliberalpatriot.substack.com/), emailed to say that

the biggest problem ahead of the 2022 midterms is that voters don’t think Biden and the Democrats are focused on the issues that matter most to them. If you look at the most recent Wall Street Journal poll, Democrats are currently suffering double-digit deficits compared to Republicans on perceptions about which party is best able to handle nearly all of the issues that matter most to voters: for example, rebuilding the economy (–13), getting inflation under control (–17), reducing crime (–20) and securing the border (–26). Democratic advantages on issues like education are also down considerably from just a few years ago.

There are political analysts who differ strongly from Westwood and Teixeira in their critiques of Democratic strategy.

[*Will Bunch*](https://www.inquirer.com/author/bunch_will/), a liberal columnist for The Philadelphia Inquirer, argues that Democrats should adopt a full-speed-ahead, damn-the-torpedoes approach. In a [*March 3 column*](https://www.inquirer.com/author/bunch_will/), Bunch contended that the Reagan revolution of the 1980s still casts “a cloud of self-doubt over the Democratic Party” and that

party messaging largely remains dominated by reaction and fear rather than boldness. Those fears seem rooted in a panic that progressive values will be seen as less American — when the reality is that ideas like academic freedom, preventing censorship and a belief in inquiry, including science, are the core beliefs of this nation. It’s past time for President Biden and other leaders of the Democratic Party to approve this message.

I asked Bunch how a Democratic candidate should appeal to white ***working-class*** voters and socially conservative Black, Hispanic and Asian American voters. He replied by email:

The white ***working class*** is a much more diverse group than commentators from all sides tend to credit. Remember the large turnouts for Black Lives Matter marches in isolated Rust Belt and rural communities in 2020, for example, and many in the ***working class*** remain zealously pro-union. I think the greatest cause of resentment is lack of educational and related career opportunities that have shut out the ***working class*** of all races. The Democrats are philosophically wired to expand these opportunities — through free community college and trade school, for example — yet have failed to make these a priority, ensuring a continued sense that Dems are now the party of self-enlightened degree holders looking down on them. That cycle can and must be broken.

I also asked how a Democrat should counter Republicans who exploit critical race theory, defunding the police, affirmative action, transgender rights and other politically divisive issues.

Bunch replied:

It’s important to reframe the conversations, so that the debate about schools, for example, isn’t about critical race theory (a construction that’s only taught in law schools) but about book banning or blocking teachers from discussing even Martin Luther King or Rosa Parks, which most voters in the vast middle vehemently oppose. Likewise, Democrats need to make clear that their goal is making streets safer and ending the heartbreak of homicide, but the way to do that is by thoughtfully building safer communities, not throwing more taxpayer dollars at failed methods of policing. The best strategy on affirmative action, at least in education, is to again make higher ed a public good and eliminate the current “Hunger Games” of college admissions.

[*Dan Froomkin*](https://presswatchers.org/about-this-site/), a media critic who writes at [*Press Watch*](https://presswatchers.org/), argued in an email that Republicans are using a collection of contrived issues with little substantive merit. On critical race theory, for example, he wrote:

It’s a phony issue. What far-right Republicans mean by “critical race theory” is that white children are being taught at public schools that they should be ashamed of being white. This is a made-up issue that serves as a stalking horse for inciting white grievance. Like so many of the far-right accusations against their opponents, it really couldn’t be less true. The reality is that public schools writ large don’t teach nearly enough about the sordid aspects of American history or culture, as you well know. As a press critic, I have been horrified at how credulously many political reporters have written about Republican lies — and how impressed they were at their alleged (but entirely unproven) effectiveness. They wrote about it as if it were a real problem, rather than an obvious, bad-faith attempt to manufacture white panic.

The prospect of Democratic losses in the House will have ideological consequences for both parties.

Halpin pointed out that the Democrats who lose seats in Congress in 2022 are certain to be disproportionately drawn from the moderates who face the most difficulty winning re-election in purple districts:

If the Democrats get clobbered this fall, it will mostly be frontline members — those who are more moderate and centrist — who lose their seats, thus paving the way for a minority Democratic Party to become even more left wing. This would be a disaster for Democrats, but no one in the party seems willing to confront it.

[*Matt Bennett*](https://www.thirdway.org/about/staff/matt-bennett), the executive vice president of Third Way, a centrist Democratic think tank, cited a major difference now compared to past midterm elections, writing in an email:

Republicans at every level are openly plotting to steal the presidency in 2024, as we detail [*here*](https://www.thirdway.org/presentation/the-plot-to-steal-the-presidency). An essential element of their plot is winning control of Congress. That means the future prospects of both the Democratic Party and American democracy could be severely damaged by a loss in 2022.

The congressional Republicans, Bennett continued,

who stood up to Trump’s assault on democracy now number in the single digits, and most of them are retiring or likely to lose in primaries. The candidates who would give them their majorities are, almost to a person, fully committed to the big lie that Trump won in 2020. Almost all have run on a set of authoritarian messages that include fear of the mythical deep state, disregard for constitutional and legal protections (other than the Second Amendment) and contempt for vital norms of governing. Worst of all, they have committed themselves to unyielding support for Donald Trump, who has staked his entire postpresidency and comeback effort on an assault on voting. Putting his acolytes in charge of Congress could send us careening toward the cliff, endangering the future of the world’s oldest and sturdiest democracy.

Bennett warned:

While the economy continues to impact voter behavior most, Republicans have been able to weaponize culture war issues in ways that significantly damage Democrats. In a [*major retrospective on the 2020 congressional elections*](https://www.thirdway.org/report/2020-post-election-analysis) that Third Way ran along with the Collective PAC and Latino Victory Fund, we found that Republican attempts to brand Democrats as radicals worked devastatingly well. Of the 12 House Democratic freshmen who lost last cycle — on a ticket with a winning presidential candidate — all were seriously hurt by culture war attacks.

This Democratic liability has become acute as politics have become nationalized, making all Democrats pay a price for what a small but prominent group pushes for:

Members of Congress on the far left have taken a series of positions — like defunding the police, abolishing Immigration and Customs Enforcement, closing federal prisons, decriminalizing border crossings, etc. — that are politically toxic in swing districts. It is no longer the case that what happens in a deep blue district, where these kinds of ideas might be more palatable, stays there. The fact is that these kinds of ideas and slogans do create a perception among swing voters that Democrats are outside the mainstream.

[*John Lawrence*](https://bsos.umd.edu/academics-research/john-a-lawrence), who served as an aide in the House for 38 years, including eight as chief of staff to Nancy Pelosi, is the kind of party strategist hardly anyone outside Washington has heard of but who is [*exceptionally knowledgeable*](https://www.politico.com/story/2013/01/pelosi-top-aide-retires-after-38-years-086341) about the state of American politics.

Lawrence replied by email to my inquiry:

I think a lot of voters will use 2022 to remind Biden (and Democrats, since they can’t vote against him) that their vote in 2020 was a vote to return to normalcy, not a blank check to build on the New Deal and Great Society. Once in office — albeit with ridiculously narrow margins — Democrats used the crisis to swing for the stands, ignoring the historical lesson of the Senate’s moderating role. So they have created the worst of all worlds: a failure to enact what the base demanded (but they did not have the votes to deliver) and the appearance of having overreached and invited an electoral haircut by many 2020 supporters who never embraced such a sweeping agenda.

The Russian invasion of Ukraine makes the future highly uncertain not only in Europe but throughout the world. Similarly, if less violently, the state of the economy, inflation and the trajectory of Covid are fuel for dissension and remain unpredictable.

The historical pattern of midterm contests suggests that a rejection of the party in power is the customary order of business. But the consequences of a Republican takeover of the House or of both branches of Congress are unlikely to be routine. What we can be sure of is that the Democrats can’t go on forever with this much of a gulf between what the majority of progressive party activists think the party should stand for and what the majority of Americans think it should.

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[***Democrats Weigh a Comeback Strategy in Factory Towns***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65MH-05N1-DXY4-X01H-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Body**

The party can ill afford to continue bleeding ***working-class*** support in Midwestern states. A new report explores how “progressive populism” could offer a way forward.

Should Democrats bother competing in the struggling factory towns of the Midwest?

A [*report released on Tuesday*](https://www.americanfamilyvoices.org/post/winning-back-the-factory-towns-that-made-trumpism-possible) answers this question with an emphatic “yes.” But the fact that it is being asked at all speaks to the Democratic Party’s still-unresolved challenge of how to win back the more than 2.6 million voters it has lost in places like Ottumwa, Iowa, and Scranton, Pa., since 2012.

More than five years after Donald Trump galvanized the white ***working class*** in America’s fading industrial heartland, Democrats are still trying to understand what happened, and debating whether they should scrounge elsewhere for votes. Should they try to run up the electoral score in urban areas and inner-ring suburbs instead?

Basic electoral math suggests that they have little choice: It would be exceedingly difficult for Democrats to win a governing majority without holding onto their “[*blue wall*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/11/08/us/politics/joe-biden-voters.html)” in the Midwest, and continued erosion in smaller communities might make that impossible in the near future.

In this year’s midterms, Democrats are trying to win open Senate seats in Ohio and Pennsylvania, while hoping they can somehow oust Republican incumbents in Iowa and Wisconsin — all states that are dotted with places that have been hurt by the effects of global economic and technological change over the last few decades.

But there’s more at stake than just who wields political power.

“If fascism and authoritarianism continue to rise in this country,” the authors wrote, “it will be because more of the voters in the small and midsized counties of the manufacturing belt fuel its advance.”

An economic slide and political shift

In Iowa, which holds its primaries on Tuesday, the Democratic Party has all but given up.

Trump won the state by more than [*eight percentage points*](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/11/03/us/elections/results-iowa.html) in the 2020 presidential election, and this year’s midterms augur more misery for Democrats. They hold just one of Iowa’s four congressional seats, and a vanishing number of major statewide offices.

Jasper County, just east of Des Moines, is a prime example of the typical factory town arc.

The county was once the center of the American washing-machine industry, but after the closure of a Maytag plant in 2007, unemployment soared to 10 percent, the highest in the state. Barack Obama won the county with 53 percent of the vote in 2008. But 12 years later, Joe Biden lost it to Trump by 22 points.

Iowa could offer but a glimpse of the future of an entire region that is trending Republican, the new report warns.

Issued by [*a nonprofit group called American Family Voices*](https://www.americanfamilyvoices.org/about), it was written primarily by Mike Lux, a Democratic strategist and Biden ally with roots in the region. It builds on research that was published last fall and [*highlighted by my colleague Jonathan Martin*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/10/05/us/politics/democrats-votes-midwest.html) at the time. The study used polls, focus groups and several hundred interviews and meetings with local officials, political operatives and activists, as well as a deep dive into voter file and census data.

The authors have emerged with a richer set of findings to recommend “a messaging and organizing path forward” for the Democratic Party in the 10 states, 565 counties and nearly 55 million voters they studied.

The polling, which was conducted by Lake Research Partners, shows a population buffeted by the rising cost of living and suffering from health-related crises. A majority, for instance, said they or a family member had a chronic health condition. Majorities also said they had personally struggled with disabilities, job loss, mental health problems or addiction.

The political challenge Democrats face in these communities is stark. The Democratic share of the electorate in so-called factory-town counties shrank from 33 percent to 24 percent from 2012 to 2020, according to TargetSmart, a Democratic data firm that was hired to work on the project, while the Republican share ballooned to more than 51 percent during the same period, from 40 percent.

Voters in this “factory towns” demographic, which still makes up nearly half of the electorate in those states, often view Democrats as too weak to enact their economic agenda, and are cynical about politicians’ ability to help them in general.

‘Progressive populism’

The report contains nine recommendations, which can be boiled down to a call for “progressive populism” to counter the frustration and economic dislocation many of these voters feel about politics.

Lux, who spent much of the last year immersed in the study, said in an interview that “probably the No. 1 surprise to me is how desperate people are for community.”

A former labor organizer, Lux said he came away from his conversations convinced that there was an untapped “hunger” in factory towns to talk about political issues and “get through some of the anger and vitriol into a more balanced conversation.”

He recommends that the Democratic Party, labor unions and progressive activists focus on engaging the pool of voters in the middle who are repulsed by extremism, and are not convinced that the Republican Party has their economic interests in mind.

“This is a challenging mission, given that the level of cynicism and disaffection from mainstream politics runs deep,” Lux acknowledges in the report.

But with the right amount of “old-fashioned community building,” he argues, voters in factory towns “could form a voting bloc that could become a cornerstone for a revival of the progressive movement.”

What to read

* While Democrats everywhere are deeply worried about a range of political warning signs ahead of the midterms, they have a particular reason for alarm in California, Katie Glueck writes: [*skyrocketing gas prices*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/06/06/us/politics/gas-prices-california-politics-democrats.html).

1. Big-city mayors are furious about the recent spate of mass shootings, but while they often have authority over police departments and social service programs, they say they are largely powerless to enact the gun control measures that many see as necessary to prevent more tragedies. [*Mitch Smith has the story*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/06/06/us/mayors-mass-shootings-gun-control.html).
2. Next week, Adam Liptak writes, the Supreme Court may hear the “800-pound gorilla” of election law cases. It concerns a legal theory that would [*radically reshape how federal elections are conducted*](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/06/06/us/politics/supreme-court-state-legislatures-elections.html) by greatly expanding state legislatures’ power to set election rules at odds with state constitutions and to draw congressional maps warped by partisan gerrymandering.

Long Beach’s mayor aims to head to Washington

The mayor of the Southern California city of Long Beach, who made national headlines for his leadership during the pandemic, has emerged as the front-runner for an open congressional seat that Democrats are expected to win in November.

The mayor, Robert Garcia, was the first Latino and first openly gay person to lead Long Beach.

He was one of [*17 speakers*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/18/us/politics/democratic-convention-keynote-speaker.html?) during the 2020 Democratic National Convention’s keynote address, and appeared in [*the*](https://lbpost.com/news/robert-garcia-covid-19-budget) [*news*](https://www.wbur.org/npr/898573404/long-beach-mayor-robert-garcia-on-losing-his-mother-to-covid-19) [*throughout*](https://www.nbclosangeles.com/news/local/long-beach-mayor-who-lost-both-parents-to-covid-19-sends-best-wishes-to-trump/2438359/) the pandemic to urge safety precautions after his mother and stepfather died of Covid-19. Later, he [*opened*](https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2021-04-15/long-beach-leaders-answer-biden-help-immigrant-children) the Long Beach Convention Center to shelter undocumented children who had arrived at the southern border.

In Tuesday’s primary election, Garcia has the backing of Gov. Gavin Newsom and multiple members of California’s congressional delegation.

“The issues that existed before the pandemic exist today, but they’re just larger,” Garcia [*told*](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/19/us/robert-garcia-dnc.html) our colleague Jill Cowan in 2020. “You think about issues around income inequality and homelessness, the housing crisis that exists here in California, climate change — those are all huge.”

Sara Sadhwani, an assistant professor of politics at Pomona College who is a member of California’s redistricting commission and who said she wasn’t publicly supporting a candidate, said that Los Angeles frequently looked to Long Beach as a model for successful policies.

“It seems like his leadership would be both progressive and pragmatic,” Sadhwani said.

Garcia faces several Democratic challengers, the most prominent being Cristina Garcia, who is not related to him.

A member of the State Assembly representing southern Los Angeles County, Cristina Garcia has built a reputation for championing policies to [*protect*](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/10/08/us/stealthing-illegal-california.html?searchResultPosition=2) and support women. She sponsored legislation [*exempting*](https://www.nytimes.com/2016/01/07/upshot/the-latest-sales-tax-controversy-tampons.html?searchResultPosition=29) pads and tampons from sales taxes and, as head of the Legislative Women’s Caucus, was a [*leader*](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/10/17/us/california-women-sexual-harassment-sacramento.html?_r=0) in California’s #MeToo movement.

Her reputation took a hit in 2018, however, when Politico reported that a former staff member had [*accused her of groping him*](https://www.politico.com/story/2018/02/08/cristina-garcia-california-metoo-398985); he [*filed a lawsuit*](https://www.politico.com/states/california/story/2019/02/01/former-aide-sues-assembly-alleges-sex-harass-claim-dismissed-because-hes-male-835315) against her and the Assembly arguing that he had been mistreated because he was a man. In [*a radio interview*](https://www.kqed.org/news/11658070/assemblywoman-cristina-garcia-denies-groping-and-harassment-but-not-sending-flirty-texts) for KQED, Garcia said she had “never assaulted anyone.”

Around the same time, she was also accused of having made [*anti-Asian*](https://www.politico.com/story/2018/04/22/metoo-asian-garcia-california-544974) and [*homophobic*](https://www.advocate.com/politicians/2018/3/28/california-lawmaker-admits-using-slur-gay-colleague) comments. She denied that she had intentionally used insulting language.

Her campaign did not respond to requests for comment.

— Blake &amp; Leah

Is there anything you think we’re missing? Anything you want to see more of? We’d love to hear from you. Email us at [*onpolitics@nytimes.com*](mailto:onpolitics@nytimes.com).

PHOTO: A steel factory in Braddock, Pa., where Lt. Gov. John Fetterman formerly served as mayor. (PHOTOGRAPH BY MADDIE MCGARVEY FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES)

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